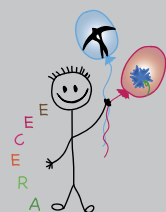




*23RD EECERA  
CONFERENCE:  
VALUES, CULTURE  
AND CONTEXTS*

*28.-31.08.2013  
Tallinn, Estonia*

*ABSTRACT BOOK*



**EECERA**  
EUROPEAN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

 **TALLINN UNIVERSITY**





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# KEYNOTES

## KEYNOTE I

Thursday, August 29, 9.30-10.30

### VALUES AND CONTEXTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MARIKA VEISSON | Tallinn University, Estonia

This presentation gives a short overview about the history and the situation of contemporary early childhood education, as well as research in that area. The history of early childhood education is long; the first preschool in Estonia was opened already in 1840. Teacher education was organized at Tartu in 1905. Since 1967 Tallinn University started to offer higher education to preschool teachers, in 2002 the university followed Bologna recommendations and adopted the BA and MA system. Nowadays we have 644 preschool institutions in Estonia. 63% of teachers and 98% of principals and head-teachers have higher education. In the latest (4th) National curriculum for preschool child care institutions (2008) there are seven important areas: native language, mathematics, me and environment, music, moving, arts and Estonian for not Estonian-speaking children. Play and child-centred approach are important in this curriculum. Most important areas of research are quality of early childhood education, curriculum of early childhood education, professionalism of preschool teachers, partnership with parents and community, and research-based approach as it is recommended also in OECD's Starting Strong III (2012). The current presentation gives a short overview about the research involving the context of socio-cultural and bio-ecological theories of the above mentioned research topics. Results of some of the most important studies in Estonia will be introduced. According to international research (Peterson, Veisson, Hujala, Härkönen, Sandberg & Johansson, 2011, 2012) Estonian teachers and principals give the highest ratings of professionalism to creating growth environment in preschool. The ratings of teachers and principals are also high concerning basic values. In general, values are an important topic in Estonia, and the current presentation will give an overview about values of teachers, principals and parents (Ülavere, Veisson, Tart & Soo, 2013). Also, introduced will be an Estonian longitudinal study, which started in 1996 and is at present still on-going. The aims of these studies have been explaining the impact of home and preschool environments to child development. PhD studies of Nugin (2007) and Tammemäe (2009) were related to this longitudinal research. Partnership with parents has been the research topic of Suur (2010, 2011 and 2012) and Lukk (2004, 2006, 2007, 2008). Quality of preschool education and growth environment in preschool has been the research topic of Õun (2010). Tuul, Ugaste and Mikser (2011) have studied preschool curriculum related questions. The most important results of all the mentioned studies will be introduced.

Keywords: quality; curriculum; professionalism; partnership with parents and community; research in early childhood education

## KEYNOTE II

Thursday, August 29, 16.30-17.30

### CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ONTOGENESIS

GENADI KRAVTSOV | Vygotsky Institute of Psychology, Russia

Development as the highest form of motion is the central concept in Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory. It is, at the same time, the explanatory principle of this theory, the subject of study and the base of experimental-genetic method, offered by Vygotsky. In most general way development is defined as the motion which leads to the formation of new, higher-level quality. At the same time development is always self-development, i.e. internally conditioned, free motion. Development is holistic process, which includes the whole human being and simultaneously it is extremely complex and composite motion.

The problem of child's cultural development have a special place in this theory. Without it, it is impossible to state correctly the problem of personality and to adequately study this higher psychological synthesis, which is the central problem of psychological science.

It is possible to mark out five general lines in the holistic process of development. Which are: organic growth and maturity, psychic development, socialization, cultural development and development of personality. These lines are deeply connected with each other and collaterally subordinated in the way they have been listed. Highest and dominating line is the line of personality's development. Isolated, which means abstract, consideration of one or another line may lead to various mistakes and delusions. For example, the interpretation of organic growth and maturity in the way of preformation theories. The study of cultural development, by Vygotsky, is directly connected with his theory of higher mental functions. In this context, development appears as the transformation of elementary, natural psychic into higher, cultural one and the mechanism of this transformation is related to the usage of psychological tools. This tool, according to Vygotsky, is a sign with a special place given to a word. The idea of mediation states various problems like the nature and types of generalizations, correlation between sense and meaning, conscious and unconscious in the composition and functionality of psychological tools.

It needs to be mentioned that development is not a mechanical process. The usage of psychological tools can not be exhaustive explanation of development's motion. Development assumes volitional effort and personality's aspiration for perfection. It can be said that the development of volitional sphere is the main line of personality's development in ontogenesis, which influences all other aspects and lines in general motion of development.



## KEYNOTE III

Friday, August 30, 8.45-9.45

### QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: CAN IT BE INTERNATIONAL?

KATHY SILVA | University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Few studies have explored whether learning experiences during the pre-school period differentiate rates of growth in cognitive skills during primary school. Here, findings are presented from a longitudinal study on a representative sample of 2,800 children in the UK. This study examined the contribution of high quality Early Childhood Education to children's cognitive progress between ages 7 and 11 (i.e., Years 2 and 6 of primary school) in English and mathematics. Results indicate that quality rather than mere attendance was the pre-school factor which promoted cognitive progress through primary education. Children who had a stronger 'profile' at school entry accelerated away from other children over the primary period. The benefits of high quality pre-school environments appear to be long-lasting and cumulative, improving children's developmental trajectories by enabling them to make greater learning gains compared to their peers who experienced lower pre-school quality. This study suggests that the effects of high quality are 'international' because they promote the capacity to learn rather than boosting school entry skills that fade during the primary years.

**KEYNOTE IV**

Friday, August 30, 9.45-10.45

**CULTURAL CONTEXTS AND THE CARE AND EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN INDIA**

NANDITA CHAUDHARY | University of Delhi, India

India is characterised by immense plurality, whether it is in ecology, economy, religion, language, culture or cuisine. As a single nation which harbours so much diversity, working towards uniform principles becomes a serious challenge, whether in the attainment of national goals or the implementation of educational objectives. Regarding childhood, there is a constant dialogue between cultural practices on the one hand, and national objectives of children's development on the other. Socialisation practices among contemporary Indian families continue to have enduring links with ancient traditions. Simultaneously, families are very enthusiastic about children's education and keeping pace with modernity and technological advancement is an important priority. This presentation focuses on the characteristic properties of family life in India that facilitate the co-existence of complex and even conflicting ways of bringing-up children. The analysis will be supported by examples from research with Indian families to describe the adaptive strategies that adults employ in the socialisation for competence of children towards a high tolerance of ambiguity and ambivalence.

## KEYNOTE V

Saturday, August 31, 11.45-12.45

### EUROPEAN POLICY COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

NORA MILOTAY | European Commission, Belgium

There is a consensus in both the research and policy making world about the importance of high-quality accessible early years services for all children and many European Member States are working on improving their systems. The European Commission's Communication on ECEC was designed in 2011 to support this emerging trend. In this context the presentation will give an overview of current European policies in the field of early childhood education and care and their possible impact on Member States policy making. It will particularly focus on the issues of access to and quality of early years services in Europe as set out in the Communication in 2011. It will also introduce the methods and tools of European policy cooperation within the Open Method of Coordination and the European Semester.





# SYMPOSIA SET A

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29  
11.30-13.00



## A1 VALUES EDUCATION IN NORDIC PRESCHOOLS: SYMPOSIA 1

Self-organised symposium

Chair: EVA MARIANNE JOHANSSON | University of Stavanger, Norway

What kind of future citizens do we foster in early childhood education (ECEC) in order to build cohesive pluralistic societies in Nordic countries? This symposium brings together initial results from a Nordic study on values education in the early years. The aim of the project is to deepen understanding of the institutionalized fostering of values in Nordic preschools at the theoretical, methodological, and empirical levels. The study is informed by a participatory action research model aimed both to create knowledge and to contribute to a change. The research design enables the researchers to work at different levels ranging from the Nordic level to national policy documentation, preschool communities, and individual practitioners.

### Values Education in Nordic Preschools: Basis of Education for Tomorrow

EVA MARIANNE JOHANSSON | University of Stavanger, Norway

#### Co-author

ANETTE EMILSON | Linneaus University, Sweden

#### Research aims

Nordic countries are often described in terms of shared values, however we know little about the commonalities and variations within values education in Nordic preschools. This project funded by NordForsk deals with values education in Nordic preschools. The aim is to deepen understanding of the fostering of values in preschool at the theoretical, methodological, and empirical levels.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Previous research describe values education as a multi-level phenomenon connected with individuals, the communications and relationships between individuals, and the institutional and cultural contexts and practices of preschools. Our own research established three value fields caring, discipline, and democracy as important dimensions in fostering future citizens in pluralistic societies.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The project applies to Habermas' theory about communicative action, life-world, and system. This allows for explorations of values education from the participants point of view and from a broader societal context. Davies' concepts of category-maintenance and transgression inform the project in purpose to understand values in relation to gender .

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The project is based on a participatory action research model aiming to create knowledge and contribute to change. Data is gathered through multiple methods and a variety of qualitative analysis methods will be employed.

#### Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are addressed to each country-specific rules and will be conducted continuously and cautiously.

#### Main finding or discussion

The discussion will relate to theoretical, methodological, and empirical levels of the study

#### Implications, practice or policy

By enhancing practitioners' awareness of values and their strategies for fostering values the quality of values education in preschool may increase. The project will inform educational policy and child outcomes for citizenship.

**Keywords:** values education; preschool teachers; children; care; democracy; discipline; communicative action; participatory action research

# Democracy, Caring and Competence Values: Analysis of ECEC Policy Documents in the Nordic Countries

JÓHANNA EINARSDÓTTIR | University of Iceland, Iceland

## Co-author

ANNA-MAIJA PUROILA | University of Oulu, Finland

## Research aims

The aim of the study is to explore how Nordic ECEC policies frame values education in preschools with a special focus on the values of democracy, caring, and competence.

## Relationship to previous research works

The Nordic welfare model has shaped the policies, practices, and ideologies of their educational systems. Nonetheless, we know little about how values are articulated in policies of ECEC.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study applies Habermas' (1995) theories of communicative actions, life-world, and the system. Here the focus is on the system level, namely, values in national curriculum guidelines which serve as the basis of pedagogical practices in preschools in the Nordic countries.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Documental analysis of the curriculum is based on application of Fairclough's (2005) critical discourse analysis. Within the democratic value field, discourses about children's responsibilities and rights are examined. Within the caring value field discourses on relationships between human beings are in focus. The competence values are explored from the viewpoint of discourses about children's skills and the content of the curriculum.

## Ethical considerations

The cross-cultural design of this study enables us to take a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge since both insiders' cultural sensitivity and outsiders' views of the policy documents can be utilized.

## Main finding or discussion

The findings of the study provide knowledge about the values of democracy, caring, and competency in curriculum documents in the Nordic countries. Similarities and variations among the countries will be reflected.

## Implications, practice or policy

The study will inform a broad spectrum of target groups across the fields of scientific research, teacher education, and educational policy and practice in the Nordic countries and beyond.

**Keywords:** values; nordic; preschool; policy; national curriculum

# The Danish Study: the Early Start. How to Involve the Preschool Teachers

STIG BROSTRÖM | Aarhus University, Denmark

## Co-authors

ANDERS SKRIVER JENSEN | Aarhus University, Denmark

OLE HENRIK HANSEN | Aarhus University, Denmark

## Research aims

The aim of the project is to explore how the practitioners perceive and deal with values in theory and practice.

## Relationship to previous research works

There is not much research in the field of value education in preschool. However, Emilson & Johansson (2009) and Johansson (2009) have investigated values in toddler interactions.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study applies theories on values and values education focused on children's appropriation of values (Halstered & Taylor, 2000), and based on Habermas' (1995) theory of communicative action the project observes and describes some patterns of values.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The project has an action research approach. Data is collected from initial focus group interviews and from video-



observations of children and preschool teachers' interactions in different settings (play, circle-time, and lunch).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are taken into account in relation to Danish rules (The Danish Research council for Society, 2002). Practitioners, children and parents have given freely consent.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings are at a preliminary stage. However some dimensions of democracy, caring, and democratic values will be presented.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study will deepen our understanding of values in everyday life in crèche and preschool, and will thus contribute to a more reflective and goal oriented values education in these settings.

**Keywords:** values education; teacher child interaction; care; discipline and democracy; video-observation; focus group interview

## **A2 RESEARCH SCHOOL IN CHILDHOOD. LEARNING AND DIDACTICS. FRAMEWORK AND ONGOING RESEARCH. PART I**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: INGRID PRAMLING SAMUELSSON | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Sweden is unique in that we have developed specific research school for preschool teachers as a joint consortium between 4-5 universities and university collages. The whole idea is to raise the professional level of preschool teachers to become able to work with quality development in the municipalities. All together it have been three research schools under the same heading Childhood, Learning and Didactics, that Gothenburg University, Karlstad University, University of Linköping and Kristianstad University Collage have jointly work with. Some of the students have finished their PhD, while others are in the process of struggling with data collection. Some of the doctoral students have a four year education while others have a two years Licentiate goal. We will in the symposia, present the research school, but six of our doctoral students will give a short presentation of their studies.

## **Mathematics and Didactic Contracts in Swedish Preschools**

LAURENCE DELACOUR | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

Teachers usually develop different practices when they communicate mathematics to give children the exact assistance they need, while children try to meet the teachers' requirements by interpreting their signals. The aim of this paper is to describe the rules of the didactic contract during a mathematical activity with a group of children 4-5 years of age.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper is based on the data collected for my thesis in order to answer one of my research questions "which didactic contracts emerge from some preschool teachers in transforming the national objectives in mathematics?"

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

I use some of the elements of the didactic contract in order to focus on preschool teacher expectations of children and mathematics. My use of a didactic contract does not imply that I am importing the general theoretical framework of the theory of didactical situations.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

I video recorded a preschool teacher implementing a mathematical activity. I use a abductive analytical method.

### **Ethical considerations**

Since the data I use is part of my thesis the ethical considerations have been controlled.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The didactic contract does not stand still, it moves and changes over the time under the influence of the teacher's or children's behavior (Garcion Vautour, 2002). During the situation, the preschool teacher repeat, clarify or ask a question that allows the didactic contract to move in a direction that the teacher have in mind. Sometimes, it can be a child's discovery, reflection or understanding that allows the contract to move.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

this paper can increase the knowledge about mathematics didactics in preschool.

**Keywords:** mathematics; didactic contract; preschool; preschool teacher; mathematical situation

## **On Following Commands and Rewriting the Rules: the Tension Between Moral Universalism and Relational Pedagogy in Swedish Early Childhood Education**

JOHAN DAHLBECK | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

In this study I investigate a perceived tension between reevaluating certain foundational claims on the one hand and following universal moral commands on the other. I ask the question, how is it that certain commonly held assumptions (about the nature of knowledge and knowledge formation) are being debunked and others (about ethics and the good life) left undisturbed in the context of contemporary Swedish early childhood education?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

this is original research unrelated to previous studies

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

I study the conceptual preconditions necessary for making sense of the studied policy documents

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

content analysis of Swedish ECE policy documents

### **Ethical considerations**

none applicable

### **Main finding or discussion**

the main findings include a detected incommensurability in the ontological and epistemological conditions of the studied policy documents

### **Implications, practice or policy**

I suggest further discussions concerning the theoretical basis of Swedish ECE policy so as reconcile this perceived incommensurability

**Keywords:** relational pedagogy; moral universalism; Swedish ECE policy; foundational values; epistemology

## **Children's Text-Making: a Conceptualization of Nomadic Writing**

CARINA HERMANSSON | Karlstad University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to explore and discuss how children's text-making is produced in complex relationships between different elements, modes and media.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Following the work of the New Literacy Studies, writing practices are assumed to be social practices that are always active and interactive within particular social, cultural and material contexts.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Based on these assumptions, the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari has been used to develop the analysis.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study is conducted in two Swedish preschool classes including 58 six- to seven-year-olds. An ethnographical approach is used involving video and audio documentation as well as field notes and examples of children's written products.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study discusses ethical considerations that occur at all stages.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The analyses describe how writing takes place in the „in-betweens“ as an effect of creating and recreating interactive

connections between children, affects, talk, bodily movements and materiality, and against a background of the new media world and a changed childhood. The results show how the text and the writer are reciprocally created in the flow of change and relations between different elements, thus opening up to a variety of ways of becoming writers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This article provides a language for capturing the complexities and the movements in which the writings are produced. Understanding writing as Nomadic Writing, as a way to account for movement, connectivity and change, is an important contribution to the issue of how to conceptualize writing in a way that corresponds with contemporary forms of communication and literacy.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; writing; development; deleuze and guattari; Nomadic writing

## **A3 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) FOR CHILDREN FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS. SOME ISSUES, SOME LITERATURE, SOME LESSONS AND SOME CASE STUDIES**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: HELEN MAY | University of Otago, New Zealand

This symposium combines the outcomes of two large studies concerning ECEC for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The first, for the European Commission Directorate General Education and Culture, focuses on ECEC services for: children living in poverty, children of migrant or refugee families, and children at risk of educational failure. The study is informed by two literature reviews and two case studies. The second study, Equal Access to Childcare: Providing Quality ECEC to Disadvantaged Families was led by L. Gambaro, K. Stewart and J. Waldfogel from the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics. This study examines the mechanisms through which seven countries deliver quality ECEC. The comparative exercise aims to better understand the variations in public spending, the and the precise ways in which the regulatory and funding systems of different countries are effective in ensuring that services are both affordable and of high quality.

### **ECEC for Children in Europe from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: A Research Paper for the European Commission**

JOHN BENNETT | Editorial board EECERJ, France

#### **Research aims**

The study aims to contribute to knowledge about the access of European children, living in severe poverty, to appropriate ECEC services, with special mention of migrant and Roma children.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study relates to the work of the EU OMC on providing social protection and combating poverty is well known, as well as the research of non-governmental organisations such as the European Anti-Poverty Network, Eurochild and others.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is informed by two literature reviews carried out by Arianna Lazzari and Michel Vandenbroeck, University of Ghent and two case studies written by Peter Moss (on the ECEC reform in England 1987-2010) and by ISSA/ Open Society Foundations (on teacher education and pedagogical principles).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology. The analysis of the materials mentioned above allowed the authors to address the research questions.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The ethical implications were duly considered. The research is a desk study that uses materials found in the public domain. The conclusions are based on human rights principles.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

In summary, the study reviews the extent of child poverty in Europe, the actual access of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in ECEC services, the barriers to and good practices in engaging disadvantaged children and families in ECEC services.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Lessons from the study include the need for European countries to reduce the current high child poverty rates. For



successful outcomes, services for excluded children must begin in the pre-natal period and continue right through school, with particular attention to ethnic minority and migrant children from low-income, multilingual backgrounds.

**Keywords:** ECEC; poverty; Roma; immigrant; inclusion

## **Equal Access? ECEC Policies and Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds in the German Context**

PAMELA OBERHUEMER | Independent Early Years Consultant, Germany

### **Research aims**

This country case study aims to identify access and quality issues in ECEC in Germany, focusing on children from disadvantaged and migrant backgrounds.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Recent research utilising country case studies for focused cross-national analysis includes the UNESCO study on ECEC under education auspices (Kaga, Bennett & Moss, 2010), Oberhuemer (2012) on professional development systems, Penn & Lloyd (2012) on childcare markets, and Moss (2013) on the relationship between preschool and school.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

International comparisons have repeatedly highlighted negative links in Germany between disadvantaged background and school performance. The current analysis is located and theorized within a rights-based social policy and early childhood education framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Drawing on relevant research studies and policy frameworks at the federal, regional and local level, the country case study follows a critical documentary analysis approach.

### **Ethical considerations**

Since the research utilizes publicly available resources, there were no person-related ethical issues to consider.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Despite a general entitlement for 3 to 6 year olds and high participation rates, children from low-income families are under-represented in ECEC. Access for under-threes is extremely variable, particularly for those with immigrant parents. In terms of quality, the sixteen Länder have well-developed regulatory mechanisms, however, the proportion of ECEC staff with a Bachelor-level qualification or above is low (approx. 4%) compared with most European countries.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

In the context of a government pledge to provide places for over a third of under-threes by August 2013, a major policy challenge is to ensure that the rapid expansion drive does not lead to a heightening of disparities across the country.

**Keywords:** Germany; ECEC access; low-income, migrant background; ECEC quality

## **New Zealand Case Study: a Narrative of Shifting Policy Directions for ECEC**

HELEN MAY | University of Otago, New Zealand

### **Research aims**

This is a policy case study, one of eight countries in the LSE's comparative project exploring the costs of Providing Quality ECEC to Disadvantaged Families.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The New Zealand narrative chronicles the shift in ECEC policy after the election of a centre-right Government in 2008. The previous centre-left Government had provided 20 hours a week of free ECEC for 3-4 v year olds, universal subsidies for all child

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The overall project is underpinned by a framework of children's rights, particularly in relation to the consequences for children of social, cultural and economic disadvantage.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

comparative policy study

## **Ethical considerations**

Document study only

## **Main finding or discussion**

New Zealand has now entered a period of retrenchment (with a freeze in funding for free ECEC and a revision of the qualified teacher target to 80%). The political rationale is to target funding towards increasing participation for the most vulnerable children in selected localities

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The new policy directions have created debate and argument concerning the balance between universal and targeted approaches to funding ECEC, the role of state in its support of preschool aged children, the categorising of some children as 'vulnerable' and a 'priority' for state intervention, and the broader consequences of undermining of quality through funding cuts.

**Keywords:** New Zealand; policy; universal ECEC funding; targeted ECEC funding; disadvantage

## **A4 LEADING FOR QUALITY IN ECEC**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: LOUISE HARD | Charlers Sturt Universtiy, Australia

Leadership is a contested construct and in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) there continues to be strong historical and contextual factors that impact leadership action. This symposium explores the nature of leadership in terms of how history and tradition link to current interpretations of leadership activity to achieve quality outcomes for children, staff and families. The first paper is based on a Norwegian research project which considers the concepts of legitimacy and loyalty in the enactment of leadership. The second paper is an Icelandic study in which the relationship between hierarchy and distributed leadership is negotiated with a focus on how staff interpret this relationship. The final paper explores the potential for ECEC leadership action in Australia to impact issues of social justice and equity. In all three papers, the intention is to relate leadership action to enhanced quality outcomes in ECEC.

## **Legitimacy and Loyalty - a Leadership Issue?**

ELIN ØDEGÅRD | Telemark University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

The constructing of leadership will be influenced by tradition, but it seems that the tasks for the heads and the pedagogical leaders are changing (Engeström, 1987). When the roles and expectations are changing the loyalty and legitimacy may be an issue.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The kindergarten culture is highly feminized and historically, culturally and institutionally embedded in a horizontal, relational and team based tradition (Bleken, 2000; Hard, 2005; Jönsdóttir 2011; Ødegård, 2011) will frame the research

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The concepts of legitimacy and loyalty will be researched by means of the empirical material and further by theories on power (Foucault & Gordon, 1980; Rosenlund, 2000; Wertsch, 1998).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is a qualitative, explorative and ethnographic inspired research with qualitative methods (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009); and I will use focus groups interviews.

## **Ethical considerations**

The project has been evaluated by the Norwegian research ethical committee (NESH; 2006) and ethical reflections are a part of the on-going research.

## **Main finding or discussion**

In the presentation I will discuss some results from an on-going research project where 20 leaders in kindergartens are being interviewed about legitimacy and loyalty.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Changes and improvements for bettering the quality in kindergarten is a main question, and focus on different aspects of leadership may give us knowledge to deconstruct and reconstruct the leadership discourse in order to improve quality in kindergarten.

**Keywords:** leadership; loyalty; legitimacy; power; responsibility

## **Leadership of Preschool Teachers: Hierarchical or Distributed?**

ARNA H. JONSDOTTIR | University of Iceland, Iceland

### **Research aims**

The aim of the research was to find out how preschool teachers working with the children saw their leadership role and further, how other stakeholders saw that role.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Some researchers in early childhood education have put forward ideas about suitable leadership in the field, only to mention „community leadership“ (see Muijs et al., 2004) and „distributed leadership“ (Oberhuermer, 2005). Further, research findings have shown that preschool teachers see themselves mainly as teachers or carers of children but not as leaders working with adults (Hard, 2008; Jónsdóttir, 2001).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical perspective, or the philosophical stance informing the methodology of the research, was interpretive, or „symbolic interactionism“.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The methods used to collect the data were focus groups interviews and individual interviews with politicians.

### **Ethical considerations**

All necessary permissions were applied for and the participants gave their personal „informed consent“ by signing the relevant papers on the spot before each interview.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings of the research revealed that the preschool teachers focused mainly on their educational role and there they perceived themselves as professionals and experts, but they did not express themselves as potential leaders. There they primarily focused on the head teacher’s role as leading developmental projects and changes. The leadership rhetoric was connected to the hierarchical leadership structure, supported by head teachers, professionals at the preschool office and politicians, but the group (class) leaders, preschool teachers and assistants, all working with the children, rather saw their leadership as distributed.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

In the presentation this difference will be discussed, connected to quality.

**Keywords:** leadership; preschool teachers; identity; stakeholders; quality

## **Social Justice in Early Childhood: the Potential of Leadership**

LOUISE HARD | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### **Co-authors**

FRAN PRESS | Charles Sturt University, Australia

MEGAN GIBSON | Queensland University of Technology, Australia

### **Research aims**

This paper explores the potential for leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to positively impact social justice at the service and broader community level.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper combines research work on collaborative ECEC service provision (Press, Sumsion and Wong 2010; Wong, Press, Sumsion, & Hard, 2012) and leadership literature to expose the potential for achieving greater social justice for children, staff and fa

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Critical theory is the underpinning theoretical framework used to explore the relationship between social justice, education and leadership. This is then linked to how leadership values and distributed leadership, are important tools



to effect local and wider social change.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper draws on data from two research studies and extant literature in which leadership emerges as having a transformational impact on quality service delivery. One of these qualitative studies included a researcher in residence component to afford rich data from nine project sites.

### **Ethical considerations**

Both studies complied with the ethical requirements for research conducted through Charles Sturt University.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Historically in Australia and recently with the introduction of the National Early Childhood Reform Agenda, early childhood education and care has been associated with redressing inequality and disadvantage. This paper argues that intentional and strategic leadership at the service level, can play a pivotal role in creating changed circumstances for children and families. Such leadership includes positional and distributed elements, articulation of values and beliefs, and collective action that is mindful and informed.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This findings potentially impact early childhood leadership professional development and undergraduate teacher education.

**Keywords:** leadership; social justice; values; distributed leadership; early childhood

## **A5 NEW IEA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDY**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: HASINA BANU EBRAHIM | University of Free State, South Africa

This symposium will provide an insight into the development of the new international study of early childhood education. It will explain the context, outline the planned content of the study and discuss some of the key issues and considerations in designing and running such a study. The presenters will each discuss one aspect of the study, providing insights into the study aims and how these are being put into operation.

## **An Overview of the IEA Early Childhood Education Study**

CAROLINE SHARP | National Foundation for Educational Research, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

BETHAN BURGE | National Foundation for Educational Research, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This cross-national study aims to explore, describe and analyse early childhood education (ECE) provision and its role in preparing children for the learning and social demands of school.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study framework builds on previous international studies, including IEA pre-primary study (1987-95), OECD Starting Strong and Eurydice's study on tackling inequalities. It will also draw on longitudinal studies such as EPPE.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study will investigate three dimensions which research has shown to be of fundamental importance to the development of ECE policy and practice internationally : ECE availability, reach and inclusion, quality, and outcomes.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using established IEA procedures, the study will collect data from the following: policy questionnaire, setting and practitioner/teacher questionnaires, home questionnaire and optional child assessment. The study team will develop all instruments and design the sampling frame for administration in participating countries.

### **Ethical considerations**

There are many ethical issues to consider, but the most important is to prevent harm to any child, parent or practitioner as a result of the study. The study framework and processes are designed to make fair comparisons between countries, while acknowledging the different values and social construction of ECE.

### **Main finding or discussion**

There are many challenges in designing a study of ECE to be meaningful in such different social and cultural

contexts. This presentation will explain some of the key decisions about the study focus and operation that have contributed to the design in the early stages.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study is designed to be interesting and practically useful to policy-makers facing difficult decisions in allocating resources to ECE.

**Keywords:** international research; early childhood education policy; access and inclusion; quality in early childhood; ECE outcomes

## **Assessing Young Children's Developmental Outcomes on Transition from Early Childhood Education: Challenges and Complexities**

CHRIS PASCAL and TONY BERTRAM | CREC, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper explores the challenges in developing a cross national instrument to assess children's developmental progress in different cultural contexts shortly before they leave ECE to start compulsory schooling, and how these outcomes vary for different age groups, countries and types of provider.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Existing cross national studies (IEA Preprimary Study 1995, OECD Starting Strong 2006, Economist Intelligence Unit Starting Well Study 2012) focus on policy and provision and have not explored the relationship between these factors and educational outcomes for children.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The focus on early years to counter socio-economic disadvantage and enhance social cohesion and mobility is supported by research in neuroscience, developmental psychology and economics (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000; Heckman and Lochner, 2000; Carneiro and Heckman, 2003).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Identifying an unambiguous, valid and reliable instrument for assessing young children which is ethical, safeguards children's well being and rights, and is sensitive to the young children's response to any testing situation provides great challenges.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethics will be safeguarded through ensuring the chosen instrument is child friendly, easy to administer by a familiar adult in a normal preschool environment and does not take up too much time. The child and family will also have the option to opt out of the study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

This assessment instrument has the capacity to generate critical dialogue about the aims and purposes of ECE and its impact on children's development.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The assessment instrument which is the focus of this paper will potentially inform the future of ECE policy and practice in the participating countries.

**Keywords:** early childhood research; child assessment; ECE outcomes; cross national research; research methodology

## **Exploring the Relationship of Attending Preprimary Education and Students Reading Achievement in Primary Education**

JULIANE HENCKE | IEA Data Processing and Research Center, Germany

### **Research aims**

This paper analyzes the association between students attending preprimary education and reading achievement at fourth grade in countries participating in PIRLS 2011.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper builds on findings of PIRLS 2006, which indicated a positive relationship between years of preprimary education and reading achievement at the fourth grade.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

PIRLS 2011 is an international assessment of reading comprehension in primary education providing internationally comparative data to help countries making informed decisions about reading education. 45 countries around the world participated in the assessment. Key factors related to students' home and school environments were collected additionally by administering questionnaires to the tested students, parents, teachers, and school principals.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper explores how countries differ in terms of enrollment in preprimary education as well as the availability of national preprimary curricula. Additionally, the relationship between attending preprimary education and reading achievement was estimated using regression models.

## **Ethical considerations**

In PIRLS ethics are safeguarded by i) applying a sensible test design, ii) assuring the anonymity of participants and iii) reporting aggregated results on population level.

## **Main finding or discussion**

There is considerable variation across countries in terms of enrollment and preprimary curricula. Results show that on average, 89% of the students attended at least one year of preprimary education. The less number of years of preprimary education students attend, the lower their reading achievement appears to be. When not attending any preprimary education the students' reading achievement is lowest.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

There is a lack of international comparative studies on ECE that relate the provision of this kind of education with educational achievement.

**Keywords:** student assessment; cross national study; international research; international large-scale assessment; primary education

## **A6 OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING: CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: EVA ÄRLEMALM-HAGSÉR | Mälardalen University, Sweden

This symposium organised within the EECERA SIG group Outdoor play and learning will present research on sustainability and culture from Australia and Sweden. Some of the issues in focus are children's connection with culture and spirituality, understanding young children's ideas and actions within education for sustainability. As well as preschool cultures and knowledge contents connected to education for sustainability.

## **Aboriginal Children Making Connections with Culture and Spirit Through Outdoor Learning**

LIBBY LEE-HAMMOND | Murdoch University, Australia

### **Research aims**

The project aimed to engage with Aboriginal children and their families to make connections between outdoor learning and children's connection to 'place' as a means of preserving cultural identity and spirituality.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This is the first study Lee-Hammond has conducted in outdoor learning but it builds on a decade of previous work with Aboriginal Early Years in Australia.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

It was theorized that outdoor learning pedagogies best reflected traditional Aboriginal ways of sharing cultural knowledge and spirituality. Consistent with the literature regarding the conduct of Indigenous research, initial and ongoing consultation with local Aboriginal Elders was necessary to framing the project (Martin, 2008; Wilson, 2008).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study utilised a range of qualitative methods. Action research underpinned the design, with a reflective and collaborative process being utilised throughout. Laevers (1994) scales were used to document involvement of children. Twenty children aged 4-7 participated throughout one school term in an outdoor learning project.

### **Ethical considerations**

The project was approved by the University Ethics Committee and complies with the Australian National Statement

on Ethical Research, appropriate consents were obtained.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Experiences in the outdoors for Aboriginal children clearly enhanced their levels of involvement. An unexpected finding was that the overall attendance of children at school increased by 40 percent during the project implementation period.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Educators may wish to consider the impact on attendance and involvement of prioritising First Nations children by providing programs that specifically address cultural knowledge in the early years. Clear formal curriculum connections can be made in order to satisfy statutory requirements of education authorities.

**Keywords:** aboriginal; culture; outdoor; early; spirituality

## **‘An Interest in the Best for the World’? Education for Sustainability in the Swedish Preschool**

EVA ÄRLEMALM-HAGSÉR | Mälardalen University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

It is widely agreed that education is an important vehicle for enhancing sustainable society and sustainable lifestyles in which children are acknowledged as significant stakeholders with a right to meaningful participation.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Education for sustainability (EFS) is a relatively new field, and the need for such research has been acknowledged by several early childhood researchers. Although Sweden is often seen as a pioneer country there is a lack of scientific studies within this field in Scandinavian early childhood education research.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework has been guided by a critical theory approach as well as an ecofeministic perspective and guided by bricoleur as methodological approach.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In this qualitative research, four empirical studies are analysed as a whole to acquire knowledge about education for sustainability in Swedish preschool and children’s agency and meaning- making in relation to sustainability.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues were taken into consideration according to the guidelines of the Swedish Research Council.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings show that education for sustainability is seen as an important task in the Swedish preschool and that children participate in various knowledge contents. Themes that become visible are related to: the present as an ongoing relation with the past and the future, places of agency, children and nature, preschool as an affirmative sustainability practice.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings point to a complex web in which the present-day educational activities carry notions and ideas from the early preschool days, along with more contemporary understanding of children, childhood and the preschool as a place where different political and practical agenda are expressed.

**Keywords:** critical theory; ecofeministic perspective; early childhood curriculum; education for sustainability; play and learning

## **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Swedish Preschools**

INGRID ENGDAHL | Stockholm University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aims of the project are to implement ESD together with the children in early childhood education practices and to collect information and further understanding of young children’s ideas and actions within ESD.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This project is part two in a larger international OMEP project [www.omep.org.gu.se](http://www.omep.org.gu.se)



## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The project was using action research, where OMEP defined the aim and suggested some of the methods in the project. In action research, the main target groups – the children and the educators – bring experiences from their daily lives to the project.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The researchers introduced some concepts and theories for discussions. Joint lectures and cross-preschool seminars and focus groups discussions supported the processes in the preschools. The following concepts were introduced as a starting point for the discussions with children and among staff:

Respect, Reflect, Rethink, Reuse, Reduce, Recycle, Redistribute

## **Ethical considerations**

If children are met with a genuine interest, they are willing to share their thoughts and ideas, based on the importance of getting consent from parents and children, a guarantee for anonymity, and a listening approach.

## **Main finding or discussion**

This project shows that democracy and gender equality are important parts of ESD in everyday practice in Swedish preschools. The teachers put forward children's influence, and made children's questions central for the pedagogical work with ESD in practice. These results are most often related to the social and cultural aspects of sustainable development.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Being a teacher includes a great responsibility. Through the interactive communication, learning and playing in preschool, fundamental values and norms are shaped.

**Keywords:** sustainability in ECE; child participation; project work; Sweden; empowerment

# **A7 THE CONCEPTS OF CHILDHOOD THAT SHAPE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROVISION IN THREE COUNTRIES**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: JAN GEORGESON | Plymouth University, United Kingdom

This symposium aims to explore the concepts of childhood that shape provision for young children in Hungary, Japan and England. In the past, we have listened to each other talk about different aspects of early education and care at conferences and produced our own chapters for a book together, and this has prompted us to find out more about the concepts that underlie each other's provision. In particular we are interested in how these concepts about childhood are revealed or transmitted, through the media and through the preparation of students to work in the early years sector. The three presentations show how the sociocultural and historical context of each country has shaped their view of the child, and how this is changing as the importance of early childhood is recognised in national policy and new concerns about 'childhood' in the 21st century are being voiced.

## **Concepts of Childhood in English Early Childhood Provision**

VERITY CAMPBELL-BARR | Plymouth University, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

In this paper I aim to explore the concepts of childhood that have informed policy developments in the provision of early childhood services in England.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In England there is a long history of early childhood policy being shaped by the romantic child discourse, that stems from the work of Rousseau and reflects the natural, innocent and pure child that is in need of protection and guidance. However, I will argue that this has now been replaced by a concept of childhood that sees children as an investment for the future.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The paper will draw on work from the sociology of childhood, but will also frame the discussion in relation to how globalisation and the rise of the knowledge economy has seen a privileging of human capital theory.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Through analysis of policy rhetoric and documentation I will argue that whilst the romantic child discourse has not been completely lost in English early childhood policy making, it is being over shadowed by economic drivers for investing in early years services.

## Ethical considerations

As the paper draws on historical and policy documentation the ethical concerns are limited. However, there is an important ethical consideration to be presented to policy makers as to what do they really value about children and childhood.

## Main finding or discussion

The paper concludes by arguing that our preoccupation with economics in early childhood policy making in England has resulted in a concept of childhood as becoming rather than being.

## Implications, practice or policy

Policy makers need to recognise childhood as an important stage in its own right.

**Keywords:** childhood; investment; romanticism; economics; human capital

## Moving Beyond Children as ‘Treasure’: Changes in the Concept of Early Childhood in Japan from 1950 to 2010

MANABU SUMIDA | Ehime University, Japan

### Research aims

This paper aims to explore changes in the image of the child in Japan, in conjunction with other contemporary factors in society.

### Relationship to previous research works

In the modern age, Japanese people have thought of children as ‘treasure’ and nurtured them cooperatively in society (Jones, 2010).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Early childhood has been conceived of as a competent stage in the sensory and perceptual domain, but young children were also thought to be unstable and fragile (Kojima, 1986). On the other hand, issues such as a declining birth rate and child abuse have become serious concerns in Japan in the 21st century.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Changes in the image of the child in Japan were investigated through documentary analysis. Newspaper articles including the Japanese words of “子ども” (child/children: there is no distinction between singular and plural of child and children in Japanese) and “幼児期” (early childhood) in a popular newspaper from 1950 to 2010 were extracted and classified into categories according to the image of the child which they portrayed. Changes in the Japanese concept of child/children/childhood were analyzed in correlation with other factors such as changes in the birth rate and marriage rate.

## Ethical considerations

The research used only documents already in the public domain, and articles about individual children were treated with sensitivity.

## Main finding or discussion

Emerging findings suggest that positive images of the child/children and childhood in Japan have been dwindling over this period.

## Implications, practice or policy

In conclusion, there is an imperative need in an international context to consider ways to reconstruct the socio-cultural and educational values of childhood in a post-modern age.

**Keywords:** Japanese culture; image of childhood; historical connections; demographics; documentary analysis

## The Way Hungarians Think About Childhood

ÉVA KOVÁCSNÉ BAKOSI | University of Debrecen, Hungary

### Research aims

The discussion presented aims to contribute to an exploration of the commonalities and differences in the notion of a universal understanding of childhood within the Hungarian context. Whilst childhood can be said to be found in the early interval of human life. The answers to questions such as: What is the child’s life like? How can it be described and how are children treated will reflect an understanding of the child within a country.

## Relationship to previous research works

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## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Drawing on an etymological approach I will consider the conceptual meaning of a child and childhood.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Through analysing documents, professional resources and literature I will look to explore the day in the life of a Hungarian child. In particular I will look to focus on the role of play within the daily life of a child.

## Ethical considerations

As I will be drawing on documentation there are few ethical considerations for this paper.

## Main finding or discussion

Within Hungary there is an interpretation of childhood as being 'lived to its full', whereby the child's duty is to enjoy childhood to the fullest extent. This is reflected within kindergarten aged children and the child-centred approach that can be found here.

## Implications, practice or policy

Hungarian kindergartens provide for a full and happy childhood, full of play. We need to ensure that we resist inappropriate environments that are not appropriate for the child's age. International comparisons can help us to consider whether there is a universal definition of childhood as well as mutually learning from one another.

**Keywords:** childhood; interpretation of a child; image of the child; children centeredness; life style

## A8 DOCTORAL STUDIES IN A PHD GROUP AT THE PEN GREEN CENTRE

Self-organised symposium

Chair: EDDIE MCKINNON | Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, United Kingdom

At the 2010 EECERA Conference in Birmingham the PhD Group at the Pen Green Centre presented their studies at a Self Organised Symposium. Along with their individual research projects, all of which involve working with practitioners formed into action research learning sets, they also talked about the value of working together as a group at Pen Green which itself also forms an action research learning set. In this Self Organised Symposium three of the PhD Group will present on their own doctoral studies which are nearing completion and are due to be submitted to the University of Leicester by December of 2013.

## Creating the Climate for the Integration of Services in a Children's Centre

JULIE VAGGARS | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

### Research aims

This research focussed on leadership of integrated services within children's centres in England (2007-2013). Leaders were required to be pioneers in the operation of new multi professional teams. Collaboration was seen as central to success and leaders were expected to develop, inspire and motivate teams of professionals.

### Relationship to previous research works

The research was located within the interpretive paradigm and was concerned about the individual, was action focussed and future orientated.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

I was both researcher and participant, located within critical theory. I was not seeking to merely understand but to also transform my current situation. Carr's and Kemmis' Model of a Self Reflecting Spiral of Action Research was used (1986, p186).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

- 1: an auto ethnographic exploration of my personal and professional leadership experience of leading a children's centre.
- 2: asking questions to gain participants' voices and shared views on integrative working practices.
- 3: A facilitated action learning set where research participants, all leaders of children's centres, deconstructed the integration of existing services within their settings.

## **Ethical considerations**

Research was participatory and followed BERA guidelines. I used a staged approach, with an initial exploration of my work, an ethical agreement and a signed agreement with the right to withdraw.

## **Main finding or discussion**

A continuum of the degree of integration and professional shifts needed to offer more cohesive response to children and families, maps to deepen professional discussion and debate, 8 leadership processes for philosophically coherent service delivery.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The facilitated action learning set was developed into an accredited programme of study at Masters Level.

**Keywords:** participatory research; action focused research; leadership; change agents; integration

# **Surfacing Practitioner Leadership Through Practice-Based Action Research**

LIZ KLAVINS | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

Exploring the leadership approach of developing a collaborative action-based research culture within a children's centre in order to emancipate practitioners from a hierarchical leadership structure and energise practice.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Torbert (2004), McNiff (2000) and Reason (1988), action research to promote greater social justice and generate future sustainability. Torbert (2004) and Marshall (1999) reflective process, a form of first person action research. Reason (1998) and Heron (1971), co-operative inquiry as a creative process to which all those involved contribute. Torbert (1972), systems theory as feedback from the environment. Lemonides (2007), individuals and their environment are interdependent. Senge (1990), 'systems thinking'.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

It is based on the pedagogical observation that those involved in leading the learning need to be active participants in the process, surfacing and collaboratively exploring their tacit knowledge through action-based research as part of everyday practice. It is believed that developments are more successfully embedded when practitioners are part of a learning community within which they are able to critically explore, test and apply theories, concepts and strategies.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative, practitioner-led action research. Identification and development of the methodology, constantly revisited and amended as part of a cyclical process. First, second and third person inquiry.

## **Ethical considerations**

Criteria and methods of selecting research participants. Ensuring the research was undertaken with participants. Power differentials, head teacher's duty of care.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Complexities of engaging a learning community in the implementation of theoretical concepts as a process of discovery.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The clarification of responsibilities and accountabilities.

**Keywords:** leadership; democracy; authoritative; learning-community; reflection

# **Inner Transformation and the Leadership of Learning**

EDDIE MCKINNON | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

The aim of this research study is to explore the experiences of early years workers and teachers engaged in setting-based practitioner-led action research sets to see if these form sites of emancipatory praxis.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This study draws on research and professional development work carried out with settings (McKinnon, 2008; McKinnon and Whalley, 2008; Hayward and McKinnon, 2011) which was strongly influenced by the work of Boog (2003)

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study was conceptualised as one which focused on the effects and outcomes for practitioners who engaged in practitioner-led action research. It has also encompassed autoethnography on the part of the researcher in terms of his internal changes arising during the study and the effect of these on him and his practice.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study is firmly located in an interpretive paradigm, semi-structured interviews formed the backbone of the research data which also included the use of video to record meetings allowing some analysis of the dynamics which occurred and author autoethnography

### **Ethical considerations**

I followed the guidance provided by the Pen Green Code of Ethics (Whalley et al, 2007) ensuring the anonymity of participants and settings, that all data gathered was confidential and that participants understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The study gives some confirmation that practitioner-led action research sets can develop participants' senses of competence and agency at the level of their practice.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The development of practitioners' leadership and advocacy for themselves and for the children and families they work with.

**Keywords:** emancipatory praxis; evidence; advocacy; resistance; leadership

## **A9 PROFESSIONALISATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN AUSTRALIA**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: MARGARET SIMS | University of New England, Australia

Early childhood has been the recipient of unprecedented federal government attention in Australia since 2009. In that time a new national quality framework inclusive of national standards and curriculum have been developed and progressively implemented. Part of the changes include a growing move towards professionalisation of the early childhood workforce. This symposium explores the resultant tensions and the relationship of these tensions to experiences in other countries.

### **Early Childhood Workers' Perceptions of Professionalisation**

MARGARET SIMS | University of New England, Australia

#### **Research aims**

International research suggests there are other discourses that may equally well inform the professionalisation of early childhood. In this paper I will present preliminary findings of a project examining what early childhood workers in Australia, New Zealand and Asia think about the current moves towards professionalisation.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Sims, M. (2010) What does being an early childhood „teacher“ mean in tomorrow's world of children and family services. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35 (3 Online Annex); pp 111 - 114  
Sims, M. (2007) The determinants of quality care: review and research report. In Hill, E., Pocock, B. and Elliot, A. (eds) *Kids Count: Better early childhood education and care in Australia*. (pp 220 - 241). Sydney: Sydney University Press.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This is an exploratory study with the aim of identifying current thinking and experiences.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study uses a constructivist interpretive paradigm, supported by elements of narrative inquiry and phenomenology. Participants complete an online questionnaire which is designed to create opportunities for them to share their thoughts in a variety of ways.

### **Ethical considerations**

An ethics licence has been issued by the University's Ethics Committee.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Data currently being collected

## **Implications, practice or policy**

There are significant benefits to professionalisation of early childhood including increased status and, ultimately, increased pay. Along with these come greater requirements for training and higher expectations (legislated in many cases) for quality service provision. However there are also risks (for example unintended consequences such as de-professionalisation and re-professionalisation) and it is important that these are understood so their impact can be mitigated or avoided if possible.

**Keywords:** professionalisation; early childhood workforce; education discourse; risks and benefits; constructivist interpretive

## **Leadership in Early Childhood: Perceptions of Victorian Early Childhood Workers**

RHONDA FORREST | University of New England, Australia

### **Research aims**

Few Early Childhood Teacher Education courses in Australia include specific units on leadership. This is despite leaders in Child Care services requiring a three or four year degree in Early Childhood Education and generally occupying leadership positions post degree. This research looks at the understandings of leadership held by these professionals.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study relates to my doctoral research titled Self Awareness of Beginning Leaders. It also informs a larger study of professionalisation currently being undertaken across France, England and Australia.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Coming from an interpretive ontology, this research seeks to uncover the understandings of the participants and recognises that these understandings are socially constructed. From a Social Justice framework, the voices of the participants are respected and acknowledged.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Some 200 Victorian professionals were involved in 3 month long leadership professional development courses in 2011 and 2012. A case study was conducted using pre and post course surveys. The surveys primarily sort qualitative data but there were also quantitative aspects to some of the survey questions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was granted by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

## **Main finding or discussion**

This paper presents the findings of this research and demonstrates that relational aspects of leadership outweigh achievement and performance as significant to their own leadership effectiveness and to what they would look for in potential leaders.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Informed by these findings, recommendations for teacher education are proposed. These recommendations include the intentional teaching of leadership in designated units. Leadership practicum is also recommended to support the application of leadership theory to practice.

**Keywords:** early childhood leadership; teacher education; professionalisation; interpretive research; professionals voices

## **Who Counts as an Early Childhood Professional? Some Insights into the Role of Preparatory Teacher Aides in Queensland**

LISA SONTER | University of New England, Australia

### **Research aims**

This research explores the lived experiences of a small group of teacher aides working in Preparatory classes in Queensland Catholic schools.



### **Relationship to previous research works**

Sonter, L.J. 2010, 'Preparatory year teacher aides'voice within research: Learning the ropes' in Proceedings of the 4th Annual Postgraduate Research Conference: Bridging the Gap between Ideas and Doing Research, July 2009, Armidale, pp 245-256.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study sits within an interpretive, socially constructed framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This research draws upon van Manen's phenomenological approach and utilises synergetic focus groups, imagery, and document analysis.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical clearance granted from the University of New England.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The introduction of National Quality and Curriculum Frameworks in Australia has shifted perceptions and expectations of the role of educators working with children aged 0-5 years. While early childhood educators are expected to enact policy, and plan, implement, assess and document learning in order to meet or exceed quality standards, experiences of some teacher aides working with 4.5-5.5 year old children in Queensland Preparatory classes tell a different story. The Preparatory Teacher Aide's role is both pedagogical and clerical. Working alongside 4 year trained teachers, most teacher aides have, or are studying towards, Certificate level qualifications (1-2 years training). At times, some aides find themselves working as the pedagogical leaders in the classroom without professional knowledge or support. Their stories reveal a worrying marginalisation from professional discourse.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This paper shares insights from my research such as ownership and access to professional knowledge, and ramifications for the sector.

**Keywords:** teacher aide's role; professionalisation; marginalisation; phenomenology; early childhood pedagogy

## **A10 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PRE-SCHOOL**

Chair: THOMAS MOSER | Vestfold University College, Norway

### **Dynamics and Stability in the Development of Motor Competency from Toddler to Preschool Age**

THOMAS MOSER | Vestfold University College, Norway

#### **Co-author**

ELIN REIKERÅS | University of Stavanger, Norway

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to examine to what degree motor-life-skills correlates at age 33 months (T1) and at 57 months (T2). Particular attention is paid to children with weak motor competency.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Motor competency is of significant importance for mastering every-day-life, knowledge development, social relationships and communication and well-being. There is a significant individual variability in the development of motor skills and individual variations occur very early in life and seem to be surprisingly stable during early childhood.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The project builds on a social-cultural understanding of learning and development and intends to observe children in natural interaction in everyday activities and environments.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In this longitudinal study 775 children participate, all enrolled in ECEC institutions in the municipality of Stavanger, Norway. The Early Years Movement Skills Checklist (EYMSC; Chambers & Sugden, 2002) was applied and has in some aspects been adapted to specific Norwegian conditions (Moser, Reikerås & Knivsberg, submitted). EYMSC is a screening instrument consisting of four distinct categories; self-help-skills, desk-skills, general-classroom-skills and recreational/playground-skills.

## Ethical considerations

Participation was based on the parents' voluntary and written consent. The study has been approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

## Main finding or discussion

The data collection at T2 was recently finished and the data analysis is still on-going. Developmental trajectories for children with different motor competence at T1 will be traced. The working hypothesis is that weak/strong motor competency, in terms of motor- life-skills, at T1 remain stable to T2.

## Implications, practice or policy

The use of systematically observation may be useful for the early detection of vulnerable children.

**Keywords:** motor-life-skills; motor development; EYMSC; longitudinal study; gender

## Children`s Physical Activity Play in Kindergarten

HEID OSNES | Oslo and Akershus University College and Applied Science, Norway

HILDE NANCY SKAUG | Oslo and Akershus University College and Applied Science, Norway

### Research aims

To reveal which factors restrain and promote children`s Physical Activity Play (PAP) in kindergarten

### Relationship to previous research works

As far as we know there are not many researches about PAP, neither in Norway nor international (Oliver mfl 2007). Some studies have found that children are less physical active than the authorities recommend (Giske mf. 2010 and Oliver mfl 2007).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

We have a phenomenological approach (Mearleau-Ponty 1994) and are interested in how children play and use their surroundings (Gibson 1979). We define PAP; playful context combined with moderate to vigorous physical activity, such that metabolic activity is well above resting metabolic rate» (Pellegrini and Smith 1998)

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

We have made our research as a part of the lessons we give to part time student in preschool teacher education over a year. The datacollection has soon lasted in three years. The students have used a moment – to moment observation scheme for their observation in their workplaces. This scheme is modified after "The Observational System-Preschool / OSRAC-P" (McIver et al 2009).

### Ethical considerations

We got permission to record data from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services and relevant parents.

### Main finding or discussion

Preliminary results - tendency: more vigorous PAP in nature, same activity level inside and in the playground, adults attend little in PAP

### Implications, practice or policy

Knowledge about which factors influence PAP will be important for the adaption for this way of playing, both in a health perspective and physical literacy perspective (Whitehead 2010).

**Keywords:** physical activity play; kindergarten; student involvement; observation; different surroundings

## How Can Pedagogues Organize Physical Activities in Preschools So All the Children Will Get Benefit from It?

HANNE VÆRUM SØRENSEN | VIA University College, Denmark

### Research aims

The aim is to discuss young children's participation in physical activities; how the activities are organized by the pedagogues and how the values and conditions are for physical activity in preschools.

### Relationship to previous research works

Physical activity is important for children's learning, development and well-being (Brown et al. 2009). Several studies have demonstrated that preschool affects children's physical activity level (Grøntved et al. 2009). Measurements of children's physical activity level with i.e. accelerometri have shown that many children are not as physical active as

recommended (Dowda et al. 2011). Other studies have proved that there is a developmental benefit on children's risk-management skills and self-concept, when they are offered good conditions for physical activity without many restrictions (Sandseter 2009).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on cultural-historical child research (Hedegaard and Fleer 2008) and focuses on children's and pedagogues' interactions and motives related to physical activity.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Video observations of children's participation in organized physical activities in three preschools (one Sports Preschool and two other preschools) have shown how the different values and culture related to physical activity affect the children's developmental benefit of physical activity.

### **Ethical considerations**

Pedagogues must offer appropriate physical activities and conditions for all children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Pedagogues must have a thoroughly knowledge about all the children they are responsible for. They must offer attractive and varied physical activities and make sure that all children want to participate, also the reluctant and cautious children. Only thereby children will experience joy and pleasure through their participation in physical activities.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Preschool pedagogues should be more educated in physical activity.

**Keywords:** physical activity; pedagogical practice; preschool; values; culture

## **A11 GENDER EDUCATION**

Chair: MARJATTA KALLIALA | University of Helsinki, Finland

### **Learning to Girlhood and Boyhood: Gendered Learning in Preschools**

THORDIS THORDARDOTTIR | University of Iceland, Iceland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of the study was to investigate children's knowledge of children's literature and popular culture, transforms into cultural capital in terms of Bourdieu's (1977).

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research deals with young children's gendered knowledge of literature and popular culture (Thordardottir, 2012). Skeggs (1997, 2004), concept of respectability and Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of field, capital and habitus.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework can be described as an holistic approach, which includes practices and methods which are reflexive and process driven, producing culturally situated learning.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

First, 68 children's, in two preschools in Reykjavik, Iceland, experience of the material was observed through participant observation. Intertwined with interviews with eight teachers and questionnaire answered by 81 parents. Third, 14 children's use of references to the material was observed during free playtime .

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations rose around the children's informed approval. Some children used to forgot their roles as participants, but seemed happy to have adult listener.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The children compared children's literature and popular culture with a real life experience. While doing so they made their own inferences to construct gendered knowledge and make gendered meanings. The teachers believed they contributed to equality in the classrooms by focusing on each child as an individual, independent of gender, and explained gender differences as essential. Findings from the survey indicated that parents choice of children's literature and popular culture in their homes was based on their children's gender.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Some implications were made of how children's gendered implications can hinder their possibilities to work for work that interest them most.

**Keywords:** gender; children's literature; popular culture; cultural capital; preschool children

## **Children's Everyday Activities in a Gender Perspective**

ELSA HELEN KALTVEDT | University of Stavanger, Norway

### **Co-author**

AUD TORILL MELAND | University of Stavanger, Norway

### **Research aims**

The aim of the study was to investigate if and eventually how girls and boys competencies in daily life activities differ before the age of 3. The question we try to address are how girls and boys mastery daily life activities in Norwegian kindergartens. These activities include children's mastery within collaboration, communication and independence such as making sandwiches, washing hands before and after meals, toilette.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research on gender and daily life activities in kindergarten are sparse. But much research has been paid to gender and the role of kindergarten in producing sex difference, constructing of gender and how gender difference in motivation (Georgalidou, 2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical frameworks are based on theory of gender (Ruble et al., 2006), theory of mastery (Bandura 2005) and preschool curricular at a national level.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Data was collected through structured observation of 1003 toddlers (513 males and 490 females) when the toddlers were between 30 and 33 months. The observations and registrations of competencies were made by the staff in the kindergartens. The method is gentle and non-intrusive for the child whose competencies were observed in natural surroundings by familiar adults and adults who knew the child. According to Bagnato (2007), this method gives ecologically valid data.

### **Ethical considerations**

The research is based on the Norwegian Social Science Data Services ethical program. Participation is based on the parents' voluntary and written consent.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Tendency: girls have higher score on daily life activities.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study will gain information of girls and boys mastery skills in an equal and life-long perspective.

**Keywords:** toddlers; gender; mastery; kindergarten; Norwegian

## **Because We Love Horses! Hobbyhorse Stable as an Example of Girls' Own Play Culture**

MARJATTA KALLIALA | University of Helsinki, Finland

### **Research aims**

The aim of the study was to examine girls' own play culture in a non-institutional context where adults have minimal impact on the limits of children's agency. This small scale study with a group of girls aged 5 - 12 (N 8) was run in 2001-2003.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is related with many ethnographical studies on play e.g. Opies & Opies (1959; 1969a,b; 1985), Burn & al., 2011, Kalliala 2002).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In addition to institutional contexts children's play has to be examined in "natural" contexts where adults do not set limits to children's agency as they inevitably do in institutional contexts.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In this ethnographical study the methods used were participating observation, child interviews and photography.

### **Ethical considerations**

In this study the access to the field demanded the approval of every girl in the group i.e. the study was based on mutual acceptance and trust.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The examination of the girls' long-lasting play (2001-2003) shows how rich a self-organised play can develop in favourable circumstances. For the girls, playing is meaningful in its own right. As to the adults, it is also important to understand what the girls also while they are playing.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Put in a global context it is interesting to ask where, when and why children have - or do not have - access to this kind of playing. The comparison with the institutional context is also crucial. Is it possible to compensate - at least to a certain extent - the lack of this kind of opportunities to play through e.g. drama pedagogy.

**Keywords:** girls' play culture; non-institutional play; children's agency; ethnography; Finnish context

## **A12 SOCIOCULTURAL LEARNING**

Chair: CAROLYN MORRIS | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

### **Understanding Children's Learning Journeys from Preschool into School, a Swedish Context – Preliminary Phase**

KENNETH EKSTRÖM | Umeå University, Sweden

#### **Research aims**

The research project aim is to deepen our understanding of children's learning journeys from preschool into school, recognising their diverse abilities and experiences, and to examine the long term implications of educational practices across the transitions for children's learning and participation.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is part of a governmental financed project that runs for four years and also part of the Marie Curie financed POET (Pedagogies of Educational Transitions) project.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

An interpretive approach is applied, using a relational perspective, activity theory and the concepts borderland, learning journeys and rites of passage.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The design includes ethnographic studies: a case study following 7 preschool units/preschool-classes into their first school-year; interviews with 24 teachers in preschool, preschool-class and year, a total of 72 and 24 principals; 5 group interviews with 6 mixed teacher groups; and learning journey interviews with 16 children and their parents

#### **Ethical considerations**

The participants included in the study (parents, children and teachers) will be informed of the purpose of the study, that participation is voluntary and that they can stop their participation whenever they wish. Information about individuals will be protected and personal data or other information treated confidentially. This also applies to storage of collected empirical data. The empirical data will not be used other than for research purposes.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Different ways to organise preparation and description of practices children are leaving and difficulties created by cultural differences between preschool and school.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications on how different conceptual frames affect transitions.

**Keywords:** transitions; preschool; preliminary phase; school cultures; conceptions

# Relationships, Socio-Cultural Context and Children's Learning Dispositions

CAROLYN MORRIS | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

## Research aims

The aims were to explore how the relationships in the socio-cultural context of the classroom influence children's learning dispositions.

## Relationship to previous research works

The work builds on the work of Katz on the concept of 'learning dispositions' (1985,1988,1993). Also links to more recent work by Carr and Claxton (2001, 2002) on 'learning dispositions' as the longer term outcomes of learning .

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework socio-cultural and interactionist.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Qualitative, case studies in two primary schools in Wales, one English and one Welsh medium. The methods were interviews, observations and a writing activity and focus group discussions with children.

## Ethical considerations

BERA ethical guidelines were followed with special considerations to research with children.

## Main finding or discussion

The main findings were that 'Classroom relationships create the socio-cultural context to influence children's learning dispositions'. It is through classroom discourses, during interactions that relationships are developed to create the socio-cultural context for learning. Teachers take the lead in selecting and guiding these discourses while children contribute to their richness and plurality. How children are positioned as 'active' or 'passive' within discourses can influence their involvement and participation in learning. Inclusive classroom discourses support children's social identities to encourage their involvement, participation in learning and strengthen their learner identities to influence their learning dispositions.

## Implications, practice or policy

Establishing classroom discourses that contribute positively to the relationships between: (a) teacher and children; (b) children and their peers, to strengthen children's identities as learners and influence their learning dispositions are crucial for practice. Concerns with U.K policy on the long term effects of early formal learning and assessment.

**Keywords:** discourses; interactions; relationships; socio-cultural context; learning dispositions

## A13 MULTILINGUALISM

Chair: TÜNDE PUSKÁS | Linköping University, Sweden

# Multilingualism in Swedish Preschools: Ideological Dilemmas and Everyday Practice

TÜNDE PUSKÁS | Linköping University, Sweden

## Research aims

The aim of the paper is to explore how ideological dilemmas manifest in everyday practice in two Swedish preschools in which the majority of children have a migrant background.

## Relationship to previous research works

The paper relates to previous research on ideological dilemmas (Billig et al 1988) in multilingual classrooms (Creese 2005) and to theories on languaging.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study is based on theoretical perspectives according to which children's learning is inseparable from the social context in which learning takes place and the level and nature of interaction between adults and peers (Halliday 1993; Vygotsky 1986). At the same time the study is influenced by research that shows that practical considerations in pedagogical situations have an ideological basis (Billig et al 1988).



### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The empirical material consists of field notes, video sequences and interviews collected in two preschools. Interaction analysis was employed for analyzing teacher-child verbal interactions. The interviews with the teachers and the field notes serve as complementary material.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study follows the ethical rules stipulated by the Swedish Research Council.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The study shows that the everyday languaging events in Swedish preschools in which the majority of children are multilingual can be interpreted in terms of ideological dilemmas around exclusion and inclusion. The examples highlight how both - unilingual literacy practice and attempts to include the childrens' mother tongues in everyday preschool activities - can lead to similar ideological dilemmas.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study shows how ideological dilemmas which can be traced back to the Swedish preschool curriculum translate into or influence everyday practice.

**Keywords:** ideological dilemmas; curriculum; multilingualism; languaging; practice

## **Linguistic and Cultural Potentials of Bilingual Educational Professionals as Resources in the Area of Language Observation in the Context of Multilingualism**

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### **Co-author**

ULRIKE LÜDTKE | Leibniz University of Hanover, Germany

### **Research aims**

Which strategies do bilingual educational professionals use for effective language observation of bilingual children?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

International research in multilingual professionalization refers partly to biographical contexts (Wenger et al., 2012; Abramova, 2011; Bustos Flores et al., 2008; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Attitudes and strategies of bilingual educators affect the teaching-learning process (Momenian & Samar, 2011; Arce, 2007; McCarty & Watahomigie, 2004; Yeh et al. 2002).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The bilingual language mode between mother or teacher and child significantly affects the language production and the linguistic and communicative competence of the child (Balluseck, 2009; Leist-Villis; 2006; Kroffke & Rothweiler, 2004; Gratier 2003). Mother-tongue speakers have acquired the culture-specific experience, knowledge and techniques themselves (Wode, 2007; Culp 2004).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A systematic random sample of Turkish-German and Russian-German educational professionals was selected for a qualitative exploration (N=18). The educational professionals were interviewed on their biographies and their subjective constructs concerning beneficial interaction and observation of linguistic and communicative competences of bilingual children. A category system dealing with attitude, methods and knowledge was then developed in MaxQDA.

### **Ethical considerations**

Within the study the professional self-competence of the educational professionals can be strengthened favorably.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Results give revealing perspectives to emphatic attitudes of the educational professional to children with bilingual backgrounds. These attitudes correspond with the educational professionals' biography and with beneficial strategies, as well as more correct assumptions regarding the language and communication competences of the children.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings have important implications for training programs for educational professionals. Also, a professional interface between prevention of language disorders and early language intervention can be implemented.

**Keywords:** bilingual educational professionals; influence of biography; linguistic and cultural potentials; multilingual

professionalization; bilingual language observation

## **Preschool - a Diverse Arena**

MIRJA BETZHOLTZ | Linnaeus University, Sweden

### **Co-author**

ANN-CHRISTIN TORPSTEN | Linnaeus University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

Purpose of this paper is to problematize multilingualism and participation conditions.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In Swedish preschool children with a mother tongue other than Swedish are given the ability to communicate in their native language and in Swedish. Research reveals notions of a monolingual norm of Swedishness in early childhood education. Developed skills in the mother tongue increases the opportunities to learn Swedish and good skills in different languages promote learning in other areas (Björk-Willén, 2007; Lindberg, 2002).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretical basis is postcolonial theory (Fanon, 1971; Said, 2004) and critical multiculturalism (May 1999) who question the socially constructed notions of majority and minority, highlighting opposites, notions of monolingualism and the creation of superiority and subordination where the possession of language may prevail in different linguistic contexts.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Data has been collected by interviewing preschool teachers and surveys of native supporters. The analysis visualizes relational and didactic skills (Persson, 2012).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are made by informant's agreement.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The analysis visualizes relational and didactic skills (Persson, 2012). Preschool teachers' relational skills appear when speaking about mother tongue, positive impact on school success and expanded vocabulary when the teacher speaks the same language as their parents. Through native support children receive help in understanding the preschool. Mother tongue teacher's education represents high didactic competence.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Offering language support at inappropriate times, when children are sleeping, visualizes low didactic skills and lack of flexibility in the organization. Arranging language support when children can not participate appears as a consequence of superiority and subordination. The norms of monolingualism are in control.

**Keywords:** preschool; language; mother tongue; relational; didactic

## **A14 PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH**

Chair: ANDREA RICHARDSON | Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

## **Partnership in Diversity in Cultural Sensitivity Consultation**

NIRA WAHLE | Kibbutzim College of Education, Israel

### **Research aims**

The importance of dialogue between partnerships in diversity was a central finding in my research with kindergarten teachers in Nazareth. It caused a radical change in personal cultural and professional identity. The purpose of this study was to construct culture-sensitive curriculum through cooperation with the participants, and to empower their professional identities.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The theoretical and research literature recognizes the importance of culture in the educational system. Yet, we found very few culture-sensitive programs in colleges, and very few culture-sensitive curricula in the kindergartens themselves, especially in the Arab population in Israel.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research includes multi-cultural, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence and post-colonial theories.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodology includes Participant Action Research that deals with changes in the oppressed minority groups. The study took place on three levels simultaneously: (1) Two researchers; Palestinian and Jewish.

(2) The study group included the researchers and 20 Palestinian kindergarten teachers and (3) every teacher in her kindergarten.

## **Ethical considerations**

The research's setting exposed dangers of maintaining power relations between majority and minority and the difficulty of trust between them.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Recognition of differences between the teachers enabled partnership and constituted a breakthrough in the study. Containment of diversity and hostility along with feminine, motherhood and professional partnerships allows dialogue. Findings show that the dialog with their professional identity releases their captive personal and cultural identity. This process led to professional empowerment of individual and group study.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The research contributed to the development of approaches and models of partnership that is not about consolidation of identities, but of recognition of diversity.

**Keywords:** partnerships; diversity; multi-cultural; cultural sensitivity; cultural competence

## **Sure Start Children's Centres: a Study of Complex Social Change**

ANDREA RICHARDSON | Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper presents the findings of research into how social capital has developed in individuals using the services of four Sure Start Children's Centres in a large urban city in northern England.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The development of Sure Start Children's Centres in England has been debated and researched over the last ten years, however the individual voices of parents and staff describing the complexity of their social experience and change is rarely represented within this debate.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical models around social capital offered by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and Michael Woolcock (1998) underpin the research. Their models around social change provide a framework to analyse and disseminate the intricacy of relationships and interaction; the motivations and reasons why individuals behave as they do.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The case study approach offers an understanding of the complex dynamics of relationships found in Sure Start Children's Centres, using parent and staff descriptions of the context of the centres, the reciprocity described in relationships, the services offered, and the processes identified by staff and parents

### **Ethical considerations**

The professional role of the researcher was significant in understanding how power was held within the research relationship.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Voices of parents and staff describe detailed personal perspectives of Sure Start Children's Centres, providing insight into the challenging circumstances and complexities of individual lives, and a framework for how social capital develops.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The research contributes to the body of learning around how Sure Start Children Centres have developed in localities, their potential for supporting individual progress and possibilities for generating social change.

**Keywords:** sure start children's centres; social capital; voice; reciprocity; parents

## **ECECs as Learning Organizations**

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### **Co-author**

BERIT IRENE VANNEBO | Nord-Trøndelag University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

Official documents states that all ECECs in Norway should aspire to become learning organizations. In this paper, we analyze governance models in ECECs and look at how leaders interpret and act on this new mission to become learning organizations.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research in this sector has focused on the changing role and priorities of managers, arguing that managers in ECECs are spending an increasing amount of time on pedagogical and strategic leadership (Børhaug and Lotsberg, 2011). Less attention has been paid to how managers execute leadership in learning organizations.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In this paper we explore the concept of learning organization, and analyze ECECs as learning organizations (Drucker, 1993; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Wenger, 1998; Schon, 2001), attempting to uncover to what extent these kinds of organizations promote learning which accomodate organizational change.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Based on interviews with managers in ECECs.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerationa in interviews

### **Main finding or discussion**

We find that there are significant differences in the way managers interpret the concept of a learning organization, and that managers are relatively unclear as to how to utilize this approach when developing pedagogical work. Although managers have developed practices that largely incorporate the key aspects of those of a learning organization they do not necessarily recognize these as part of building deliberate and conscious organizational strategy.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

These findings are puzzling, considering the governmental efforts to institute the concept of learning organizations as a guiding principle for the future development of ECECs. Our findings indicate the need for a more integrated approach to building learning organizations in the sector.

**Keywords:** ECECs as learning organizations; management and leadership in ECECs; organizational development; learning; management for learning

## **A15 EDUCATION AND MOVEMENT**

Chair: WENDY MESSENGER | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### **Climbing in Kindergarten – Promoting the Combination of Education and Movement**

ULRIKE UNGERER-RÖHRICH | University of Bayreuth, Germany

#### **Research aims**

Climbing in kindergarten can give children the chance to acquire learning and speaking skills, to make experiences in the field of science and mathematics, to improve their social skills as well as their health resources through, with and via movement and exercise.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Teachers learned by e-learning to combine physical activities with social learning, natural sciences, language and different resources.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Children need learning environments that offer opportunities for movement and mastery experiences. Climbing facilities provide these opportunities. Based on different theoretical framework, we planned climbing areas in Kindergarten and qualified teachers by an E-learning-seminar: „Movement and Education“.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

An education and movement study was realized in a longitudinal design with 3 testings in one preschool-year. We experienced different climbing facilities in 10 preschools in Munich and 6 preschools in Bayreuth and had control groups without any intervention, with climbing areas but without a specially qualified staff and a control group with teachers who only took part in the E-learning seminar.

### **Ethical considerations**

Mainly children with migration background and girls are the “winner” in the study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Best results gained the children in Kindergarten with both: qualified teachers and climbing areas. Children need teachers who are convinced of the significance of climbing and of being physically active for their learning, their well-being and their general self-efficacy.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The E-learning-seminar „Movement and Education“ is offered to all interested teachers. It has to go hand in hand with building climbing facilities in kindergarten.

**Keywords:** movement education; health resources; mastery experiences; teacher qualification; e.learning

## **Symbolic Tools Implementation in Soccer Motor Skill Acquisition in Preschool Age**

ALEKSANDER VERAKSA | Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia

### **Research aims**

It was hypothesized that symbolic tools can be an effective technique for developing a specific soccer skill in pre-school aged athletes .

### **Relationship to previous research works**

There are a number of studies suggesting that schematic representation and metaphor is an effective tool for adult athletes' preparation (Palmer, 1992; Garza&Feltz, 1998).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Since Vygotsky thought that using a sign extracts any skill or operation out of the situation in which it occurs and as such makes the skill more conscious and intended, we expect the implementation of symbolic tools to be effective as an intervention method for mastering physical skills.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Subjects (N = 22, M = 5.7 years), attending the Chertanovo Soccer School in Moscow, Russia, were divided into two groups. The main methodological procedures used in the intervention were mini-movies (30 seconds each) modeled specifically for each group of athletes (those who were learning through schematic representation and those who were learning by using metaphors) that were shown during each individual session with an athlete. The main phase of the study was carried out over a 4 week period and included 12 individual sessions with the athletes. At each third meeting, each athlete's mastery of the skill was monitored by video and then assessed by 3 independent soccer coaches.

### **Ethical considerations**

Study was carried out in accordance with Code of Ethics of Russian Psychological Society.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results showed the effectiveness of the metaphor implementation rather than the schematic representation when working with pre-school aged athletes.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Results are of special importance for teacher in physical education and coaches.

**Keywords:** symbolic tools; metaphor; schematic representation; soccer; motor skill

## **A16 CROSS-NATIONAL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES**

Chair: SUSAN KRIEG | Flinders University, Australia

## The Power and Potential of Cultural Critique on Teacher Reflectivity and Practice: Early Childhood Teachers as Critical Viewers of Self Through Cycles of Micro-Analyses of Practice

MARY JANE MORAN | University of Tennessee-Knoxville, United States of America

### Co-authors

CHIARA BOVE | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

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### Research aims

This cross-cultural qualitative study involves researchers and infant-toddler teachers in two university lab centers in Italy and the US. The aims include: developing a comparative/contrasting analyses of toddler teacher practice and teacher reflexive practices and metacognitive behaviors through multiple viewpoints using video cues, micro-analytical, and recursive observations and interviews.

### Relationship to previous research works

Many studies have provided an in-depth look at how to educate teachers by framing and ensuring “situated and dynamic” processes of critical thinking and reflexivity in educational contexts (Dewey, 1933; Schon, 1987). Few have revealed how cross-cultural research might accelerate and deepen these processes by encouraging comparing/contrasting of one’s practices, positing interpretations with others inside and outside one’s culture, and chronicling the process, longitudinally.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and teacher inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001) theories and action research (Lewin, 1948; Sagor, 2010) informed the study.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

A multi-method approach combined data from videotapes of a ‘day in the nido’, recursive micro-analyses of videos, self-reflections, individual-semi-structured interviews, writing/video-based focus groups, and discussions. Analyses of data in both contexts included constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), schema analysis (Strauss, 1992) and open/axial coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### Ethical considerations

Ethics committee approvals included parent informed consent for videotaping children and teacher voluntary informed consent.

### Main finding or discussion

Preliminary findings include: reconsidering the relationships between teachers’ proximity, control and autonomy, and between teachers’ language and peers’ interactions.

### Implications, practice or policy

Implications include new tools and methods for mediating reflective and metacognitive behaviors among teachers of young children and policies for sharing sensitive data, cross-culturally.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural; professional development; critical reflection; metacognition; action research

## Early Childhood Pedagogy - Development of Child Initiated Pedagogies Towards Open Democracy and Participatory Practices

LEENA ROBERTSON | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

### Co-authors

JARMO KINOS | University of Turku, Finland

MAARIKA PUKK | Tallinn University, Estonia

NANCY BARBOUR | James Madison University, United States of America

### Research aims

At the heart of this paper is a deep-seated concern for young children in their formal learning contexts. It outlines a multi-national project to develop child-initiated pedagogies. The paper focuses on four countries: Finland, England, the United States and Estonia.



### **Relationship to previous research works**

In Finland the development of early childhood pedagogy has been family-centred facilitating a greater participation in the world of work. In England the focus is subject-centred and assessment-driven. In Estonia, with its post-Soviet Union period, old and new practices are being re-defined. In the US, the focus on assessment and accountability has taken the focus off child-centred curriculum. The need to explore the motives of young children in developing child-initiated pedagogies is critical for all.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Young children's innate ability to make a positive contribution to their learning and education and thereby to the society (Trevarthen, 2011) forms the central frame.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The paper outlines the methodologies and methods being developed for the project to take place in 2013-2014 (Kinos & Pukk 2010).

### **Ethical considerations**

Principles of empowering and participatory research have been adopted: children are not research objects and they have their own research agendas which research will aim to address.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The discussion presents the start of the project focusing on a literature review that analyses the specific concerns for child-initiated pedagogies in each country.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Early childhood pedagogy must make children's interests prominent with adults ensuring that practice takes place within broader educational aims and works towards the direction of participation, democracy and equality .

**Keywords:** child initiated pedagogies; formal early years settings; participatory practices; democracy

## **Values in Action: Investigating the Relationships Between Access, Participation, Equity and Quality in Early Childhood Programs**

SUSAN KRIEG | Flinders University, Australia

### **Research aims**

The study examines the extent to which the effectiveness of combined programs to improve children's school readiness is influenced by: (i) the level of participation by children, (ii) the family and social characteristics of children and (iii) the quality of the learning program being offered.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In contemporary and comparative research into the advantages and disadvantages of child care and education the quality of the learning program must take central place.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This paper explores the relationship between the number of hours spent in quality integrated child care and preschool and a successful start at school.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research is framed within a social constructionist paradigm using quantitative survey methodology.

### **Ethical considerations**

This research has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The quality of the learning program is fundamental to describing the outcomes from early care and education, particularly for children experiencing social disadvantage. The research process thus far demonstrates that evaluating quality is a process that exemplifies values in action.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Combined child care and preschool programs provide an important opportunity to extend existing knowledge on the effects of such programs on school readiness by allowing us to examine whether effects vary for children from different backgrounds and by the level of children's exposure to combined programs. These issues are directly relevant to debates over whether extending public care and education programs to all children is an effective policy strategy to reduce inequity and how much time children should spend in these programs.

**Keywords:** quality; integration; participation; disadvantage; values

## **A17 EVALUATION AND QUALITY IN ECEC**

Chair: TERESA HARRIS | James Madison University, United States of America

### **Evaluation in Early Childhood Services**

LUISA CAPPAROTTO | Verona University, Italy

#### **Research aims**

The research is focused on evaluation of early childhood services in Italy. The development of meaningful evaluation processes needs to take into account cultures and implicit models of educational work rather than mere tools. Documentation and current evaluation practices are useful for accreditation and accountability of the services but may not be sufficient for gaining information on the services's community work and for enhancing reflective practice among the professionals involved (responsive evaluation, Scriven, 2003; fourth generation evaluation, Guba e Lincoln, 1989). The research aims to: - gain a deep understanding of evaluation practice and cultures in a wide part of Verona's early childhood services - within a cooperative framework including researchers and professionals of a small sample of the services involved, build guidelines for a context-sensitive evaluation model

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

the research lies in reflective practice studies and participatory research

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research refers to participatory evaluation practice as a mean to improve community interventions for children and their families.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

naturalistic inquiry, qualitative approach - content analysis of professional documents - interview with the professionals working in the services - reflective workshop (12 hours) in a part of services involved

#### **Ethical considerations**

Research involves professionals with a specific care for taking into account their point of view and their needs.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

At this moment findings regard the exploratory data. They show a general lack of awareness about the evaluation practices and need to deepen this theme for improving practice.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Research is a contribute to improve educational practice, it aims to enhance innovation in professional work and contains elements for transferability to similar contexts.

**Keywords:** evaluation; responsive evaluation; participatory research; reflective practices; early childhood services

## **Quality Early Childhood Care: a Picture Is Worth 1000 Words**

TERESA HARRIS | James Madison University, United States of America

#### **Research aims**

As part of Virginia's Statewide Early Childhood Needs Assessment Project, quality in programs and practices from the perspectives of providers, families, and children was examined to explain to policy makers the assets and barriers to ensuring readiness for entry into kindergarten.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study is part of ongoing work in the U.S. to examine issues related to providing programs and services for children and families. Most studies focus on the use of surveys, focus groups, and interviews of key stakeholders; however, this study adds the component of photovoice methodology to bring the images and voices of the people most directly involved in early childhood to the public for closer scrutiny.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study uses the social constructivist framework to examine the jointly constructed and constantly evolving inter-relationships among children, families, providers, and communities to provide high quality care and education.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

As a collaborative research methodology, photovoice allows participants to use digital cameras to photograph and then discuss what they consider to be significant factors affecting their experience with early education and care.

**Ethical considerations**

This project was approved by James Madison University's Institutional Review Board. Consent letters were signed by all participants.

**Main finding or discussion**

All stakeholders were interested in quality. Providers viewed quality in terms of caring interactions with children. Families wanted safe clean environments but valued the relationships built among providers, children, and themselves. Children valued friends, teachers, and interesting materials.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Providers and families need multiple forms of support to build caring relationships and provide appropriate interactions to ensure children are prepared for kindergarten entry.

**Keywords:** quality; programs and policies; educators; families; photovoice

## **The Effectiveness of a Complex Intervention on the Sustainable Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education in Childcare Services Situated in Areas of Disadvantage**

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**Research aims**

To determine components of a complex intervention which impacts on sustainable quality within childcare services.

**Relationship to previous research works**

This study links with research undertaken on quality (Effective Provision of Pre-School Provison [EPPE], 2004)

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This complex intervention is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model and is guided by Síolta, Ireland's quality framework for early childhood education and Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Participants (88 practitioners and 347 children Mage = 4.2 ±0.6 years) from 8 community childcare services participated in this study. All services received a quality supports encompassing several components; the presence of a quality mentor, advice on professional development and guidance on corporate governance at management level. Quality within the service was quantified using the ECERS-R and the ITERS-R at baseline, mid-test (9 months) and post-intervention (18 months). At mid-test, the Irish Governance Code was used to assess corporate governance and interagency co-operation and sustainability. A process evaluation was conducted alongside the intervention to gain an insight into the components of the intervention which proved effective.

**Ethical considerations**

The project team adhered to National Guidance on Ethical Research

**Main finding or discussion**

There were areas of development common to all services; these include the quality of interactions among staff and children and the use of language and reasoning skills. The majority of scores across all domains of ECERS and ITERS were low.

**Implications, practice or policy**

The analyses of the baseline scores indicated concrete steps which can be taken to improve quality within services. Process evaluation findings suggest that non-contact time for the practitioners was an important element to improving quality.

**Keywords:** childcare services; complex interventions; quality; ECERS; corporate governance

## **A18 EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS**

Chair: ANNELI NIIKKO | The University of Eastern Finland, Finland

### **Autonomy and Rules: Practices, Words and Representations of Nursery School Teachers**

GAIA BANZI | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

#### **Co-authors**

GIULIA PASTORI | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

SUSANNA MANTOVANI | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

#### **Research aims**

The main focus of our research is the investigation of teachers thoughts about the promotion and strengthening of autonomy and awareness of rules in 0 to 3 year old children attending Nursery School. The analysis is linked to a project of professional development of the teachers involved in this study through their talking and reflections upon day-to-day activities and interactions with children.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

We took hints and hypothesis from a previews research-action inquiry conducted in 2007/2009 with ECEC directors and teachers in Milan-Italy, (supervisor prof. Susanna Mantovani).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The investigation is framed by anthropological studies (Tobin, Hsueh, Karasawa, 2011), psychological studies (Sroufe, 2000), cultural psychology (Rogoff, 2003), sociological studies (Corsaro, 2003), pedagogical studies (Mantovani, 1992) and is characterized by a multidisciplinary theoretical approach (Dewey, 1929) in ECEC.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodology and methods are based on a qualitative paradigm. The purpose is going deep into the investigation of meanings and practices related to the topics of autonomy and rules. The data collection is based on participatory observations, interviews and focus groups.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Permission to be audio and video recorded were required and were given guarantee to be maintained anonymous in case of use of the data for presentations, teaching, publications.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Time, emotion and relationships emerged as main focuses. The possibility of supporting reflectivity in the process will be discussed.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Reconceptualizing practices and relationships on rules and autonomy in Nursery School context.

**Keywords:** autonomy; rules; reflectivity; professional development; relationship

## **Early Years' Pedagogy and Pre-School Teachers' Professional Ethics**

ANNELI NIIKKO | The University of Eastern Finland, Finland

#### **Co-author**

RIITTA KORHONEN | University of Turku, Finland

#### **Research aims**

This study investigates pre-school teachers' conceptions of professional ethics in pre-school. The identified questions are: What are the values and principles the teachers emphasize? How do the teachers implement these things in practice?

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research has connection with research topics such as. Katz & Ward 1978, Oser 1994, Einarsdottir 2003, Thornberg 2008, Niemi 2012.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Good professional ethics is one of the most important resources, which determines and guides a teacher's relationships with children, parents, colleagues, other partners and society. Professional ethics occurs as guidance on the different levels. At the top are values and principles, then practical codes and at the bottom are concrete instructions.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study is a qualitative small- case study and uses a phenomenographical approach. Data has been collected with open ended interview questions from 50 pre-school teachers from the different parts of Finland.

### **Ethical considerations**

In the research it has been ethically followed the principles of good scientific practices. Professional and occupational responsibilities are seen to be important in the fields of health, education and social care (Bell & Nutt 2008).

### **Main finding or discussion**

The preliminary findings show that the teachers' values are related to children's wellbeing, educating according to curriculum, good professional skill and personal traits. The principles stress relationships with children, children's guiding on positive way and educator's own behavior.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Further studies are needed to examine more deeply the connections between pre-school teachers' professional ethics and pedagogical activities both in theory and practice. It is interesting to find out what are the challenges for pre-school teacher's professional ethics.

**Keywords:** pre-school teacher; professional ethics; values; principles; pedagogy

## **Pedagogic Creed: a Formation Pathway for Preschool Teacher Students at NLA University College, Bergen**

AASE NYLENNA AKSLEN | NLA University College, Norway

### **Co-author**

OVE OLSEN SAELE | NLA University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

The aim of this paper is to analyze how preschool teacher students create and develop their professional role by means of the "Pedagogic Creed"; a written text based on what students assume to be essential in their future work.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The theme of the presentation relates to John Dewey's My Pedagogic Creed (1897) and publications about teachers' beliefs. We see some links to Jerome Bruner's conception of mind and culture, and Charles Taylor's philosophy of self-formation.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Both from a psychological and philosophical angle we analyze how students establish their professional role through reflection on theoretical syllabus and practice experiences.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative and quantitative methods are used in analyzing the material. Written material collected from a period of time is analyzed as to choice of terms, values and changes of concepts.

### **Ethical considerations**

Condition of anonymity is taken care of. The individual student's integrity will be an important part of the approach to the task.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The main findings of this study are how syllabus, lectures and guidance influence on developing the students' from their present role to their identity as teachers. We find that students emerge more as authentic human beings through self-reflection in the educational process.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Important implications of this study are to improve the quality of our educational program for preschool teacher students. For the benefit of the new Preschool Teacher Educational Program, starting the fall of 2013, we see the Pedagogic Creed as an important part in students' formation, and hope to contribute to improved quality.

**Keywords:** preschool teacher students; formation; pedagogic creed; self-reflection; values

## **A19 COMPUTER AND TV**

Chair: JOANNE SHARI LEHRER | University of Quebec, Canada

### **Computer Use and Television Viewing: Links Between Cognitive Development, SES Background, and Childcare Attendance for Four-Year-Old Children**

JOANNE SHARI LEHRER | University of Quebec, Canada

#### **Co-author**

NATHALIE BIGRAS | University of Quebec, Canada

LISE LEMAY | University of Quebec, Canada

#### **Research aims**

This study investigated the effects of the amount of time four-year-old children spent watching television and using the computer on their cognitive scores, as well as the moderating effect of childcare attendance and SES.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research suggests that early childhood screen time can have negative effects on child development (Chistakis, 2009; Pagani et al., 2010). Children attending centre-based care, and children from higher SES backgrounds, appear to have less screen time than those at home or in home childcare settings (Barnett, 2010; Tandon, Zhou, Lozano & Christakis, 2011).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of child development (1979).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using correlation and regression analyses as well as ANOVAs, this quantitative study examined 236 four-year-olds' WPSSI-III (Wechsler, 2002) scores and their mothers' responses to the Leisure and Home Activities questionnaire (Bigras, 2009).

#### **Ethical considerations**

All standard ethical considerations, such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, respect for participants, and informed consent were respected.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Analyses revealed that lower SES and more than 7 hours of television viewing per week were associated with lower cognitive scores. Computer use was associated with higher cognitive scores, for children from lower- and higher-SES backgrounds, but only for those who did not attend childcare centres.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results of this study suggest that computer use may provide cognitive stimulation to children who don't attend childcare centres. While findings also support the recommendations from organizations that call for limits on preschool children's screen time, this study suggests that different types of screen time may have different impacts on children's development.

**Keywords:** screen time; television; computer use; childcare; socio-economic status

## **Children's Computer Habits and Behaviours**

NIRMALA KARUPPIAH | National Institute of Education, Singapore

#### **Research aims**

This research project aimed to collect data from teachers, parents and children on 1) why/how young children use computers; 2) what are the key social/health habits/behaviours of children when using the computer; and 3) what is the role of adults during children's computer use.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

While computers provide children with a wide range of educational/entertainment/communication tools in the preschool/home, research shows that the use of computers can also pose potential dangers/risks. Hence, it's now

not about whether children should/should not use computers but is about how (early) should children be introduced to computers/how should we supervise/monitor children's computer use.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This project was carried out in a typical preschool in Singapore. A face-to-face semi-structured questionnaire was used to interview/collect data from the teachers, parents and children in the preschool. A checklist was also be used to observe/collect data from children both in their preschool/home.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethics clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Consent forms were used to gain consent from teachers, parents and children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Generally, Parents \* underestimate children's capabilities/curiosity \* do not guide/monitor/supervise children during their computer use \* do not discuss with children rules for computer use Generally, Teachers \* do not discuss with children on dangers of computer use \* do not share with parents info on how to guide/monitor/supervise children during computer use

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The information gathered from the interviews/observations can be used to inform parents, teachers and other stakeholders with information on preschool children's computer habits/behaviours.

**Keywords:** computer habits; computer behaviours; computer use; Singapore; young children

## **Media Use - an Ongoing Project of Childhoods in Rural Areas in Sweden**

CARIN ROOS | University of Tampere, Finland

### **Research aims**

The over all aim of the study is to investigate how the environment and ongoing social, educational and technological changes empower and restrict rural children's lives. The project focuses knowledge-making and identity creation, equal participation and involvement.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

There are virtually no studies on children in rural areas. Thus these children can be seen as out of research coverage, they may belong to the group of children on the outskirts of the digital landscape – out of net coverage. City children's circumstances are therefore likely to dictate the norms of people's ideas regarding their well-being.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A social constructivist view will guide the research.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study is ethnographic with multiple methods. The research is located in an independent school, an after-school centre and pre-school and during three years follow and observe activities in and outside of the institutions. The target group consists of educators and other staff, their pupils aged 1-12 (45 in school, 20 in preschool), and their families.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical thinking in planning this research is very important and we will follow the Swedish guidelines for research on children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

In 2012, a pilot study was implemented in the village school where the project is placed. In this study a survey of media habits was conducted among children, grade 1-6, with a focus on the existence of and use of digital devices. The presentation will especially report on the results of this pilot study.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results will contribute to our knowledge of children's growing up in a rural district.

**Keywords:** rural; media use; participation; school; preschool



## **A20 SCHOOL READINESS**

Chair: MARION BRENNAN | Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

### **Collaboration in Action**

MARION BRENNAN | Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

#### **Co-author**

ELAINE HYNES | Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

#### **Research aims**

To develop a strategic collaboration between pre-school practitioners and primary teachers in implementing Aistear, the National Curriculum Framework for young children birth to six years of age.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

An audit of curriculum between pre-school and primary school has been undertaken in 2009 (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment[NCCA]) but this research seeks to focus on the collaborative process between teachers and practitioners.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This research draws on theories of action research (Lewin, 1947; McNiff, 2013) and utilises the framework of Huxham and Vangen (2005) to support collaborative practice.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In phase one, a collaboration was developed between a teacher and an early childhood specialist, who together facilitated weekly workshops and explored curricular understandings with a mixed group of ten teachers and ten early childhood practitioners. Learning from phase one has informed subsequent cycles which involved the teacher and early childhood specialist working with 3 subsequent mixed groups of teachers and pre-school practitioners.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Permission has been given by all participants engaging in the study.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings to date suggest that cross sector collaboration between pre-school and primary has been challenging but worthwhile. The collaborative process has resulted in stronger links and communication between pre-school and school, greater consistency in understandings of and approaches to curriculum, along with increased respect and appreciation of 'the other'.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study highlights the need for a planned and supported approach to facilitate collaborative working between pre-school and primary school.

**Keywords:** collaboration; curriculum; practitioners; teachers; pedagogy

## **Are Children Ready for Formal Schooling at Ages between 60- to 72-Month-Old? Perceptions and Experiences of First Grade Teachers, Primary School Administrators and Families**

MEHMET BULDU | TED University, Turkey

#### **Co-author**

SÜHENDAN ER | TED University, Turkey

#### **Research aims**

This study examined the perceptions and experiences of Turkish first-grade teachers, administrators, and parents/families on school readiness of children.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Despite a number of empirical research investigating the association of age and learning over time, formal schooling entry-age and what readiness actually means remain as a source of much debate.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

With the recent changes on schooling-entry-age in Turkey, children are now required to be registered to first-grade when they turn 66-month-old; and, they can be registered at ages between 60- to 66-month-old if their parents

request so. With this in mind, it was critical to understand how teachers, administrators and parents/families perceive readiness of children to formal schooling and what kind of experiences they had within the first year of this change in Turkish education system.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study took place in Ankara, Turkey, with 186 first-grade-teachers, 62 administrators, and 320 parents/families. The major data-gathering techniques in this study were surveys and semi-structured interviews. The descriptive statistics, correlational analyses and a phenomenological procedure was used to analyze the data.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To maintain confidentiality of research participants no identifying information was collected.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results provided a rich data that reveal the complex and mixed perceptions of school readiness that has been embraced by the teachers, principals and families. The teachers and principals reported a range of problems. The results highlighted worries and concerns that parents/families of young-first-grade children have to deal with.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The implications for early childhood and elementary teacher education programs, teacher educators, teachers, school administrators, parents/families, schools, and educational policy-makers were considered.

**Keywords:** school readiness; schooling-entry-age; perceptions and experiences; teachers and administrators; parents/families

## **What Happens If You're Not Ready for School?**

ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper considers the troublesome concept of school readiness in relation to studies of transitions to school. It asks what happens to children who are deemed to be unready by comparison to those who are perceived as ready for school, and why?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The paper draws on previous research on transitions undertaken by the author as well as a wide set of published papers on school readiness and school transition.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework brings together concepts of school readiness and transitions to school. Each is seen as a social construct based on different models of the child.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A systematic review of the literature was used to identify and define school readiness. The narratives of school readiness that emerged were then linked thematically to contemporary transition-to-school studies using QSR NVivo for data management.

### **Ethical considerations**

Two main issues were considered: ensuring accurate and fair treatment of existing research and awareness of any ethical issues arising from the research reviewed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Transitions occur before, during and after school start. A new narrative of school readiness linked to a principle of positive transitions provides greater insight into what supports children to make the most of school.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

An understanding of the extent to which transitions research has influenced and revealed the relative usefulness of school readiness concepts is relevant as we continue to engage in curriculum reform, debates about the purpose of universal preschool provision and the assessment of young children. A focus has emerged from this narrative enquiry on how schools can provide well for entrant children,

**Keywords:** school readiness; transition to school; narratives; quality; practices

## A21 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT I

Chair: ALISON STREET | Parents Early Education Partnership, United Kingdom

### Pre-Curriculum Activities: Focus Groups on Resilience

RENATA MILJEVIĆ-RIDIČKI | University of Zagreb, Croatia

#### Co-authors

DEJANA BOUILLET | University of Zagreb, Croatia

CARMEL CEFAI | University of Malta, Malta

#### Research aims

The main aim is to conduct some pre-curriculum activities for resilience curriculum.

#### Relationship to previous research works

A crucial contribution that preschool teachers can make to children's ongoing success, well-being and the ability to overcome life challenges is to build children's resilience – the ability to rebound from crisis through strengths under stress.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

A group of experts from six countries (Malta, Croatia, Sweden, Portugal, Greece and Italy) joined in a specific task to develop a European resilience curriculum for early years and primary school children. Along with the curriculum, a manual for parents will be written. Nevertheless, there are a number of ambiguities and inconsistencies regarding what resilience specifically implies. The ambiguities relate to conceptualising resilience as a personality trait, a dynamic process or an outcome, and defining the constructs that constitute it. Bearing this in mind, the expert team decided to organise pre-curriculum activities for the purpose of finding out what parents, teachers and children think about resilience, as well as to identify the skills and protective factors that are important for them.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Three focus groups were organised (one with preschool teachers, one with parents and one with 5- to 6-year-old children).

#### Ethical Considerations

All participants were well informed about the goals; parents were informed about the focus-group for children and gave their permission for children's participation.

#### Main finding or discussion

Participants had the opportunity to answer questions concerning their opinion about resilience and about factors which are important for building children's resilience.

#### Implications, practice or policy

These will lead experts to choose basic themes for the resilience curriculum and for the parents' manual.

**Keywords:** resilience; Croatian kindergartens; focus-groups; pre-curriculum activities; curriculum

### Planning the Learning Activities in the ECE System of the Republic of Srpska: Macro and Micro Contexts of the Culture of Teaching

TAMARA PRIBISEV BELESLIN | University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

#### Research aims

Paper presents the results of a study on planning the learning and teaching process made by preschool teachers in the ECE institutions in the Republic of Srpska, the entity of B&H. The aim is to identify patterns within the process.

#### Relationship to previous research works

This is the first study that was done. One tangential research points to certain trends within the culture of teaching in early mathematics in the Republic of Srpska (Pribisev Beleslin, 2012).

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Child-centered and outcomes-based National curriculum (2007), and the traditional theoretical framework of "diluted" school-based methodology of teaching which separates the activities initiated by teachers from children's play, are taken into consideration. Frame of analysis is theory of different cultures in preschool (Janson, 2007, 2012).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The inductive analysis, in interpretative research practice, included a teachers team's "phased plans" of the educational process written continuously since two weeks, and the attitudes of teachers about that process, which was collected in the three focus groups.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical consideration is based on anonymity, respect the teachers' writing and planning styles, an researcher's continuous reflection on own prejudices.

**Main finding or discussion**

The study is in progress. There are rough patterns: macro context - metodological simplification of planning process; misunderstanding of the curriculum (outcomes and children's activities); micro context - plans mostly reflect the teachers' activities, but not the children's.

**Implications, practice or policy**

It will provide local contextualized knowledge for understanding the ongoing process within the system and the future development of methodologies within the culture of teaching, which is characterized as underdeveloped according to its science, theories and practices.

**Keywords:** planning process; curriculum; teachers' practice; learning activities; play

## **Assessment of Children's Learning in Australian Early Childhood Education**

NATALIE ROBERTSON | Deakin University, Australia

**Research aims**

Australia implemented its first Early Years Learning Framework in January 2012. Structured by socio-cultural theory, the framework advocates for the application of contemporary assessment methods. This research discusses educators' views and understanding of current assessment processes as outlined in Australia's Early Years Learning Framework. This research aimed to explore educators' definition of assessment of children's learning, with a specific focus on the role the framework has upon educator's assessment processes.

**Relationship to previous research works**

Research illustrates that educators perceive contemporary styles of children's assessment to facilitate professional practice and improve curriculum opportunities (McDonald, 2007). However, this perception from educators is not reflected in their practice as many are still founding their assessment processes on developmentalism procedures (Fleet et al. 2006). This research follows a previous study which indicated that educators misinterpret the wording and intention of policy (Blaiklock, 2009).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research is examined and interpreted from a socio-cultural perspective to identify educators' views of children's assessment.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Semi-structured interviews were employed in this qualitative research to examine how directors and educators of long day care and preschools view and interpret the current assessment processes discussed in the Australian Early Years Learning Framework.

**Ethical considerations**

Anonymity of participants and the services were maintained through the use of pseudonyms.

**Main finding or discussion**

The outcomes will be discussed with reference to the role the Early Years Learning Framework has upon educator's assessment processes.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Implications are placed on training services to assist educators interaction with the Early Years Framework to better understand the processes of assessment of children's learning.

**Keywords:** assessment; early childhood; policy; pedagogy; educators

## A22 TRANSITION AND PRACTICES I

Chair: CARMEN HUSER | nifbe, Germany

### Turkish Preschool Teachers' Beliefs About Early Literacy Practices

İKBAL TUBA ŞAHİN | Bülent Ecevit University, Turkey

#### Co-authors

RAMAZAN SAK | Yüzüncü Yıl University, Turkey

NURAN TUNCER | Gaziosmanpaşa University, Turkey

#### Research aims

This study aims to investigate preschool teachers' beliefs about early literacy practices in Turkish classrooms.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Several studies were conducted related to early literacy in Turkey but there were limited studies which investigated this issue based on principles of DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practice).

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Quality of education and educational activities should be enhanced to encourage children's skill development and promote optimal learning. Therefore, a framework established on a knowledge base about educational effectiveness and research into child development and learning was adopted by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1986, and became known as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP).

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Basic qualitative research design was used in this study. The participants were twenty-eight public preschool teachers in Tokat, Turkey. Teaching experiences of participants were between one year and twenty-seven years. The data was collected with a protocol of semi-structured interview designed by the researchers.

#### Ethical Considerations

Before participating in the study, the teachers signed a volunteer participation form.

#### Main finding or discussion

Findings of the study will be presented at the conference.

#### Implications, practice or policy

Findings of the study will contribute to related literature and improvement of early literacy practices in preschool classrooms.

**Keywords:** early literacy; preschool teachers; teachers' beliefs; DAP; qualitative study

### Mind the Gap! Children's Transition from Preschool to School – the Swedish Example

HELENA ACKESJÖ | Linnaeus University, Sweden

#### Research aims

The overall focus in this presentation is to describe how the transition to school can be characterized for children in the Swedish context.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Particular interest is placed on the preschool class, a voluntary school form for 6-year old children, which is sparsely explored in research.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework providing the basis for this research includes theories of transition, border theories and theories of identity constructions. The research adopts the theoretical position that children pass through certain institutional borders in transition from preschool to school and that children reconstruct their identities as they enter new educational arenas.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research aims to approach the children's perspectives of transition, and the data is constructed through both observations and conversations with children in three school forms; preschool, preschool class and the first year in compulsory school.

## Ethical considerations

Following the ethical principles of the Swedish Research Council, parents and children have given their consent to participation in the research.

## Main finding or discussion

The results shows that the preschool class risk to constitute a cultural gap for children in transition to school, and the empirical data indicates that children have to re-do activities from preschool.

## Implications, practice or policy

The transition from preschool to school is managed in different ways and at different times in children's life across the world. This presentation puts the spotlight on the Swedish preschool class in the borderland between preschool and primary school.

**Keywords:** transition; preschool class; borders; identities; curriculum

## Transition to School: Reapplying a Bridge Metaphor

CARMEN HUSER | nifbe, Germany

### Co-authors

BOB PERRY | Charles Sturt University, Australia

SUE DOCKETT | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### Research aims

To revisit Garpelin's bridge metaphor to represent a child's transition to school

- To consider the impact of the number of lanes on the 'transition bridge'
- To investigate the bridge metaphor through comparison of transition to school in Germany and Australia

### Relationship to previous research works

Garpelin has used the bridge metaphor to apply van Gennep's rites of passage to transition to school. The German Brückenjahr project and the Australian Transition to School Position Statement also use the metaphor.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Two separate theoretical and conceptual frameworks are brought together:

- van Gennep's rites of passage;
- Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Using the constructs of opportunities, expectations, aspirations and entitlements derived from the Transition to School: Position Statement, a bridge metaphor was constructed to model transition to school for all stakeholders. This metaphor has been applied to transition practices in both Germany and Australia in order to consider each of the constructs and compare their meanings in each country.

### Ethical considerations

As this is a theoretical study that does not involve human subjects, ethical processes have been restricted to those concerning national images and understandings of the strengths of all involved in transitions to school.

### Main finding or discussion

The metaphorical model of transition to school as a bi-directional bridge traversed by children, families, communities, educators, and educational systems is a powerful way of viewing transitions and considering what makes them successful.

### Implications, practice or policy

transition to school is seen as a process that involves many people and takes time;

- transition to school is seen as more than a one-way journey;
- different bridges can represent different journeys.

**Keywords:** transition to school; comparison Germany and Australia; bridge metaphor; rites of passage; bio-ecological model

## **A23 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT I**

Chair: KATHY RING | York St John University, United Kingdom

### **Young Children's Visual Thinking: Providing a Supportive Environment**

KATHY RING | York St John University, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This paper draws upon data collected within a longitudinal research project 'Supporting a Playful Approach to Drawing' (2004-2010) The project aimed to support early years practitioners in developing greater understanding of young children's use of drawing as a tool for thinking and learning, and recognizing the significance of the routines and rituals of their particular settings in enabling or hindering this.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The project builds upon previous research (Ring, 2003), reporting misconceptions about drawing which limit its role as a tool for thinking.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

It takes a cultural-historical approach to children as learners, understanding drawing to be part of young children's multi-modal approach to meaning making (Kress, 1997).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Cohorts of twenty practitioners took part in an interweaving of training, debate and analysis focusing upon data collected as a first phase of action research within their own educational setting. A second longer phase of in-depth study took place with a smaller number of practitioners. Visual methods were fore-grounded and imagery alongside narrative provided rich, context-related data for joint-analysis.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical priorities included working with participants to understand and engage with their uncertainties.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Through practitioners' adaptations to established routines, rituals and provisioning children extend, connect and develop fluency of visual thinking and enhance their disposition towards 2D representation.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

This paper draws attention to the importance of the visual within the multi-modality of young children's meaning making, thinking and learning. It identifies key features of the environment that support and extend children's ability to make sense of their world and develop fluency of thinking through drawing.

**Keywords:** young children; visual thinking; multi-modality; drawing; environment

### **Foundation Phase Teachers Views on Learning Environment Factors Influencing Transitions Early Schooling to the Intermediate Phase in South Africa**

MARITZA OLIVIER | University of the Free State, South Africa

#### **Research aims**

The crisis in primary education in South Africa has put a focus on grounding basic skills in early schooling and preparation of young children for the demands of the next phase. The aim of this study was therefore to explore the Foundation Phase teachers' views on the factors that influence transitions from early schooling (6 to 9 years) into the Intermediate Phase (10 to 12 years).

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study relates to work done by South African researchers such as Dr Phatudi.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The framework that underpinned this study was based on constructivist accounts of teacher's experiences of the early years of teaching in preparing learners for the transition into the Intermediate Phase.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

An interpretive paradigm informed a qualitative research approach. Six focus-group interviews in six schools were conducted with Foundation Phase teachers from Grades 1 to 3.



## Ethical considerations

Ethics was obtained by Faculty of Education at the university. Consent for the study also was negotiated with all participants at the time of the focus-group interviews.

## Main finding or discussion

The emerging findings thus far show that the following factors influenced the transition:

- Beliefs on high quality early schooling
- Understanding early learning environments in relation to curriculum reform, practice and transitions
- Complexities of practice and creating high quality learning environments for successful transitions.

## Implications, practice or policy

Practice

- Teachers need professional development in
  - high quality early school teaching,
  - understanding different learning environments and the complexities thereof,
- New communities of practice need to be develop across phases. Policy
- The new continuing teacher education policy needs to take into account the voices of teacher for professional development.

**Keywords:** transition; learning environment; foundation phase teachers; constructivist; South Africa

## Characteristic Features of Project Pedagogy Used in Hungarian Kindergartens

SÁNDOR PÁLFI | University of Debrecen, Hungary

### Research aims

Our paper is intended to be a gap-filler by way of presenting the part of our research where we analyse the project plans which have been declared successful by kindergarten professionals.

### Relationship to previous research works

In the documents offered by 57 kindergarten teachers participating on a voluntary basis, we were looking for the types of project classification, the origin and source of themes, planning cycles, activity forms, and the kinds of information storage devices used. We tried to find features of kindergarten teachers' and children's role in the project to identify.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The adaptation process of the project approach in Hungarian kindergartens started in the late '90s. Despite the literature published abroad and an increasing number of professional articles written in Hungary, there has been little attention paid to its implementation in kindergartens.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Analysis of documents

### Ethical considerations

Respondents submitted documents on a voluntary basis.

### Main finding or discussion

Finally, we classified the products and results of kindergarten projects, and collected the best practices for closing the projects.

### Implications, practice or policy

As there is no Hungarian research available for comparison, by publishing our findings it is our intention to inspire further research and suggest problems for analysis.

**Keywords:** kindergarten; project pedagogy; Hungarian practice; voluntary; comparison

## A24 CREATIVITY IN PRESCHOOL

Chair: HOLLY MCCARTNEY | James Madison University, USA



# Relationship Between Dialectical Structure of the Mind and Creativity in Preschoolers

NIKOLAY VERAKSA | Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia

## Research aims

Research of dialectical structures of the mind.

## Relationship to previous research works

Dialectical structures of the mind were previously studied by Piaget, Riegel, etc.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Dialectical structures are based on a system of dialectical mental actions and form a dialectical representation of the world. A mathematical analogue of the dialectical structure of the mind is a specially defined category, Dn.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

We hypothesize that the dialectical structure of a preschooler's mind forms a part of the mechanism of creativity. Correspondingly, the development of the dialectical structure of a child's mind is related to the development of creativity. We tested this hypothesis using two tests. Test 1 evaluated the level of the dialectical structure of a child's mind. In this test, children were asked to manipulate sets of pictures grouped into different event series. Test 2 evaluated children's creativity using Torrance test. Subjects were preschoolers aged 6 (a total of 72 participants). Each child was evaluated using both tests. Based on the results, each child was quantitatively ranked on each test, and a coefficient of correlation  $r$  between the two rankings was calculated.

## Ethical considerations

Research was carried out in accordance with Code of Ethics of Russian Psychological Society

## Main finding or discussion

The results ( $r = 0.54$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) have confirmed our hypothesis.

## Implications, practice or policy

Therefore, we conclude that there is a special dialectical structure of the mind whose development correlates with the development of creativity in preschoolers. Results are used in structuring Russian preschool education system.

**Keywords:** dialectical thinking; creativity; preschool; dialectical structure; representation

# Keeping Creativity and the Arts Alive in Early Childhood

HOLLY MCCARTNEY | James Madison University, United States of America

## Research aims

This paper defends the inclusion of a graduate level course that attempts to prepare elementary teacher candidates to integrate the arts and creativity as an essential part of the school curriculum.

## Relationship to previous research works

This paper supports E. Eisner (2002), M. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) R. Sternberg (2006), E. Torrance (1974) H.Gardner (1983) who all provide support for the inclusion of the arts and creativity in teacher preparation programs.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

O'Donnell and Micklethwaite (1999) found evidence in policy documents for the inclusion of creativity and the arts from early childhood through secondary education across Europe, America, Australia, and East Asian countries. This is particularly true for developing countries (Oral, 2006). In the United States however, No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) and the creation of national standards linked to federal funding, has increased pressures on schools and ultimately teachers to raise test scores (Cochran-Smith, 2005a).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Using a constructivist-interpretive framework, we sought to interpret why certain things happened rather than quantifying our findings (Eisner, 1991; Erickson, 1986; Falk & Blumenreich, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Fosnot, 2006).

## Ethical considerations

The researcher has taken the required human subjects in research training through the university. Participants gave consent and allowed to review quotes as part of the data analysis and review process.

**Main finding or discussion**

Student's definition of creativity broadened. They saw value in the inclusion of the arts and creativity.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Seeing the value of Creativity and the arts in early childhood curriculum. As Eisner suggested, the arts teach students that small differences can have large effects (2002).

**Keywords:** early childhood; creativity; pre-service; teacher research; curriculum

# SYMPOSIA SET B

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29  
14.30-16.00

## B1 VALUES EDUCATION IN NORDIC PRESCHOOLS: SYMPOSIA 2

Self-organised symposium

Chair: EVA MARIANNE JOHANSSON | University of Stavanger, Norway

What kind of future citizens do we foster in early childhood education (ECEC) in order to build cohesive pluralistic societies in Nordic countries? The overall aim of the project is to deepen understanding of the institutionalized fostering of values in Nordic preschools at the theoretical, methodological, and empirical levels. The study is informed by a participatory action research model aimed both to create knowledge and to contribute to a change. This second symposia brings together some initial results from the Norwegian study on values education in the early years. The Norwegian project will be presented as a whole including theoretical and methodological frames and methods. Preliminary results from interviews and observations will be discussed.

### Values Education in Nordic Preschools: the Norwegian Study

EVA MARIANNE JOHANSSON | University of Stavanger, Norway

#### Research aims

The project funded by NordForsk deals with values education in Norwegian ECEC settings. The aim is to deepen understanding of values education in Norwegian preschools at the theoretical, methodological, and empirical levels.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Previous research describes values education as a complex phenomenon connected with the communication between individuals and the institutional and cultural contexts and practices of preschools.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

To interpret communication between practitioners and children, the concepts of strategic and communicative action proposed by Habermas have been used. This theory also allows for the analysis of values education from participants point of view and a broader societal context.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The project is based on a participatory action research model aiming to create knowledge and contribute to change. The study consists of 7 Norwegian ECEC-settings. The project continued for 2 years and involves two interconnected phases: an implementation and a research phase. Data were gathered through multiple methods: seminars, interviews, observations, scenarios and metaphors. Initial analyses have been carried out.

#### Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations have been addressed to Norwegian guidelines. Ethical issues have been conducted cautiously during the project.

#### Main finding or discussion

Preliminary findings imply that practitioner's familiarity with values shifted from uncertainty to a more certain position, while their views of values changed from absolute- to more relativistic positions. A variety of values were communicated, yet moral values seemed to be highly prioritized by practitioners.

#### Implications, practice or policy

By challenging and enhancing practitioners' awareness of values and their strategies for fostering values the quality of values education in preschool increases. The project will also inform educational policy and teacher education.

**Keywords:** values education; preschool teachers; children; participatory action research; Habermas; strategic and communicative action

### Values in Norwegian ECEC-Setting. The Locker Room as a Place for Values

BERIT TOFTELAND | University of Stavanger, Norway



## Co-author

ELISABETH IANKE MØRKESETH | University of Stavanger, Norway

## Research aims

The aim is to study practitioners reflections on how values are communicated and prioritized in the locker room in seven Norwegian ECEC- settings.

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous research describes values education as a complex phenomenon connected with the communication between individuals and the institutional and cultural contexts and practices in ECEC.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework is based on Habermas' concepts life-world and system, and his theory about strategic and communicative actions (Habermas 1995, Emilson 2008).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This study is based on two interviews in each group of practitioners. The first interview was accomplished in the beginning of the project, the second at the end. The interviews are based both on a case from the locker-room, and on reflections about values and values education.

## Ethical considerations

Written and Informed consent for participation has been obtained in relation to the rules and legislations in Norway. The data is treated regarding to the same rules.

## Main finding or discussion

The practitioners' reflections appear in a tension between values associated with individuality and collectivity. Our interpretation is that the preferable situation in the locker room seems to be a close relation between one adult and few children. The practitioners prioritize order as a value to support this. Our research based results will be discussed according to Habermas' concepts.

## Implications, practice or policy

The project will inform educational policy and teachers education about dimensions of importance in the prioritizing and communication of values.

Keywords: values in ECEC; Habermas; locker room; individuality and collectivity; practitioners reflection

# Values Education in Norwegian Preschool: Values Communicated in the Locker Room

KRISTIN FUGELSNES | University of Stavanger, Norway

## Co-author

MONIKA RÖTHLE | University of Stavanger, Norway

## Research aims

The aim is to deepen the understanding of values education in Norwegian preschools. The particular research questions are: What kinds of values are communicated by practitioners in interactions with children and how are these values communicated?

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous research describes values education as a complex phenomenon connected with the communication between individuals and the institutional and cultural contexts and practices of preschools.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

In order to interpret the expressed communication between practitioners and children, the concepts of strategic and communicative actions proposed by Habermas have been used.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Data have been gathered through video observations of interactions between teachers and children in the locker room in 7 ECEC-settings. Communication between teachers and children has been analyzed according to the kind of values communicated and prioritized, and how these values are communicated.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations have been addressed to Norwegian guidelines. Ethical issues have been conducted

continuously and cautiously during the project.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings imply a variety of values to be communicated, yet caring values seemed to be prioritized by practitioners. Strategic as well as communicative actions were identified. The communication seemed to be related to context and the participant's different interpretations and goals. Playfulness and encounters face to face appeared as important dimensions in the communication of values.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The project will inform educational policy and teacher education about dimensions of importance in the prioritizing and communication of values.

**Keywords:** values education; preschool teachers and children; locker room; Habermas; strategic and communicative action

## **B2 RESEARCH SCHOOL IN CHILDHOOD. LEARNING AND DIDACTICS. FRAMEWORK AND ONGOING RESEARCH PART II**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: INGEGERD TALLBERG BROMAN | Malmö University, Sweden

Sweden is unique in that we have developed specific research school for preschool teachers as a joint consortium between 4-5 universities and university collages. The whole idea is to raise the professional level of preschool teachers to become able to work with quality development in the municipalities. All together it have been three research schools under the same heading Childhood, Learning and Didactics, that Gothenburg University, Karlstad University, University of Linköping and Kristianstad University Collage have jointly work with. Some of the students have finished their PhD, while others are in the process of struggling with data collection. Some of the doctoral students have a four year education while others have a two years Licentiate goal. We will in the symposia, present the research school, but six of our doctoral students will give a short presentation of their studies. (PART II)

## **Communication About Natural Science in Early Childhood Education Sweden**

SUSANNE THULIN | Kristianstad University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to generate knowledge about how children and teachers communicate scientific contents in preschool. The general research question is formulated as, how do the object of learning and the act of learning appear in communication about scientific contents?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The empirical study has its background in research on children's learning (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2003, 2008) and a new view of the Swedish preschool's commissions (Ministry of Education and Science, 1998/2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research approach is primarily based on phenomenography focusing on developmental pedagogy. Children are seen as active in their own learning and as develops on the basis of their own experiences in communication with the surrounding world.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The empirical data consists of video observations from two preschools (children 3-6 years) working with different thematic projects about ecological phenomenon. Focusing the verbal communication the data observations have been transcribed and analysed from (1) the know-what and the know-how aspect of learning, (2) children's questions during theme work with natural science.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical aspects are considered ([www.codex.vr.se](http://www.codex.vr.se)).

### **Main finding or discussion**

The result is presented on the basis of the communication of the what-perspective and is discussed in terms of what is noticed and how the children's understandings are communicated. The result is also discussed in relation to situated learning and the assumption about the task of preschool characterizing the social practice that is brought

to light.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Prominence is given to the need of a critical reflection over the role of language as maintaining a discourse and the concepts established.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; science; learning; curriculum; communication

## **A Trace of Music Ship. The Didactic of Music Event in Preschool Practice**

YLVA HOLMBERG | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aim of the study is to describe and analyse music events in preschool practise and to try out concepts that can denote the figuration of music events. The result is organised by the didactic questions what, how and who, and musicianship is suggested as a possible figuration, a concept for reflecting critically about music events in preschool practice.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is a contribution to both didactics and music teaching in early childhood settings.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

To answer the “what” and “how”- questions, I use music didactics (Nielsen, 2006), based on the “german bildung” (Klafki, 1005) as a theoretical resource and conceptual framework. In addition when focusing “who”, I use the concept musicking (Small, 1998).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

I have observed and video recorded, 46 music events. The content in music events where not specified beforehand. After the music events, the teachers watched the videos and commented what they saw.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are about children and teachers being recorded, everyone has signed consent letters about the study.

### **Main finding or discussion.**

The content in the music events is moving between a goal oriented with a focus and a more improvised content. Combining the activity with its functions (reproduction and production) singing is reproductive, playing instrument is productive and moving is both. Considering the “who” question the actors within the music event can act different, as players, starters, colluders, teammate and opponents.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Music ship is suggested as a possible figuration of music events. A concept for reflecting critically about music events considering the content, form, and actorship within the events.

**Keywords:** music; pre school; didactics; learning; musicpedagogy

## **Communication Affordances in a Multilingual Preschool: Free and Promoted Fields of Action**

ÅSA LJUNGGREN | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aim of the study is to highlight and to understand how children’s abilities to communicate with each other vary in different situations in a preschool setting.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research has shown that the most effective way of developing children’s communicating skills is to encourage a polyphonic environment (Dysthe, 1998). Children’s opportunities to position themselves as communicative agents are therefore of interest.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is influenced by the sociocultural perspective grounded in Vygotsky’s cultural-historical theory My study is also based on Reed’s work (1993).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

**Method and Methodology** The present study involved one preschool setting in a city in the south of Sweden, with five teachers and 15 children. The following methods were used for data collection, observations (video or observation notes), interviews and informal conversations with staff, field notes and help with translation from the Arabic language teacher. My study is primarily based on observations. The interviews with teachers may be considered as a complement to the observations.

## **Ethical considerations**

The guidelines by the Swedish research Council (2012) have been used

## **Main finding or discussion**

**Main findings** The observations reveal that during play time the children use all kind of different tools and symbols. Their communication is in many ways made possible by the various artifacts that are readily available at play time.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

**Possible educational implications** Children's ability to communicate with each other is to a large extent dependent on teachers' didactic organization and their approach toward the children.

**Keywords:** preschool; communication; affordances; bilingual; children

# **B3 MALE WORKERS' CONTRIBUTION TO PROFESSIONALIZATION IN ECEC**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: KARI EMILSEN | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

According to the European Commission, there is a pressing need to make a career in the ECEC sector more attractive to men in all EU countries (EC 2011, 7). Efforts have been made by governmental agencies throughout Europe to engage more men in the field. In this symposium, strategies and results of these efforts are discussed in relation to professionalization. In an Austrian study, attitudes and professional images of experts participating in strategies towards a more gender-balanced workforce are analyzed. In Germany and in Norway, working groups of male practitioners are a part of governmental funded strategies supporting men in the field of ECEC. In Israel, a support model has developed based on grassroots activities of male ECEC students and practitioners. It is discussed how these groups bolster professional identity of male workers and thus contribute to professionalization. - SIG gender balance symposium 2 of 3.

## **Professionalization in ECEC and the Persistence of Gender Segregation**

BERNHARD KOCH | University of Innsbruck, Austria

### **Research aims**

The research is based on a project funded by the Austrian Science Foundation (2012-2015) about strategies to increase the number of men in ECEC. It focuses on the links of gender and professionalism and analyzes attitudes and professional images connected to the aim of increasing the number of men working in ECE.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study builds up on recent research projects on men in Austrian kindergartens as well as on projects on „more men in ECE“ in several European countries.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework is based on a concept of two sexes and a large variety of masculinity and femininity (gender roles).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The methodical approach is both quantitative and qualitative. 50 teachers and 50 students responded to a questionnaire about men and women in childcare. Moreover, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. Attitudes and behaviour of teachers in vocational training institutions regarding professionalism will be measured at the beginning and at the end of the project.

### **Ethical considerations**

The ethical principles include (according to the British educational research association) the categories harm, autonomy, privacy, reciprocity, equity.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First analyses show that the vocational training institutions reflect their „gendered identity“ and plan measures to increase the proportion of men. There is a welcoming atmosphere for men and many men are in general interested in child care work. Nevertheless female norms of caring and education („air of care“) still dominate the field.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The preliminary findings will help to put the issue of „gender balance and professionalism“ on the political agenda in Austrians ECEC system.

**Keywords:** men; women; gender; professionalism; childcare workers

## **Contribution of Working Groups of Male Educators to Professionalism and Quality in ECEC**

TIM ROHRMANN | Coordination office for Men in ECE, Germany

### **Co-author**

KARI EMILSEN | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **Research aims**

This study analyses male ECEC worker's groups and their contribution to processes of professionalization.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

„Professionalising the early childhood workforce and employing male workers can be seen as independent trends: there is no necessary relationship between the two“, Cameron (2006/2012) has stated. Male worker's support groups are one of several strategies towards a more gender-balanced work force in Germany and Norway. It is therefore a relevant question if, and how, men contribute to professionalization and quality in ECEC.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Within the framework of gender theory, ECEC is viewed as an extremely gendered profession. It is stated that more variety in teams and organizations can contribute to better quality.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A multi-method approach was used to gain insight into conditions and issues of working groups for male ECEC professionals. 30 coordinators/leaders of working groups in Germany and Norway answered a quantitative questionnaire as well as a short qualitative online inquiry. Moreover, group discussions and a small number of in-depth interviews were conducted and analyzed.

### **Ethical considerations**

As part of the research, results were reflected to and discussed with the participants prior to publication.

### **Main finding or discussion**

We found that working groups address many issues relevant to quality development. On the other hand, fluctuation in participation and inadequate qualifications of group leaders limit their effectiveness.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Men's working groups can provide support for male workers and thus bolster their decision to remain in the field. They also can induce processes of change. Experts who coordinate groups need adequate qualification for promoting gender consciousness and dealing with personal issues and group processes.

**Keywords:** gender; male ECE workers; professionalization; training; masculinities

## **A Grassroots Support Group for Male Early Childhood Educators: Implications for Practice**

Yael Dayan | Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

### **Co-authors**

YAIR PEREZ | Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

DAVID BRODY | Efrata College of Education, Israel

### **Research aims**

This study explores the effects of a support model for male workers developed in Israel based on grassroots activities of male ECE students and practitioners.



## Relationship to previous research works

The extreme isolation of male childcare workers has been well documented. As a small minority in their work setting, these men are placed in the role of „the other“ (Perez, 2009).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Connell (1995) has noted that men construct their masculinity primarily according to reactions of other men. Male support groups have been found effective among men in female professions, as they bolster the emotional wellbeing of these men (Blom et al., 2011; Calasanti/King, 2007).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This study examines the effect of a support forum for male ECE students and workers on the professional self-identity of group members. The forum meets bimonthly to provide a collegial atmosphere of mutual discourse and collaborative professional growth. Open interviews were conducted with five men characterized by different student and professional profiles. Results were analyzed using grounded theory to identify major themes.

## Ethical considerations

The teachers voluntarily participated in this study and granted permission for their interviews to be used anonymously in the published results.

## Main finding or discussion

Findings show that participation in the group served to break isolation, improve self-image, and enhance the professional identity of those interviewed. Furthermore, group participation enabled men to deal effectively with the sense of „otherness“ through the awareness of mutual support beyond the forum meetings.

## Implications, practice or policy

These findings suggest that grassroots support groups may significantly bolster professional self-identity of male workers and encourage their retention in the ECE workforce.

**Keywords:** male workers; professionalization; self-identity; support groups; gender

## B4 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS! RIGHT?

Self-organised symposium

Chair: DILYS WILSON | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

The papers in this symposium consider the rights of babies and young children to have practitioners who can encourage their agency by listening to them and following their lead, understanding their needs and acknowledging their feelings. Exploring how this can be achieved is both challenging and fluid depending upon many variables. How can undergraduate and graduate practitioners reflect on their learning from degree studies and professional training and apply it to their practice? What aspects of the content of their learning (counselling theories, discourses on children's rights and professional reflection) impact on their practice with babies and young children in early years settings?

## What Kind of Practitioner Do Babies Need?

DILYS WILSON | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

### Research aims

This paper will consider what enables or prevents practitioners on Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) pathways to develop their understanding of the needs of babies so that they can effectively lead practice with this age group.

### Relationship to previous research works

The Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund final report (Mathers et al, 2011) questioned the impact of EYPs on improving quality for babies and toddlers. Elfer and Dearnley (2007) researched a model of CPD which addressed the emotional complexity of working with young children. Powell and Gooch (2012) have looked at ways of empowering practitioners who work in baby rooms.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

This research draws on theories of professional identity (Osgood, 2010) and explores how EYPs view their identity and their practice. Hochschild's (1983) concept of „emotional labour“ is considered within the context of professional identity. Bions (1962) concept of containment is used to draw attention to the emotional factors involved in working with babies.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This small scale qualitative study uses semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion to gather the thoughts and reflections of practitioners on EYPS pathways.

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants were informed of this research and of its purpose. Procedures for ensuring confidentiality but also to acknowledge contributions as appropriate have been put in place.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings suggest that reflective practice in itself is not sufficient to develop an effective pedagogy for babies.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study suggests that practitioners who lead practice with babies need carefully considered training which combines theory and reflective practice as part of a wider community of practice.

**Keywords:** early childhood professionalism; pedagogy; babies; psed; children's rights

## **What Do Children's Rights Look Like in Practice?**

ANGELA SCOLLAN | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

The main aim of this study was to explore how early years professionals define what Children's Rights look like within their practice.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research relates to previous work based research undertaken to explore professional reflection and module evaluations.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The work of Schon (1987) on reflective practice and Archard (2005) on Children's Rights provides the underpinning theoretical framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This small scale qualitative research was conducted from an interpretative perspective. Reflective journals and small focus groups were used to explore how early years practitioners identified what Children's Rights actually look like in practice

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants were informed of this research and of its purpose. Ethical procedures for ensuring confidentiality have been put in place.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings suggest that capturing what Children's Rights looks like within practice is challenging to quantify. The majority of practitioners reflected that transforming their knowledge into a definite skill, product or aspect of practice is both complex and challenging to articulate.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The knowledge gained from this research will be used to underpin future EdD research to impact upon professional practitioner training and modify how a year three Children's Rights module is delivered.

**Keywords:** children's rights; reflective practice; early childhood professionalism; pedagogy; transformation

## **An Awareness of Counselling Theory and Unconscious Processes Equip Early Years Practitioners to Address the Emotional Needs of Young Children**

BETH GALLAGHER | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper explores how practitioners develop and apply their understanding of counselling theories to their work with young children

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The work of Youell (1996) and West & Bainbridge (2012) helped frame the research as it addresses a psychological understanding of a developing professional practice and a significant link with reflective practice has been informed by Schon (1983).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Drawing on more recent perspectives developed by those above, the study is under-pinned with a number of counselling theories, the key ones being Sigmund Freud (1925) the founder of psychoanalysis and Klein (1975) who developed therapeutic techniques to support child development. Rogers developed the core conditions which provide a foundation for effective learning and therapeutic movement

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study aimed to develop a biographical narrative account to understand how the practitioner makes use of their learning. Data was collected from reflective journals and presentations followed up with a questionnaire for overseas students and interviews with London- based students

### **Ethical considerations**

Students and practitioners volunteered participation and consent was granted from relevant authorities

### **Main finding or discussion**

The counselling module had informed students in their everyday interactions and they drew on specific theories when dealing with deeper psychological and emotional needs. Some respondents showed a deeper awareness of the way unconscious processes impacted their practice

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Encourage practitioners to take up further training opportunities and to review the current u/g module.

**Keywords:** unconscious processes; core conditions; therapeutic movement; reflective practice; children's rights

## **B5 UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS AS EMERGING PROFESSIONALS: EXPLORING HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS IN TEACHER TRAINING AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UK**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: SUZANNE FLANNERY QUINN | University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

This symposium will address conference themes of values, culture and contexts through the strand of professionalism and teachers' role. The symposium will begin with research that investigated how, from 1900 to 1939, British 'Froebelians' developed a conception of their professional role as teachers of young children, grounded in implementation of the values embedded in Froebelian pedagogy. The second presentation examines how contemporary teacher trainees articulate pedagogy using Froebelian principles through the techniques of pedagogic documentation. The final paper will address the emerging personal and professional identities of contemporary students of early childhood studies in higher education more broadly. The discussion will link the papers to the concept of 'habitus' and the social space in which our professional roles develop, emerge, and are expressed. This symposium will serve to facilitate discussion about issues related to professional development in light of historical and contemporary social spaces.

### **Becoming Froebelian: Identity, Pedagogy and Performance**

JANE READ | University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

The research investigates how, from 1900 to 1939, British Froebelians developed a conception of their professional role as teachers of young children, grounded in implementation of the values embedded in Froebelian pedagogy

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Its historical standpoint seeks to provide a fresh perspective which throws light on current research into the development of professional role and its articulation and to complement issues explored in papers by colleagues in the symposium

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The paper's central organising framework draws on social movement theory to explore how a distinctive Froebelian identity was predicated on explication and practice of orthodoxies and acquisition of habitus (Bourdieu, 1993)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Discourse analysis of documentation, including reflective accounts by trainee students at Froebel Educational Institute, London, and photographs, will seek to illuminate how language and visual signifiers conveyed a unique Froebelian culture.

### **Ethical considerations**

The paper aims to privilege the voice of those engaged in shaping their professional identity by drawing on reminiscence and diaries as well as published accounts

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings identified opportunities for inculcation of Froebelian values through immersion in intense and prolonged communal experiences which accorded cult status to the group. The paper concludes that Froebelian teachers and FEI students shared a sense of common identity which framed Montessorians, for example, as „other“. Being Froebelian, and, in the case of FEI students, from the premier British Froebel training institution, carried powerful cultural capital

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for current practice are that powerful professional identities are formed and consolidated by intense immersive experiences to which the current conference, and others like it, contributes

**Keywords:** Froebelian identity; professional role; social movement; habitus; discourse analysis

## **'What Does Babs Think?': Personal and Professional Identity in Students of Early Childhood**

ELISE ALEXANDER | University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

SUE ROBSON | University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

Early Childhood Studies students arrive at university as successful learners, with enthusiasm and commitment, but can find the transformative learning of university costly in terms of personal and professional identity. The research aims to identify the academic attitudes of successful learners and the transformations in their professional identity that occur in the course of their studies.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Building on earlier work with early childhood students who collaborated to write a book, the proposed research will explore how the understanding of threshold concepts and the acquisition of discourse can lead to a 'transfiguration of identity' (Meyer and Land 2005).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research draws upon Meyer and Land's (2005) theory of threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge, which may lead to students seeing things in a new way.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Symbolic interactionism. Data will be collected through interviews and guided group discussions with students.

### **Ethical considerations**

The ethics of research involving tutors and students as participants is challenging, and demands careful consideration and organisation. Accordingly, colleagues who do not teach or assess the student participants are involved in collecting data. The work will be carried out within the University of Roehampton Ethics framework.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Discussion about students' identity as learners and as professionals and the nature of threshold concepts in Early Childhood Studies.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This work has important implications for studying early childhood in England, particularly in the new landscape of early years' qualifications and practice emerging from Government policies. It is also an opportunity for the team to

draw on the ideas of colleagues from countries with different approaches.

**Keywords:** student learning; professional identity; learner identity; threshold concepts; higher education

## **The Articulation of Froebelian Pedagogic Principles by Early Childhood Teacher Trainees: Examining the Use of Photography, Reflection, Dialogue, and Metaphor in Pedagogic Documentation**

SUZANNE FLANNERY QUINN | University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

LUCY PARKER | University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This research aims to examine how early years teacher trainees develop and articulate Froebelian principles of pedagogy using pedagogic documentation techniques (specifically photography and reflective narrative writing). This research critically examines aspects of Froebelian principles that are included in the teacher trainees pedagogic documentation (such as being guided by children's concerns and curiosities, nurturing a sense of „unity“, the importance of experiences in nature, and the benefits of play).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The current project relates to research on early childhood pedagogy in general, Froebelian Principles, as well as the techniques of pedagogic documentation (building on continuing and prior work by the first author).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research uses a socio-cultural framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Narrative writing and still photographs produced by teacher trainees are analysed using the principles of Grounded Theory, drawing on the ideas of Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 2005, to produce a theory from the data.

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants have given consent to have their writing and photographs analysed for the purpose of this research. Permission has been granted by any parents/guardian in the case of photographs that include people. Participants have chosen pseudonyms for their work. Participants were aware of their right to withdraw at any time and without any reason during the data collection period.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Themes related to Froebelian principles evident in the student work include: play, realistic experiences, nature and unity. The use of photography is found to enhance trainees abilities to reflect and articulate their pedagogy.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications relate to the use of pedagogic documentation techniques and Froebelian principles in teacher training.

**Keywords:** pedagogic documentation; Froebelian principles; teacher training; professionalism; photography

## **B6 BEING IN RELATION**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: KATE HAYWARD | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

This symposium presents three interwoven micro projects from a main research programme on how young children learn to be themselves through being in relation to others? Researchers, early years educators, parents and children form the three micro-research teams. The first presentation focuses on liminality, how do children explore at the frontiers of self-determination? How do they develop self-regulation? How do parents and educators develop narratives on well-being and boundaries with children. The second presentation considers what parents and educators can understand about children's learning through closely observing their interactions with peers? This study focuses on children's learning through negotiation, interactions and patterns of engagement with each other in daily social experiences at home and at nursery using video observation techniques. The third presentation reconsiders what can we know about children's intentionality. Video analysis is informed by multi-modality and embodiment valuing non-verbal communication and meaning-making particularly important in understanding younger children.

## Being in Relation - Children and Liminality

MARGY WHALLEY | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

### Research aims

This research explores liminality – how do children explore at the frontiers of creativity and self-determination? How do they develop self-regulation through being in relation to others? It positions parents and practitioners in a central role developing a narrative on well-being and boundaries with children.

### Relationship to previous research works

The Pen Green Tracer Study (2011-2012) revealed the importance of parental advocacy for children and raised the question of how facilitating mastery orientations may combine with the development of social well-being, particularly after transition from Nursery. This research also builds on the Pen Green Emotional Well-being project (2001-2004).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

What can we know about children as 'boundary surfers'? We consider to what extent non-compliance is a survival mechanism against social injustice (Jenks, 2003). We aim to deepen understanding of mastery orientation in terms of relationships (Fisher 2005) and how we can support the cultural capital of families (Bourdieu, 1986) as they advocate for themselves and maintain relationships with others in learning communities.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Working in a constructivist paradigm, with parents and practitioners as co-researchers to develop our knowledge of the children being in relation both in the Pen Green Centre and at home through observations and shared analysis.

### Ethical considerations

Research conducted according to The Pen Green Code of Ethics. Parents, educators, children and researchers are invited to act with equal voice in the research process.

### Main finding or discussion

Devising a programme 'Learning to Be Strong' for Early Childhood Education and beyond. Devising pedagogical strategies in terms of developing children's self-regulation. Devising 'Confident Parents, Confident Children' material for families facing inter/intra personal challenges.

### Implications, practice or policy

**Keywords:** liminality; social injustice; non-compliance; mastery; boundary

## Being in Relation – What Can Parents and Workers Understand About Children's Learning Through Closely Observing Their Interactions with Peers?

KATE HAYWARD | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

### Co-author

SARAH MARLEY | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

### Research aims

This study focuses on children's learning through negotiation, interactions and patterns of engagement with each other. Parents, workers and children act as co researchers to consider the child's learning through daily social experiences at home and at nursery using video observation techniques.

### Relationship to previous research works

The project builds on 'Parents' involvement in their Children's Learning' (Whalley, 1997; Whalley, 2007; Hayward and Proddger, 2010, Hayward et al, 2009) 'Children learning through negotiation and accruing 'negotiation capital' (Hayward, 2011) and the importance of what happens 'between' children (Dahlberg, 2010).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

There will be a focus on social learning (Pollard, 1985) and children's learning through their experiences as they relate to and negotiate with other children at home and at nursery (Vygotsky, 1978; Trevarthen, 2002).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research design will be interpretivist, developing the Pen Green methodology of parent-practitioner- child action research between parents and workers in an early childhood centre. Data collection will be through parents' diaries, video observations recorded at nursery and at home and focus group discussions between workers and parents and researcher.

## **Ethical considerations**

Research conducted according to The Pen Green Code of Ethics. Parents, educators, children and researchers are invited to act with equal voice in the research process.

## **Main finding or discussion**

This is work in progress. The impact is expected to include: 1) developing our understanding of the significance of friendships as children learn and develop, and 2) developing Parents Involvement in Their Children's Learning (PICL) 'home learning' loop and influencing nursery pedagogy and practice.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

**Keywords:** action research; negotiation; peer interaction; parents; video

## **Being in Relation – What Can We Know About Children's Intentionality?**

PENNY LAWRENCE | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

SARAH MARLEY | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

To reconsider what can we know about children's intentionality.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

A case study in the Pen Green Leaderful project (2011) demonstrated the strength, perseverance and effective use of intentions of a two year old, Mia. A pilot study of two year olds (2011-12) revealed how meaning making for themselves about their identity

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is informed by multi-modality (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001) and embodiment (Daum 2009) which value non-verbal communication and meaning making particularly important in the understanding of younger children.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Derived from the paradigm of social semiotics the methodology uses fine grained multi-modal video analysis (Norris 2011) of critical episodes of decision making. This foregrounds where the attention of the children is and indicates potential meaning making. The small unit of analysis is also informed by Stern (2004)'s thinking about The Present Moment.

### **Ethical considerations**

Visual data requires rigorous on-going communication between children, workers and families according to the Pen Green Code of Ethics.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First interpretations of observed children's interactions, necessarily made quickly in the midst of practice, can be reconsidered in light of the possible meaning potentials that can be read in these interactions through analysis. This will impact on workers reading events in future practice.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The project has implications for adult child interactions, observation and assessment, pedagogic strategies and supervisory methods.

**Keywords:** intention; knowledge; multi-modal; embodiment; video

## **B7 DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION IN PLAY/ INNOVATIVE/ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: PENTTI HAKKARAINEN | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### **Research aims**

The goal of the project is to elaborate new tools for early education practice for developing children's self-regulation in play.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach to play is further elaborated.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Participatory sense making is used in indirect play guidance in play-world construction with children.

## **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent of participating adults and children is obtained.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Statistical and qualitative results from three Lithuanian cities on children's play in day care centers will be presented. Educators are not able to explain concrete developmental effects of play, which they in general support. Theoretical analysis has revealed serious problems in explaining why play has or has not developmental effects.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

New play pedagogy is badly needed

**Keywords:** quality of plays; play pedagogy; indirect play guidance; play-worlds; cultural-historical approach

## **Pretend Play, Motivation and Self-Regulation**

PENTTI HAKKARAINEN | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### **Research aims**

To reveal the relation and mechanism of self- and other regulation to the development of motivation in pretend play

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Returning back to the doctoral thesis

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Cultural-historical play theory has not succeeded to reveal the specific character of play motivation in spite of the argument that children's play is one of the leading activity types. By definition each type differs from others by motivation (motivation is the main criterion of any activity). The definition of play process as the motive is not better than "internal motivation" of play. We are lacking a motivation criterion in order to call play to be an activity. We suppose that social and psychological sense making mechanisms help us constructively solve the riddle of play motivation and develop a better educational approach to self-regulation.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Results of a fresh theoretical analysis are used for elaborating interventional methods for educational practice. A specific focus is the concept of self-regulation because contradictory results are attained about the impact of play due to narrow operationalization of the terms.

### **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent of participating adults and children is obtained.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Reviews have revealed educators' ignorance of goals and initiatives of children. Instead of developing genuine motivation and self-regulation strict abiding by existing rules is emphasized. We have developed motivated agency of children. Our empirical research revealed that ordinary methods of "developing rules" with children did not influence at all on their self-regulation. Our alternative play-world approach changed the situation.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The first task is to change everyday understanding of self-regulation as rule-centered behavior.

**Keywords:** self-regulation; agency; rules; motivation; play

## **Pretend Play and Self-Regulation in Lithuanian ECEC**

MILDA BRÉDIKYTÉ | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### **Co-author**

DALIA NASVYTIENE | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### **Research aims**

Mapping the situation of make-believe role play in Lithuanian kindergarten classrooms.



## Relationship to previous research works

Cultural-historical approach to play (Vygotsky, 1966, 1977; El'konin, 1978, 1989) is the framework of this study.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The following methods were used: play observations, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The data was gathered in kindergartens of four cities. The data provides evidence about: (1) the level/ complexity of games played in preschool classrooms, (2) the teachers' support of play and (3) how teachers understand their role in play for the development of self-regulation.

## Ethical considerations

Appropriate permissions and consents were obtained from participants in all settings.

## Main finding or discussion

The data shows that very little or no time is reserved for children's play activities. Teachers don't play with children and don't have good strategies to support children's play. Typically children are playing in very small groups: many children play in pairs, some children play alone. There are very few long lasting group plays, nor well-elaborated play scripts. Teacher's opinions about play contradict with how they organize play activities in their classrooms. Most teachers claim play to be very important for the development and learning of the young child. Nevertheless, in reality they organize very few possibilities for the children to play.

## Implications, practice or policy

Developmental potential of children's pretend play is poorly utilized in Lithuanian ECEC. Consequences may be fatal for the whole educational system.

**Keywords:** pretend play; everyday concepts; self-regulation; play guidance; child development

## We Want to Play More!

TOMAS LAZDAUSKAS | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### Co-author

IZABELE GRAUSLIENE | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### Research aims

To explain children's everyday play activity in early childhood settings.

### Relationship to previous research works

No previous research on children's opinion about play in Lithuania.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Cultural-historical approach to play is the framework of this study.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The data was collected using semi-structured interview. Information about children's everyday activities in preschools, play activity at home and kindergarten was collected. In research participated 4 – 6 years old children.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical principles of carrying out human subject research were observed.

### Main finding or discussion

Children's answers revealed the following main themes: 1) Play is the most important everyday activity, 2) Adults do not participate much in children's play, and 3) Play at home is different than in kindergarten. Play in kindergarten is pleasant, because there are other children to play with. At home children play often alone, but play is less limited and structured. Parents play more with children than teachers. On the basis of children's answers play is very important for them. ("I like to play most/always when there is no exercise/practicing", "[I wish] that there would be no works (organized activities) and we would play instead"). Seems that children's need to play is not fully satisfied in kindergarten.

### Implications, practice or policy

Adults' need to understand better the meaning and benefit of play activity for child's development and learning at early age and to practice different interventional strategies to support the development of children's play activities in the classrooms.

**Keywords:** play; early childhood; play in kindergarten; play at home; child narration

## **B8 DEMOCRACY IN KINDERGARTEN**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: KIRSTEN ELISABETH JANSEN | University of Agder, Norway

The symposium intends to discuss kindergarten as a democratic arena. Is it possible and advisable to associate an idea of democracy to children's life in kindergarten? How might the concept of democracy be related to the kindergarten as a community for citizenship, participation and learning? In the Nordic countries the concept of democracy is a value framing the kindergarten activities. Democracy, Building and the right to participate are expressed as fundamental values. The issue is how might these values be realized and understood in the daily life of the kindergarten? The presentations in the symposium are based upon research projects performed by members from a Nordic network on democracy and kindergarten - named „Demokrati i barnehagen“. The network has yearly network meetings / workshops and published articles in „Nordic Research in Early Childhood Education and Care“, No. 4/2011.

THURSDAY  
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B  
SYMPOSIA

### **Democratic Experience in Learning Activities in Kindergarten?**

KIRSTEN ELISABETH JANSEN | University of Agder, Norway

#### **Research aims**

Democratic experience in learning activities? From the empirical data of a research project about children's right to participation in learning activities three patterns are constructed. One of the patterns can be described through movable processes, movable content and movable positions. The question is whether children might have democratic experiences when learning activities are developed through movability? Children's right to participate in kindergarten as a democratic arena on one side and extended focus on the planned, specific learning results (The Norwegian Framework Plan, 2006, 2011) on the other create a field of tension – children's influence facing the power of the teacher's plan and control of the activities Is it possible to identify children's democratic experience in this field of tension?

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This presentation will build on Dewey's understanding ....democracy is primarily a mode of associated living embedded in the culture and social relationships of everyday life (Dewey 2005). Democracy in kindergarten as a community, where children are able to experience themselves as participants or subjects with influence on activities in the community (Dewey, 1977, Biesta, 2003, Dahlberg & Moss, 2002). Proj.no. 182864/S20 - The Norwegian Research Council - "Children's participation in a relational perspective – focus on the youngest children in kindergartens "

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The concept of participation in according to The Convention on Childrens rights

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

video observations, videostimulated recall and text analysis

#### **Ethical considerations**

ethetical discussion on video observations as research methodes

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Three patterns where children's possibilities to participate varies.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

discussion in early childhood about the learning practice according to official politics

**Keywords:** early childhood; children under three; the right to participation; democracy; learning activities

### **Materiality and Relationships, Concerns Related to the Notion of Respect and Democracy in an Open Organized Kindergarten in Norway**

ELSE CATHRINE MELHUUS | University of Agder, Norway

#### **Research aims**

to explore the influence space, place and materiality in a newly organized kindergarten has on enhancing a democratic practice, with special focus on the concept of respect. The kindergarten has an open structure where the whole area is open to the children.

## Relationship to previous research works

A follow up of a previous work on outdoor kindergartens and democracy.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The research draws on anthropological theory on place and space developed by Olwig and Gull, and critical theory on space and materiality as in Somerville and Bennet.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Space as a starting point opens up for investigating how human and non-humans enter into different relationships. The research is based on a fieldwork where focus has been on how human and non-human things make the place and influence each other, using child participant methods, videos, photos and interviews with children and adults.

## Ethical considerations

Democracy and respect are normative concepts that easily can blur the divide between open interpretations and judgments.

## Main finding or discussion

Certain cases will be discussed in relationship to the agency of materiality and persons, how this can be linked to the concept of respect. In what way can a kindergarten based on the notion of free choice and where there is abundant of playthings, influence children's approach to the material world? In the Norwegian Kindergarten Curriculum democracy is connected to tolerance and respect. Respect in this work includes respect towards human and non-humans, regarding the object as making a rightful claim on our conduct, as deserving moral consideration in its own right.

## Implications, practice or policy

taking space seriously in planning on all levels.

**Keywords:** space; materiality; democracy; respect; openorganized kindergartens

## How Can Children's Democratic Participation Be Conceptualized?

LIV TORUNN GRINDHEIM | Bergen University College, Norway

### Research aims

My PhD-project aims on identifying conditions for democratic participation in Norwegian kindergartens. Conditions are supposed to be identified through children's ways of participation in communities of peers in their institutional kindergarten contexts.

Relationship to previous research works: Most researchers focus on children's participation from adult perspectives, and in relations between adults and children. Previous research indicates that participation among children like having friends and being a part of playgroups are important relations for children. Most of children's time in kindergarten is spent in interactions with other children. These relations appear to be troubled more often than participation in child-adult relations. The serious consideration of children's agency and right to participate in their everyday life also involves these relations. To expand children's opportunities to experience participation, knowledge of conditions for democratic participation in communities of peers, is needed.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

From Harts ladder of participation to Biesta's pedagogy of interruption.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

I did an ethnographically-inspired fieldwork, joining the everyday life of children in three Norwegian kindergartens. The project is situated in "the new sociology of childhood". Log, manual observations as thick descriptions and more or less structured conversations with the participants were the main methods for preserving experiences.

### Ethical considerations

How 'to catch' children's perspectives?

### Main finding or discussion

What might democratic participation be, if/when children are viewed as citizens?

### Implications, practice or policy

Ways of conceptualize democratic participation lay table for how to interpret experiences from the field.

**Keywords:** democratic participation; peers; kindergartens; Norway; theoretical conceptualization

## **B9 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION I**

Chair: BETSY VAN DE GRIFT | Terzake managementdiensten bv, Netherlands

### **The Lack of Diversity Amongst ECE Center Directors**

BETSY VAN DE GRIFT | Terzake managementdiensten bv, Netherlands

#### **Research aims**

International research shows that the workforce of operational (center) managers in childcare are very homogeneous: 95% are women. How does this lack of diversity influence organizational inclusiveness and diversity?

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Hard, L (2005). How is Leadership Understood and Enacted within the field of early Childhood Education and Care? Muijs, D., Carol Aubrey, Alma Harris, Mary Briggs (2004). How Do They Manage? Wise, V., Travis Wright (2008). Critical Absence in the Field of Educational Administration: framing the (missing) discourse of Leadership in Early Childhood Settings. Peeters, J. (2007). Including man in early childhood education: insights from the European Experience.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

1) Principal-Agent Theory 2) Genderstudies 3) Organizational Climate 4) Leadership in ECE

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

- Data of the Dutch workforce were collected with a online questionnaire, about background, daily activities and perceived job-satisfaction, on 247 respondents having middle management positions in multi-site child care organizations. - Overview relevant research.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Respondents for the questionnaire were approached through both ECE journals and relevant Dutch websites and then referred to the online survey by a link. No personal data were gathered nor were they preserved.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

ECE research shows that operational management influences organizational climate. 'Inclusiveness' -being part of organizational climate- was only found in research according to projects for recruiting 'men in childcare'. The workforce's characteristics are homogeneous. Research outside ECE shows that heterogeneous teams are a predictor of a more inclusive climate.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Center leaders are influencers of the organizational climate, and will be implementers of diversity programs. The lack of diversity in this specific workforce should be addressed in organizational HR policy.

**Keywords:** ECE; center directors; leadership; diversity; management development

### **Awareness of Learning Disability Among Primary School Teachers of English Medium Schools in North India**

MONIKA SHARMA | Christian Medical College Ludhiana, India

#### **Co-author**

SANISH SAMUEL | Christian Medical College Ludhiana, India

#### **Research aims**

To find the awareness of primary school teachers about learning disability(LD). To find if teachers were aware of the provisions by the government.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research underlines the importance of a teacher's role and attitudes, in early detection of LD. Studies from Israel and south India, suggest that teachers of 'special schools' have a greater awareness of learning disability than teachers of mainstream school besides having a poor attitude. A Kenyan study, suggested that teachers had a false idea of their awareness and were inept at helping.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Teachers of primary school are the earliest contacts of a child. Their awareness of learning problems can aid early detection and help.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This prospective study was carried at three primary schools. 100 primary school teachers who consented were requested to answer a questionnaire. It asked for the teacher's awareness, their understanding of LD, its causation and provisions available.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval of the institutional review board.

## **Main finding or discussion**

99% of the respondents said they knew of LD, but most gave vague definitions. Most attributed LD to poor home environment, low IQ and lack of interest in the child and majority felt that working harder with the child would be useful. None mentioned awareness of remedial education. Half of the respondents were unaware of the provisions for children with LD.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Primary school teachers of mainstream school are poorly aware of learning disability and its remedies. One would expect them to report learning problems early. This implies that policy makers must include awareness generation in their agenda of helping children with learning problems.

**Keywords:** learning disability; early detection; awareness; primary school teachers; remedial teaching

# **B10 LEARNING THROUGH COMMUNICATION**

Chair: DEBI KEYTE-HARTLAND | United Kingdom

## **The Children's Group as a Transitional Space**

HOLGER BRANDES | University of Applied Sciences for Social Work, Education and Nursing, Germany

### **Research aims**

At what age do children begin to autonomously create small groups, and what do they learn in there? The aim of the research is to show how children develop their group competence and how they gain the ability to work over extended periods with other children to assemble a common symbolic space.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

See Brandes: Selbstbildung in Kindergruppen (Munic 2008)

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on social constructivism (Youniss), group analytical theory (Foulkes), the psychoanalytic approach (Winnicott) and research about gender and developmental psychology (Maccony).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative analyses of processes in children's groups (based on about 120 scenes in German ECE-institutions).

### **Ethical considerations**

The involved children and the children's parents gave their agreement to be filmed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The most important medium in children's groups is role playing. This manifests largely in fantasy situations, but children also subtly play out family dynamics and gender roles. Hereby the boys and the girls are mostly separated and create a male and female "children's culture". They collectively modify individual scripts that they bring with them from their family environments. The children use the group as a transitional space and there they establish themselves as social subjects. In interacting together the children also move between the spheres of play, non-play and metacommunication. Therefore the children's early group processes are an important starting point not only for the formation of later group skills, but also for the fundamental ability to empathise and for further cognitive development.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The research shows how important is the framework for the children's play in groups.

**Keywords:** children's group; roleplay; gender; social subjects; peers

## **Metacommunication in Pretend Play: How Does it Contribute to Cooperation?**

DORIAN DE HAAN | Utrecht University, Netherlands

### **Research aims**

The aim is to have a better view on how metacommunication contributes to cooperative play between young children

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Relationship with research on social play, pretend play, discourse analysis and language acquisition

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Metacommunication in pretend play is considered the most complex form of social play. However, in an earlier study we did not find any significant correlations between the use of metalanguage and higher levels of cooperation. This raises the question of what children really do by using metacommunication. Do they use it to develop their own narrative line or to build upon the contribution of the other? Is there any relation with conflict behavior? Is it related to the use of directives or questions? Answers to these questions give us a better view of the quality of interaction in social play.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Participants are 24 four- to six-year old children. Video-observations are made of 30minute free play in two Dutch preschools, one with predominantly indigenous children, the other with predominantly children of migrant backgrounds. All language utterances are transcribed and coded. Fragments of pretend play are selected and analyzed for the use of metalanguage, quality of social play, and ways of regulation of behavior. In addition, language ability of the children is taken into account. The data are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

### **Ethical considerations**

Teachers' and parents' consent is obtained for videotaping and publishing.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Results will be available at the end of this academic year.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

A better view of the role of metacommunication may give teachers tools to sustain children's cooperative play

**Keywords:** metacommunication; social play; pretend play; language ability; discourse

## **Developing Children's Critical Thinking Through Question and Dialogue: from the Recall of Experience to the Co-Construction of Knowledge**

DEBI KEYTE-HARTLAND | United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to tell the story of a learning community of UK/Swedish educators co-constructing theories of learning and pedagogy with a specific focus on the ways we ask children questions in projects of inquiry.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

It builds on "Developing a shared language of learning: A centre-based model of CPD" (2010) by Burton, Keyte-Hartland, Watson, Reynish.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study challenges traditional ideals of learning referencing (Moss, Dalhberg, Penn) and the power dynamics inherent in teaching (Foucault). Co-construction and Reggio Emilia's concept of 100 Languages has influenced the development of pedagogy and practice defining the learning community and project as a site of encounter, exchange and dialogue.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

It is a socio-constructivist qualitative case study drawing on semi-structured focus groups, personal reflective journals, documentation of process, analysis of baseline information and exit interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

It is located within ethical guidelines of BERA. Participation was voluntary and where preferred, anonymous. The

author was aware of the ethical challenges of being researcher–participant but also recognised the possibilities this brought.

### **Main finding or discussion**

A culture of learning was co-constructed through the confrontation of multiple perspectives upon episodes of children’s knowledge building processes in network meetings. Identifying tensions between traditional ideals of learning, imposed statutory assessment requirements and those of a desired pedagogy of social co-constructivist approaches was vital. Multi-modality as a process of critical thinking and the use of different languages enabled children to express and co-construct knowledge.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Developing international networks enables educational practice to be continually contested and reshaped by focusing on shared pedagogic projects and differences.

**Keywords:** 100 languages; critical thinking; multi-modality; co-construction; learning community

## **B11 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Chair: TARJA TIKKANEN | Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

### **Curriculum in Kindergarten? - Literacy Learning and Use of ICT with Small Children**

TARJA TIKKANEN | Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

#### **Co-authors**

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#### **Research aims**

Mapping of (i) the status of the “kindergarten curriculum” in the participating countries in terms of policies, attitudes and practice in the area of early literacy learning, and the use of ICT to this end; (ii) the job competence of the pedagogical staff in kindergartens in the above regards.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Relevant research from all five participating countries has contributed to building of the survey. For example studies on children’s play with and exploration of digital tools (digital photos, tablet PC) (Bølgan, 2009b; Jernes, Alvestad, & Sinnerud, 2010; Knudsen & Eriksen Ødegaard, 2011), on use of and access to digital tools (Bølgan, 2009), on children’s activity with a PC (DIGOB - Engelsen, Jernes, Kvinge, Vangsnes, & Økland, 2012), and on how to integrate digital tools in a play-based curriculum in kindergartens (Siraj-Blatchford, 2006) and on how children use social media and tablet pc (Kamp, 2013).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The work builds on a social-constructivist and socio-cultural theories on learning.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study is based on an electronic survey, carried out in April 2013 in all countries participating in CHILDICT. A convenience sample was used.

## Ethical considerations

None.

## Main finding or discussion

The findings from the survey are not yet available. They will be compared across the participating countries. The discussion will be based on reflections from each country.

## Implications, practice or policy

To Teacher Training Institutions, local authorities, kindergartens, and further research.

**Keywords:** digital tools; kindergarten; early literacy learning; curriculum; ICT

## Interactions in Digital Contexts in Kindergarten

MARGRETHE JERNES | University of Stavanger, Norway

### Research aims

The aim of the research is achieving knowledge about child-child and child-adult interactions in contexts where technology is part.

### Relationship to previous research works

In this paper, the dissertation from a ph.d-research, which is an independent study as part of a research project funded by the Norwegian Research Council, will be presented.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The research is anchored in socio-cultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 2001; Rommetveit, 1998; 2008) where the inter-subjective action (Buber, 1996; Bollnow, 1976) is interpreted within the thinking of peer-culture (Corsaro, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 2001; Johansson, 2007).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

It is qualitative research with phenomenological and hermeneutic approach and the data is collected through observations and interviews with both staff and children, during an eight month fieldwork.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations have been taken care of in accordance to the terms of declaration of consent, the issue of confidentiality and information about how results are intended to be presented (NESH, 2010).

### Main finding or discussion

This research is consisting of three studies illuminating from different perspectives the main problem stated. Findings suggest challenges and opportunities teachers face with digital tools in the educational practices in kindergartens. Further analysis from observed interaction by the computer, suggests that there exclusion appear. Children acquire digital literacy in different ways and in different contexts.

### Implications, practice or policy

The analysis shows that the introduction of digital technology in the kindergarten has implications for several fields. For nursery staff the importance of reflecting on the reasons for the use of technology is crucial. As regards higher education, the analysis shows the importance of developing deep knowledge about children and technology in a social context.

**Keywords:** children's and staff's perspective; interaction; digital technology; communication; inclusion

## Young Children's Use of Digital Technologies in Kuwait Preschool Education

IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU | The University of Hull, United Kingdom

### Co-author

FAYIZ MONSHER ALDHAFEERI | University of Kuwait, Kuwait

### Research aims

This project aims to investigate what digital technologies children are using. The key research objectives are to examine: whether young children under the age of five years are using these digital technologies, to what extent and for what purposes and whether they can be considered as digitally literate.



### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study draws upon findings from three key studies: The Australian study(Downes, 1998; Groundwater-Smith et al, 2001; Downes, 2002). The USA (Guthnick, et al 2010) research and the English project Marsh et al (2005).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Children's and families' interactions with digital technologies and teachers' perceptions on how these technologies can be used a learning tool in preschool education in Kuwait.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

mixed methods approach

### **Ethical considerations**

Consent of all participants will be acquired prior to the research project. We also aim to create ethical spaces for research with children and share methods as participatory methods . the research tools will be developed and used collectively.

### **Main finding or discussion**

This is a work in progress and we are still collecting data but preliminary analysis so far has demonstrated that young children are users of a number of different digital technologies .

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The preschool education in Kuwait need to re-examine the way children interact with the digital technologies and organise their learning environments in a way that accommodate children's experiences

**Keywords:** early childhood education; digital literacies; digital technologies; learning environments; family's perspectives

## **B12 NATURE AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

Chair: JEANETTE HILL | Redcliffe Children's Centre, United Kingdom

### **Learning in Pre-School – Teachers' Role**

LAILA GUSTAVSSON | Kristianstad University, Sweden

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to discuss qualitatively different ways in which teachers offer children (aged 4-5) to learn about phenomena in nature when visiting nature.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Gustavsson & Pramling (2012 manuscript) The educational nature of various ways teachers communicate with children about natural phenomena Marton & Tsui (2004) Classroom discourse and the space of learning

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Variation theory is presented as a framework for analysing the data. The theory assumes that variation is needed to support learning. However, the variation is not in methods but in variation of critical aspects needed to understand the object of learning. This means that how the specific content of learning is dealt with has effect on childrens' learning.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The empirical data consist of video observations of children and teachers communicating with one another. The research builds on ordinary preschool activities.

#### **Ethical considerations**

All parents were informed and had to give their written permission for the children to take part in the research. The children were were informed it was freely for them to stop the recording whenever they wanted. The teachers were also informed. All participants were guaranteed preservation of anonymity.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The study identifies two qualitatively different ways to present the object of learning to the children. One way is based on the principle of opening up dimensions of variation and the second way is built on presumed shared previous experience as a resource for making sense of a novel observation.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

How teachers deal with the object of learning is important for children's learning

**Keywords:** deep learning; surface learning; variation theory; pre-school children; teachers' role

## **How Can a Nursery School Maximise the Potential for Young Children to Experience Adventure and Challenge, Assess Risks for Themselves and Enjoy a Sense of Freedom?**

JEANETTE HILL | Redcliffe Children's Centre, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

Aims to identify how the immediate outside area of a Nursery in an urban environment can maximise potential of regular visits to a wild, unstructured forest. Study follows development of the garden with two children from 10 months old until present day, alongside forest visits.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Two previous papers which include the same children.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Ethnographic study seeks to explain and make sense of the world that the children are exploring at nursery and in the forest. It will be done through the perceptions of the parents, staff and myself.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodology is based on case studies of two children, collated from qualitative data from interviews with staff, parents, video footage, photographic & written observations from practitioners and reflective professional discussions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Permission been obtained from children's parents. Methods used to gather data, how it will be shared have been explained. Parents have been given option to remove their child at any time and see data. I will adhere to Redcliffe Children's Centre Research Ethics Policy.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Facilitate action and make improvements to the current garden. The study is still in progress. Analysis will be happening in the future. Some initial findings are already evident and have started to impact on the nursery garden. These are:

- Providing sufficient physical challenge
- Adults allowing children to take risks

Provision of flexible pieces and loose parts

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The outcomes from this study will impact on the quality of provision, the pedagogical practice. It will influence future Professional Development within our network, in Bristol. The setting is a National Teaching School.

**Keywords:** adventure; freedom; challenge; risk; unstructured

## **B13 CHILDRENS EXPERIENCES IN ECE**

Chair: TIINA PETERSON | Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Estonia

## **Children's Experiences of Knowledge in Centres for Children and Families**

TIZIANA MORGANDI | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

### **Co-authors**

PIERA BRAGA | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

SUSANNA MANTOVANI | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

### **Research aims**

Aim of the research is exploring the quality of learning experience in some parents/children centres in Italy for children aged 0-3. Data concern free play, peer interactions, experiences and structured activities proposed by teachers/caregiver.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research refers to researches that have highlighted the children's potentials for learning in the early years in out of family context. It is inscribed in a broaden comparative international study (Hoshi-Watanabe, Musatti Rayna, Vandenbroeck, 2012).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study refers to sociocultural theories in early childhood and development and to more recent perspectives introduced in the field by anthropological studies on the cultural nature of learning and development (Rogoff, 1990,2003 ;LeVine, New, 2008). It also refers to studies on situated-learning in the early years and on the role of peers and adults to sustain children's exploration.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study adopts a qualitative and phenomenological paradigm and combines observations and focus group discussions with parents and teachers.

### **Ethical considerations**

Formal consents has been required to parents and teachers.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings give evidence that the activities proposed to children by teachers in these centers tend to under-estimate their potentials for learning. The focus is rather on relationships and often overlooks learning opportunities.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

To promote intercultural dialogue between teachers and parents, the co-construction of representations of development more "soft" , in line with the potential of children; to recognize issues and guidelines for professional development.

**Keywords:** children potentials for learning; parenting/parenthood; professional development; representations; observation

## **Empowerment Experiences from Infancy to Kindergarten**

ELENI LOIZOU | University of Cyprus, Cyprus

### **Co-author**

NASIA CHARALAMBOUS | University of Cyprus, Cyprus

### **Research aims**

In what ways are infants-toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarteners empowered during their daily activities in their school setting? How is the level of empowerment differentiated during play, routines and structured activities? What is the role of the teacher and the curriculum in the process of empowerment?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study investigates experiences of empowerment in the realm of children's rights, participation and democratic practices.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Our theoretical framework draws from Page and Czuba's definition of empowerment (1999) "a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives" (¶11).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Participant observations over the period of three months were employed to study young children's experiences at a university-based school during their daily activities in their natural environment.

### **Ethical considerations**

All parents were informed about the study and were asked to sign a consent form for their child to participate.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Data suggests that during the earlier years, infancy and toddlerhood, there are more opportunities for children to be empowered to reject their teachers' initiations or suggestions and make their own decisions of what to play with, when and how. The main limitations were in reference to safety issues. Whereas, in the case of older children, preschoolers and kindergarteners due to the differentiated curricular and teacher expectations there are fewer opportunities for power negotiation and empowerment is experienced mainly during play.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Research suggests that we need to reconsider our curricular expectations of older children in order to allow both educators and children to have opportunities of participation and thus empowerment during their early school experiences.

**Keywords:** infancy; preschool-kindergarten; empowerment; early childhood curriculum; free play

## **B14 TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Chair: CATHARINE GILSON | Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

### **‘I Want to Spend My Time Teaching Rather than Dealing with Tantrums and Toilet Issues’: Student Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of the Early Years Educator**

CATHARINE GILSON | Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

To investigate the factors influencing the formation of professional identity in Early Years student teachers looking in particular at the idealisation and denigration of the role of the EY educator.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Britzman (1992, 2003) and Bibby (2010) have written on the productive use of psychoanalytic theories as a lens through which to consider education to yield fresh insights and understanding. Psychosocial approaches to methodology have influenced this empirical study, in particular the work of Hollway and Jefferson (2012) and Kvale (1999).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study is informed by psychoanalytic perspectives of education, particularly the notion of the defended subject as developed by Klein (Bibby, 2010; Mitchell, 1986). The study also draws on the work of Winnicott (1994).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study uses a mixed method design. A questionnaire survey was administered to 120 student teachers to collect factual data and identify any patterns in beliefs relating to professional identity. This descriptive data then informed the two subsequent focus groups of 4/6 students each.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The impact of being an insider researcher was taken into consideration throughout with particular regard to the administration and timing of the fieldwork.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings suggest that polarised perceptions of the role of the early years educator undermine the formation of a coherent and resilient professional identity. It is hoped to discuss these findings in the light of social and cultural influences.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings have implications for the training of EY educators, particularly in terms of completion of training programmes and entry to and retention in the early years workforce.

**Keywords:** professional; identity; idealisation; student; educators

### **Which Concept of Children’s Learning Do Students of Early Childhood Education Programmes or Primary School Education Programmes Have? – a Comparative Study**

ANJA SEIFERT | Ludwigsburg University, Germany

#### **Co-author**

ELKE REICHMANN | Protestant University of Applied Sciences, Germany

#### **Research aims**

Specified study programmes in early childhood education were recently established in German universities of

applied sciences and universities of education. Both early childhood educators and primary school teachers work with children up to the age of ten. Central questions of research: Do students of these two study programmes have a similar understanding of the concept of how children learn and how those learning processes can be supported? In the beginning of the first term seven group discussions were conducted with first semester students from both study programmes. The students of the different study programmes were not mixed, the groups were therefore homogenous and chosen by chance out of the first semester student pool. The students did not know each other and group sizes varied from five to nine students. Apart from the comparison of the understanding of the students it will be interesting to see the development of this understanding over the course of their studies, especially considering theoretical approaches.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In a lot of countries a common study for pre-school and school teachers exists. Additionally, cooperation between pre-school and primary school is still a big issue. The researchers were involved in research projects referring to the topic of transition from pre-school to school and pre-school teachers' view on learning.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Even if learning is a central term in education sciences and in teacher training, there is no common concept. Instead, we have a lot of different theories and an imprecise use in educational settings. The need to balance between learning through instruction and learning as self education, learning as formal learning and learning in informal settings is closely linked to the different concepts (psychological, anthropological, cultural-historical approaches) and self-understandings of the institutions kindergarten and school. Also, the own learning biography influences the concept of learning

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

qualitative, group discussions, content analysis

### **Ethical considerations**

confidentiality, anonymity

### **Main finding or discussion**

The main findings show that future preschool teachers already have a different view of children's learning than future primary school teachers. Perspectives on learning differ in that future primary school teachers focus on learning as something institutionalised, whereas future early childhood educators have a more child-centered view.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings have implications for policy/ practice in the development of pre-school and teacher training.

**Keywords:** learning; pre-school; primary school; professionalism; teacher training

## **Getting Ready to Be an Early Childhood Teacher**

FILIZ VAROL | Firat University, Turkey

### **Research aims**

This study investigates early childhood teacher candidates' professional development during their participation in teacher education program.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The realities of 21st century require teachers to be skillful in every aspects of teaching including content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge. As stated in literature, it is critical to identify what teacher candidates need to be effective teachers.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The current study was organized based on a framework for understanding teaching and learning proposed by Darling-Hammond and Bransford in 2005.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Total of 178 teacher candidates participated: 50 freshmen, 50 sophomores, 43 juniors, 35 seniors. Two questions were asked: if you were a teacher, what were your strengths/weaknesses. They were given 30 to 45 minutes to answer those questions. Data were analyzed using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis program. Two main themes were identified: personal characteristics and professional characteristics and the change over four years was our focus.

### **Ethical considerations**

The participants were asked for their consent to participate in such study and all agreed to participate. They were

also informed that the information they would give us would stay confidential.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Among the sub-themes, being patient has an interesting trend. While freshmen did not think that it was so important, there was a peak in sophomores and juniors, and it becomes less important for seniors. The teacher candidates' communication skills got better as they continue to their teacher education program. Teacher candidates realize the importance of teaching experience. Also, aggressiveness shows downward trend.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study will may shed some lights on re-organizing the course contents, goals, objectives, and course format that are given in teacher education programs.

**Keywords:** teacher education; theories of teacher education; teacher candidates; early childhood; professional development

## **B15 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN ECE**

Chair: MARESA DUIGNAN | Early Years Education Policy Unit, Ireland

### **Young Children's Perspectives and Assessing Quality in the Early Years Setting**

JUDY WHITMARSH | University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

#### **Co-author**

LIZ COLEYSHAW | University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This study, part of the Longitudinal Study of the Early Years Professional Status (Hadfield et al. 2012) explored how Early Years' Professionals (EYPs) respond to children's perspectives (CP) to inform practice and enhance early years' provision in six settings.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The complex, problematic, nature of assessing quality (Dahlberg and Moss 2005; Fenech 2011); the 'children's perspective', which encompasses consultation (Davies and Artaraz 2009), listening (Clark 2005), participation (Lancaster 2010), and children's voice (Conroy and Harcourt 2009).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

As above and also Shier's model (2001) model of child participation.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The Mosaic approach, incorporating conversation, digital photography, child-guided tour, group interview, interview with the EYP and a subsequent reflective discussion.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was gained from the university ethics committee and the CWDC project advisory board. Best practice guidelines were followed during the research, including gaining assent from the children and consent from parent/carers.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

We identified three overlapping stages of maturity, reflecting the degree to which knowledge and understanding of children's perspectives were embedded in a setting's approach to practice leadership. The settings with the most advanced approaches to children's perspectives also had the least hierarchical management structures. Tensions and barriers were mediated by confident leadership and the emancipatory ethos of the more mature model.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The presentation will explore factors facilitating and restricting the use of children's perspectives into settings to enhance quality provision. Coleyshaw, L. Whitmarsh, J. Jopling, M. Hadfield, M. (2012) Listening to children's perspectives: improving the quality of provision in early years' settings. Department for Education.. <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfE-RR239b%20report.pdf>

**Keywords:** children's perspectives; EYPS (early years' professionals); quality; challenges; impact

## Quality Improvement: Listening to the Voice of Practitioners

ROSIE WALKER | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### Research aims

The aim was to explore what practitioners perceive as influencing the quality of early education within a range of workplace settings.

### Relationship to previous research works

Follow on work from Early childhood practitioners developing an academic voice within a community of practice: Early childhood tutors making sense of the research process

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Research into Early Childhood Education and Care reveals an interconnectivity between structural and process features of quality. It is important to understand how such interconnectivity may be seen as driving forward quality and the importance of recognising less visible quality drivers such as the ability of practitioners to reflect and evaluate their own practice.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research was conducted at a University in England using embedded qualitative research. Methods included content and relational analysis from course materials produced by students alongside phenomenological interviews, group interviews, participant observation and case studies

### Ethical considerations

The project design was scrutinised by the University Ethics Committee. Participant permission obtained. Ethical parameters included strategies for participation and withdrawal by respondents

### Main finding or discussion

The research revealed an interconnectivity between structural and process features of quality and illustrates how such interconnectivity was seen as driving forward quality and the importance of recognising less visible quality drivers. It also revealed how the transformational nature of the inquiry for participants and researchers.

### Implications, practice or policy

The research sheds light on the way quality is perceived by practitioners and that high quality approaches to Early Education and Care appears to be heightened when structural and process features are understood and connected by practitioners.

**Keywords:** quality; praxeology; values; innovation; professionalism

## Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education in Hong Kong: a Case Study of University-School Support Program

DORA HO | The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

### Research aims

This paper attempts to identify the process of school capacity building in ECE in Hong Kong.

### Relationship to previous research works

There have been different perspectives on the concept of capacity building depending on different contexts. The keys to the process of school capacity building are restructuring and reculturing.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Restructuring can be described as re-establishing and formalizing a new system which focuses on networking teachers effectively into the learning community for professional growth and development. Reculturing can be understood as a shift in the common direction of the school, producing a culture of inquiry.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research methodology used in the study was action research which was developed by Susman and Evered (1978). There are five phases within each research cycle, namely diagnosing, action planning, taking action, evaluating, and specifying learning.

### Ethical considerations

The methods of data collection included field notes and interviewing. With consent given by the interviewees in the study, all interviews were audio-taped and fully transcribed for content analysis. Any information obtained in this study remained very strictly confidential.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The preschool in this study went through a process of capacity building for change, from the status quo ante, preparation and initial stage of change.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

There are two implications. First, this signaled that the school principals began to engage in delegation. There might be a trend moving towards a decentralized form of leadership practice. Second, the key stage coordinators began to shoulder more responsibilities in leading curriculum changes. There might be a potential shift that they would act as teacher leaders in quality improvement.

**Keywords:** capacity building; school development; leadership; quality improvement; university support

## **B16 CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROFESSIONALISM**

Chair: WILMA ROBLES MELENDEZ | Fischler School of Education, United States of America

### **How Do the Foreign Teachers Recognize the Japanese Mimamoru Approach?**

HARUTOMO UEDA | Nagoya City University, Japan

#### **Co-author**

FUMINORI NAKATSUBO | Hiroshima University, Japan

#### **Research aims**

The purpose of this study are below,

- 1) What is the Japanese Mimamoru Approach as the teachers' professionalism?
- 2) How do the foreign teachers recognize it?

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

In ECEC, teachers' professionalism has become an important keyword not only Japan but also in many other countries. For example, in the US, the importance of Intentional Teaching has been pointed out as one of the essential professionalism. But, in Japan, it is slightly different from the U.S. We are called it the "Japanese Mimamoru Approach".

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Previous our studies of the Japanese Mimamoru Approach argue that it is non-interventional involvement teachers' attitude to children.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The participants in this study were three teachers in US. The researcher interviewed teachers for 1 hour about Japanese teachers' behavior. The resulting narrative data was collected and analyzed using SCAT (qualitative analysis method).

#### **Ethical considerations**

We explained the purpose of this study to all participants and gained agreement.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First, the Japanese Mimamoru Approach is non-interventional involvement. Japanese teachers guide children to solve problems by themselves by not teaching or intervening purposefully with children, although they have educational intentions. Second, the US teachers thought it is important to intervene with children by Japanese Mimamoru Approach. But they thought it is difficult for US teachers, because US teachers have many roles as a 'Conductor'.... It is creating, leading, adjusting, time-keeping, solving.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Japanese Mimamoru approach and US teaching should not be considered as forming a dichotomy, but instead should be studied from each other's approach.

**Keywords:** Mimamoru Approach; professionalism; ECEC teacher; teachers' roles; qualitative research



## Same Same but Different?! – a Cross Cultural Approach to the Professional Self Concept of Educators

KATJA GRAMELT | University of Wuppertal, Germany

### Research aims

The project Efilki (Educators film (everyday life in ) kindergarten) seeks to find out the professional self concept of educators by asking them to film aspects of everyday life in their institution. Participating countries are Germany (Berlin), Great Britain (London) and Turkey (Istanbul).

### Relationship to previous research works

The project is based on Joseph Tobins study 'Preschool in three cultures' (1991). Following his ideas, in Efilki, Educators give insight into their work. New is the approach to let the educators do the filming and thereby show their uninfluenced view.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Major changes in the concepts of Early Childhood Education and along with that the training of educators created a gap between the new demands and the recognition of the educators' work (OECD 2004). In order to redefine the requirements of future educators' training, a inventory of what educators do is a necessary step (Barnett 2004).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The qualitative research design has three stages: 1) Educators film in their own institution, 2) Educators discuss films from other countries, 3) Educators discuss the feedback from other countries. The group discussions will be analyzed with the documentary method.

### Ethical considerations

All participating parents, children and educators agreed to appear in the videos and be part of the study.

### Main finding or discussion

The findings reveal a differentiated understanding of how Early Childhood Education is defined and put into practice in different cultures.

### Implications, practice or policy

The results invite to a more differentiated view of the practice. Professional competence in Early Childhood Education cannot be universally defined, but must be adapted to the particular cultural, historical and societal context.

**Keywords:** professionalism; educators; cross cultural; video study; qualitative research

## Growing to Help Children Grow: a Culturally-Based Model to Support the Professional Development Needs of Hispanic

WILMA ROBLES MELENDEZ | Nova Southeastern University, United States of America

### Research aims

Need to create a culturally-responsive model to facilitate training of Spanish-speaking immigrant early childhood teachers in South Florida working in child care settings. Support professional needs by overcoming language barriers validating cultural knowledge

### Relationship to previous research works

Quality as priority in the quest for appropriate early childhood experiences for young children (NAEYC, 2013; NGA Center for Best Practices, 2010). Importance of teacher preparation underlined by findings revealing developmentally-based practices and positive children's learning outcomes depend on the level of training teachers have (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1996; NAEYC, 2012). Need exist for responsive training meeting diverse characteristics of early educators.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

NAEYC standards for teacher preparation used as framework for professional development. Model followed a constructivist approach. Integration of Moll's funds of knowledge concept for cultural responsiveness

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Quality as a paradigm for excellence in early childhood programs guided experiences. NAEYC framework used as template for bilingual experiences. Reflection integrated to connect concepts with own knowledge, experiences. Follow-up visits to identify transfer of knowledge.

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants were asked to participate in the training. Selection was made based on those meeting admission expectations and who agreed to participate

### **Main finding or discussion**

Three-years of implementation revealed participants' high rate of success. Follow-up visits showed high sense of pride and commitment to children. Reflection using NAEYC standards continued as way to see own progress. Culturally-based experiences validated, supported own experiences and promoted need for ongoing growth.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Culturally-responsive design meets needs of teachers with diverse backgrounds and facilitates meeting credentialing expectations. Reflection fosters growth which leads to enhancing quality of practices.

**Keywords:** hispanic early educators; quality; teacher training; culturally-responsive training; reflection

## **B17 DEVELOPMENT REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS**

Chair: HOLLY MCCARTNEY | James Madison University, United States of America

### **From Research to Reality: Becoming Reflective Practitioners**

HOLLY MCCARTNEY | James Madison University, United States of America

#### **Co-author**

TERESA HARRIS | James Madison University, United States of America

#### **Research aims**

Our aim is to help our graduate students in a course titled Inquiry in Early Childhood Education, value the process of teacher research. By explicitly providing opportunities for our teacher candidates to "see into teaching" (Loughran, 2007, p. 1) we hope they come to see teaching as a profession that goes beyond simply delivering content and toward the ability to question, revise and improve practice.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Our study parallels Loughlin's work on developing a pedagogy of teaching through researching practice (2007) and Meier & Stremmel (2010); Dunn, Harrison & Coombe (2008) who suggest that the value of teacher research is its ability to allow teachers to reconstruct their role as teachers.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The ability to solve questions directly related to our own practice allows us to rethink our own educational philosophies, become more reflective in order to effect change in both large and small ways. (Meier, Henderson, 2007; Perry Henderson, Meier, 2012).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodology: Qualitative. Teacher Research. Action Research. Methods: Observations, Interviews, Focus Groups, document collection.

#### **Ethical considerations**

All participants have completed our Universities human subjects in research training provided prior to conducting their own inquiry projects. Participants gave consent to allow their work to be considered for this study. Pseudonyms were used throughout.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Student investment in the inquiry process depends on where they are along the developmental process of becoming a teacher. More detailed findings will be shared.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

If we value the importance being a reflective practitioner, then we must provide opportunities for our students to see beyond just "doing teaching." (Loughran, 2007, p.1)

**Keywords:** early childhood; inquiry; reflection; pre-service teachers; praxis

# Developing Critical Thinking as Part of the Process of Becoming an Early Years Teacher: Tutor and Students Learning Together

MADELAINE LOCKWOOD | York St John University, United Kingdom

## Research aims

In this action research project I evaluate the quality of my work as a tutor of a group of Early Years PGCE students in facilitating and supporting their critical thinking and conceptual understanding of being an Early Years Practitioner through an 'enquiry-based' approach.

## Relationship to previous research works

Reflection on values and ethics led me to question previous research methods. Changes to methods of gathering data were made for this phase of the action research cycle.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

I draw upon the work of Hodge (2008) who outlines key attributes of a successful 'Student as scholar', Moon's (2008) perspective on developing critical thinking, McNiff (2010), in using values as a criterion for judging practice and Mitchell (2008, 2011) and McIntosh (2010) for the use of visual methods to facilitate and represent reflection.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Visual imagery (drawing) is used as a mode of enquiry and representation, personal journal entries and images as sources of data.

## Ethical considerations

The institution's ethical research guidelines and equal opportunities policy was followed. A 'reassuring' invitation to make a drawing was given. The right to withdraw was emphasised, signed consent was sought for participation and use of data and anonymity was an option. Choice of materials and a leisurely pace was provided, followed by opportunity for participation to explain their thinking.

## Main finding or discussion

This paper presents key themes from the analysis of images and explanations based on the relationship between student and tutor learning journeys.

## Implications, practice or policy

Involvement in this process has challenged my values, role as a tutor and researcher and perceptions of students' needs and strategies for support.

**Keywords:** values; critical thinking; conceptual understanding; role of tutor; visual imagery

## B18 CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Chair: JAN SVERRE KNUDSEN | Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway

### Children's Concert Experience: an Intercultural Approach

JAN SVERRE KNUDSEN | Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway

#### Research aims

This paper presents research into young children's experiences of and reactions to the concert event in a multicultural setting: Indian musicians and dancers performing in Norwegian primary schools. It investigates physical and oral responses to the concert event. The presentation is based on my chapter in the new book *Young Children, Pedagogy and the Arts*, edited by Felicity McArdle and Gail Boldt.

#### Relationship to previous research works

The project draws upon previous research in music education for young children and the psychology and sociology of music.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework is based on current thinking in the psychology of music and music education. (H. Gembris 2005, S. Young 2004, C. Trevarthen 1997, L. Green 2008). The conceptual framework is inspired by social constructivist thinking.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The methodological approach is child-centred with a focus on children's own perspectives and meaning-making

strategies. Research data are gathered through observations and group interviews with young children.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are addressed in accordance with the ethical norms of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

### **Main finding or discussion**

Main findings give an image of particularities of children's concert experience, their associations and meaning-making strategies. Findings point to ways of experiencing, associating and reacting physically that are particular to being a child.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Recognizing these particularities challenges prevailing practices of art promotion to children as well as underlying ideologies and understandings of childhood. The presentation argues that since children experience the arts differently, art promoters and educators should also reconsider the focus and format of artistic presentations in order to address these differences in a relevant way.

**Keywords:** music education; concert promotion; indian music and dance; psychology of music; multicultural education

## **Artistic Expression and Impression = the Basic Human Link from Birth to ...?**

KATALIN KOZAK | Oslo and Akershus University Collage, Norway

### **Research aims**

To enlarge and add new understanding of children's native ability of perceiving complex esthetic impulses. Observe children's own spontaneous esthetic production practice as reactions to artistic experiences. Reinforce the dramatic, musical and visual art curriculum in Early Childhood Education. Emphasize the importance to recognize the quality of children's spontaneous esthetic behavior.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

- Norwegian Klangfugl project; - International Glitterbird project; - Baby theater program at Kolibri Theatre, Budapest

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

M.Csikszentmihalyi's studies on Flow The Psychology of Optimal Experience H.Gadamer: Art as a Play Kant: aesthetic taste is not a concept of understanding but the free play of imagination. www.hioa.no : dr. Faith G. Guss; professor Leif Hernes, professor Ellen Os recent achievements

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Comparative studies of performing practice I try to find meeting points between these theoretical and practical working fields on my way producing a study book for future Early Childhood Educators.

### **Ethical considerations**

Kindergarten pedagogues responsibility of children's social, esthetic and cultural development

### **Main finding or discussion**

Children's joy of artistic communication Children's need to react to impulses as of utter importance Free dramatic play, fantasy and imagination is a basic condition for cognitive development Sensibility prior to ReCognition. The importance of recognizing the youngest spontaneous esthetic behavior.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Collaboration with portuguese colleagues: - Helena Rodrigues prof. Psychology of Music, Pedagogy UNL, director of Laboratory for Music and Communication in Infancy of the research Unit CESEM of FCSH. She is also artistic director of www.Musicateatral.com Exchanges by visiting each other's Institutes for workshops and lectures, demonstrations - Paulo Lameiro, Artistic Director Escola de Artes SAMP Leira and his ensemble Concertoes para Bébés.

**Keywords:** children under the age of 3; theatre art; esthetic communication; dramatic communication; esthetic curriculum

## **Culture in Pre-School - a Transboundary Cooperation Between Five Institutions**

ASBJØRN HIRSCH | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

## Co-author

HARRIET AUGUSEN | Mid Sweden University, Sweden

## Research aims

The purpose of this study was to follow the process of an Interreg project, which aimed to create a permanent preschool teacher education with a focus on culture heritage and childhood culture. Three teacher training institutions and two museums in Norway and Sweden participated in a transboundary three-year development work. The process was followed through an on-going evaluation.

## Relationship to previous research works

Educational research

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

We used a simplified model of Activity Theory and Action Theory as theoretical frameworks and as tools for analysis.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Data was collected from taped and documented individual and group interviews, surveys and focus groups. The target groups consisted of students, teachers, museum educators and the project steering group.

## Ethical considerations

Our material has been handled confidentially. In the descriptions we have used fictive names. Some of the project's key persons have not been possible to de-identify. The descriptions can not harm anyone, we believe we have done what is possible to meet the ethical requirements.

## Main finding or discussion

All respondents were seriously engaged in creating an attractive innovative pre-school teacher education, where teaching and learning were based on children's culture and cultural heritage in museums as well as in the children's own environment. Many important experiences were made along the way, a basis for continued cooperation was formed. Nevertheless the project failed in creating a permanent pre-school education after the project period. There were many reasons for this.

## Implications, practice or policy

Awareness of the importance of identifying differences between two countries' educational systems concerning national rules, frameworks, cultures and built-in values

**Keywords:** preschool teacher training; culture heritage; childhood culture; transboundary cooperation; learning organisations

## B19 CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY I

Chair: MARION BRENNAN | Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

## Transforming Nicaraguan Myths and Legends into Digital Stories: Educational Use of Digital Storytelling

NAHÚM TÓRREZ | Vestfold University College, Norway

## Co-author

OMMUND C. VAREBERG | Vestfold University College, Norway

## Research aims

Our major concern is to develop knowledge about teaching methodology, text analysis and assessment of digital storytelling products developed for small children.

## Relationship to previous research works

Several researchers have studied the educational use of digital storytelling in different levels (Haug et.al. 2012; Meadows 2003; Sadik 2008). Our study focuses on the pedagogical use of transmediation of traditional oral legends in Nicaragua into educational digital stories.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Our study is based on a framework of social semiotics (Halliday 2004), multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001, 2006, van Leeuwen 2005) and pedagogical text theory (Selander & Skjelbred 2004).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The method has two steps. In the first step, five Nicaraguan myths and legends are transformed into digital stories by teacher students. The digital versions shall function as patterns for young students when they make digital versions of myths and legends. In step two, the digital stories will be analyzed as multimodal pedagogical texts according to their function.

### **Ethical considerations**

No children will take part in this part of the research; since the issue is production and analysis of digital stories.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The preliminary results show that digital storytelling is fruitful and has a large potential to transmediate oral legends in a way that give young children experience with digital media.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Through digital stories it is possible both giving children digital experience and at the same time preserving and conveying the cultural heritage of the ancient myths and legends.

**Keywords:** digital stories; myths and legends; transmediation; multimodal text; social semiotics

## **Exploring the Attitude Towards Aboriginal Parents' Selecting and Using of Picture Books**

CHING-YUAN HSIAO | The National University of Tainan, Taiwan

### **Research aims**

This study was initially based on past references and relevant researches to analyse and discuss the motivation and reasons for how aboriginal parents selecting children's picture books. It also applied the perspective on characters of visual art and cultural characters of children's picture books.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The researcher has done the action research on investigating children's response to appreciation picture book activities several times.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The majority of parents' selection on children's picture books was based on "the gender of children" and "the price of picture books" (Yeh, 2012).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The researcher made the research of children's picture books with data of in-depth interview to compile a questionnaire.

### **Ethical considerations**

Before collecting data, the researcher sent the concern form to the participants, and all of them want to participate in this research.

### **Main finding or discussion**

1. Aboriginal parents reading with children less than 1 hour per week, and they spent less than \$30 USD on purchasing picture books. 2. Parents share picture books with their children based on "colors-The Amis tribe prefer the picture books used red, white, and black." 3. Parents' selection of picture books will be verified due to "different domestic-caregivers" and "the number of siblings—most of them purchase picture book for the firstborn." 4. Parents' use on children's picture books will be changed because of "gender—mother purchased more books than father", "age—20-30 years old parents purchased more picture books than 40-50 ones."

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The researcher want to include the aboriginal parents who live in both east coast & west coast to participate this research in the future.

**Keywords:** aboriginal parents; children's picture books; selecting; attitude; culture characters

## **"They Will Catch up, Right?"**

ELISDABETH STANGELAND | University of Stavanger, Norway

### **Research aims**

Exploring genderdifferences in early age language- and selfregualtion skills

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Children's literacy begins with language, were rich and engaging language environments during the first five years of life is the best way to ensure their success as readers. Self-regulation is a skill that also has been linked to literacy and to academic success. Out of general concern for understanding variability in acquisition of literacy, researchers have looked for impressive- and expressive language precursors of written language skills. Although there is abundant evidence linking language development in kindergarten years to later literacy, research evidence for differences between Norwegian boys and girls in skills linked to literacy is more limited. In this study we look to early age language - and self-regulation skills in toddlers attending Norwegian ECEC (N= 1005).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Building on theories about literacy and school readiness which emphasize certain skills in early age as important predictors for academic success, gender differences in linguistic awareness, self-regulation, word production and language comprehension was explored using data drawn from the observational system TRAS.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Authentic-Assessment, Quantitative analysis

## **Ethical considerations**

Parents consent for all of the participants is in line with regulations specified by NSD. In order to preserve anonymity the cases have been coded.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Significant gender differences, favouring girls, was found in all four aspects explored. The most pronounced gender difference was found in linguistic awareness and word production, skills known to be important in the initial stages of reading.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings will be discussed in relation to other research on language development and gender, and questions concerning pedagogical practices of inclusion will be raised.

**Keywords:** gender; early language and self-regulation; inclusion; toddlers; ECEC practices

## **B20 TRANSITION AND PRACTICES II**

Chair: SUSAN GRIESHABER | Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

## **Investigating Transition to School Through Participatory Action Research**

TESS BOYLE | Southern Cross University, Australia

### **Co-authors**

SUSAN GRIESHABER | Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

ANNE PETRIWSKYJ | Queensland University of Technology, Australia

### **Research aims**

Building on prior transition to school studies with teachers in both the school and prior-to-school sector, this study investigates how a particular research approach might address questions raised. The methodology (participatory action research) evolved from these former studies and represents a 'new' approach to studies about transition to school.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Developmental theoretical perspectives, most notably ecological and sociocultural theories, inform most studies of transition to school. This study contributes to a smaller yet emerging body of transition literature informed by critical theoretical perspectives.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Critical theory informs the study and the collaborative research processes. Each participant has an equal voice in the planning, development and facilitation of the cross-sectoral activities.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The participants of this and a previous pilot study initiated the formation of a professional learning community. Within this forum (a participatory action research group) the design and aims of the study, professional learning activities, transition activities and data collection methods, timelines and evaluation tools were negotiated.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study was formally reviewed and approved by the Queensland University of Technology's Human Research Ethics Committee Brisbane, Australia. A summary of ethical considerations was distributed to participants.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Data collected using this collaborative enquiry approach has resulted in shared understandings of continuity during transition and of research processes. The facilitation of mutual and collaborative processes resulted in outcomes that will inform changes in transition research approaches as well as changes in transition pedagogies.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study provides empirical evidence of how research processes and approaches to transition might be influenced by critical theoretical perspectives.

**Keywords:** transition to school; participatory action research; professional learning community; early years education; critical theory

## **Adult-Child Interaction in Crèche Contexts: a Praxeological Research on Adult's Mediation Role**

SARA BARROS ARAÚJO | School of Education of Institute Polytechnic of Porto and Childhood Association, Portugal

### **Co-author**

JÚLIA FORMOSINHO | Portuguese Catholic University and Childhood Association, Portugal

### **Research aims**

The study aimed to understand the impact of a context-based teacher education process at the level of adult-child interaction, in a context for children under 3's.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study was carried out under Pedagogy-in-Participation, the pedagogical perspective of Childhood Association (Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho, 2012), that has been developing training, research and intervention projects, in Portugal, over the last 20 years.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework encompasses participatory pedagogies (Oliveira-Formosinho, Kishimoto & Pinazza, 2007), in which Pedagogy-in-Participation is integrated.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A praxeological research project was developed in two activities rooms, with the participation of two educators and a context-based teacher trainer / researcher. The context-based teacher education process was centred around the transformation of quality in several pedagogical dimensions, including adult-child interaction. Data collection included the researcher's field notes, interviews with the early childhood education teachers and the use of the Adult Engagement Scale, from the Baby Effective Early Learning Programme (Bertram & Pascal 2006).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical concerns included the ongoing informed consent of participants and confidentiality assurance.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Results show a positive impact of the context-based teacher education process at the level of adult-child interaction in all adult engagement categories: sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy. They also show particular difficulties, in both professionals, at the level of stimulation. Finally, they turned visible a differentiated evolution on the professional learning of both educators in their mediational role.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for practice consider the need for specific and explicit pedagogical frameworks that can sustain the critical analysis of practice and contribute to its transformation, through participative processes.

**Keywords:** praxeological research; context-based teacher education; adult-child interaction; mediation; participatory pedagogies



## **B21 GENDER DIFFERENCES**

Chair: PÄIVI PIHLAJA | University of Turku, Finland

### **Gender and Social-Emotional Difficulties Among Toddlers**

PÄIVI PIHLAJA | University of Turku, Finland

#### **Co-authors**

JENNI FYRSTEN | University of Oulu, Finland

JAANA ALAKORTES | University of Oulu, Finland

#### **Research aims**

In this study we examine the occurrence of social-emotional difficulties among 18-month old children (N= 1134) and the gender differences.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The estimate of general prevalence of children's social and emotional difficulties has been for years around 15-20 percentage (Puura et al 1995; Walker et al. 1995). In Danish study 18-month-old's mental health problems' prevalence was 16-18% (Skovgaard et al. 2007). These kinds of difficulties are more often identified with boys but also girls seem to have problems. Identified problems differ between girls and boys. By many researches child gender is a contributor to trajectories of externalizing problems and behaviour. Boys participate more often aggressive and conflicted interactions than girls.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Addressed problems are divided to internalizing, externalizing, and regulatory domains. Items also address delays and deficits in the acquisition of social-emotional competencies.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study is quantitative by nature. In all tests, P-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The permission to this study is from every participant who are not identifiable.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

In this data the occurrence of possible problems was 15% and the difference between girls and boys was not statistically significant. Instead, difference in competence delay between girls and boys was significant so that boys were more often delayed in their socio-emotional competence than girls

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results make us researchers reflect the process of education and upbringing. How can we support the social emotional learning of both genders?

**Keywords:** socialemotional difficulties; socialemotional competence; gender; toddlers; assessment

### **Re-Assembling Childhood Masculinity. Boy Children and Childhood Masculinity in Three Early Childhood Education Settings in Sweden**

MARIE NORDBERG | Karlstad University, Sweden

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this project is to study childhood masculinities and to compare children's learning and embodiment of gender in three preschools and primary schools settings placed in different geographical locations.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

While previous research on boy children and the embodiment of masculinity norms often has taken its points of departure in masculinity models fetched from research on teenagers and adults masculinity practices and embodiment of gender norms, this study use another masculinity concept, childhood masculinity, and problematise the masculinity models applied in most masculinity research on young children and their practice of gender.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework combine poststructural theories on childhood and gender. Theoretical points of departure is Castadena's deconstruction of the child in poststructural theories, Judith Halberstam's highlighting of metronormativity and the postcolonial research's deconstruction of hegemonies and hierarchies in knowledge

production.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The method used is poststructural discourse analyses. The material consist of ethnography from three preschool/ primary school settings, and of descriptions children's masculinity practice in research, media and policy documents.

### **Ethical considerations**

Quotations, photos and descriptions has been proven. The children, teachers and schools are not visually presented.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings shows that boy children are encouraged to take up, perform and embody certain versions of childhood masculinity in all the settings, but important differences also occurs, due to the intra-actions between masculinity positions, material conditions and the embodiment of local identity.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings complicate the discussion on boys and masculinity and point out the importance to study childhood masculinities from positions placed outside metronormativity and adults embodiment of masculinity.

**Keywords:** childhood masculinity; preschool; gender; local identity; metronorms

## **B22 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT II**

Chair: SANDRA CHEESEMAN | Macquarie University, Australia

### **Perceptions of Experts and Teachers on Music as an Expressive Language of the Children in Colombia**

ELSA ESCALANTE | University of North, Colombia

#### **Co-authors**

IBRAHIM ACAR | University of Nebraska-Lincoln, United States of America

JULIAN NAVARRO | University of North, Colombia

VANESSA ROMERO | University of North, Colombia

#### **Research aims**

The Colombian early childhood education guidelines promote the development of children's competences throughout learning experiences which provide the opportunity for children to express their preferences, needs, feelings and thoughts using their multiple languages such as visual language, music language, building language and others (National Ministry of Education, 2008). The current paper presents results and discussions of two quantitative studies regarding teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and pedagogical competences to promote music as child's expressive language in enriched learning environments.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research studies showed that music is part of children's life; it is an expression of their essence and development (Chin & Rickard, 2012; Denac, 2008; Sloboda, 2005; Yim & Ebbeck, 2009)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

These studies are illuminated by principles of Reggio Emilia Approach and the One Hundred Languages of Children theory (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2012).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The first research was a two-round Delphi method design used to build consensus among experts from music and early childhood education field about teacher's characteristics to promote music as expressive language in early years. The second study aimed at exploring and analyzing the current background of in-service teachers who work in early childhood education in a city of Colombia.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations involved negotiation throughout research (experts-teachers-policy).

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings conclude that training process based on knowledge in music, expressive languages of children and interdisciplinary teamwork would be important key elements for the in-service teachers' professional development in

order to improve their pedagogical competences.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The discussion contributes to the reflection about the recent child's policy and educational guidelines in

**Keywords:** teacher's development; expressive language; music; Reggio Emilia Approach; child's policy

## **Infants of the Knowledge Economy**

SANDRA CHEESEMAN | Macquarie University, Australia

### **Research aims**

This research aims to enhance understandings of infants' (birth to twelve months) experiences in childcare. In particular it will consider the introduction of a national curriculum guideline for children from birth - The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), as part of the Australian Government's Productivity Agenda.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

As part of the larger Australian Research Council project, see Sumsion, Harrison, Press, McLeod, Bradley & Goodfellow (2007-2011) this doctoral study contributes to greater understanding of the lived experiences of infants in Australian childcare settings.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Using a criticalist theoretical frame, the study broadly examines hidden, silenced and taken for granted assumptions about infant's encounters with curriculum. The study critiques the potential for the EYLF to be an instrument of government "...as it conforms to the goals of the real State, to the dominant meanings and to the requirements of the established order" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, p.13).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using participatory methods and elements of mosaic methodology, the study gathers a range of images, perceptions and experiences of infants participating in childcare settings.

### **Ethical considerations**

Careful attention to the infants' consent to participate along with reflecting the lives of infants with fidelity are among many of the ethical challenges of this project.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Interrogating the discourses of "learning begins at birth" and "lifelong learning" underpinning the EYLF as they apply to infants of a knowledge economy.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Greater theorising of curriculum may provide a stronger platform for understanding the relationships between curriculum intent and the infant's encounter, leading to a deeper awareness of curriculum in the lives of infants.

**Keywords:** infants; Australian policy; curriculum; participatory research; early years learning framework

## **Musical Memories: a Learning Resource for Families**

ALISON STREET | Parents Early Education Partnership, United Kingdom

### **Co-authors**

SALLY SMITH | Parents Early Education Partnership, United Kingdom

NUZHAT ABBAS | Parents Early Education Partnership, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

We present the findings from two action research projects which investigated culturally responsive strategies in engaging parents in South Asian communities. We argue that to support preschool age children services need to find ways of listening and responding to immigrant parents whose 'hidden' voices are too infrequently heard (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) especially in debate on diversity and identity.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The projects build on the research by Vandenbroeck et al. (2009) that illustrate how issues of diversity, citizenship and democracy are shaped through the 'here-and-now' micro events in daily relationships between parents and those who seek to support them.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretical perspectives informing this work are Hannon's ORIM framework (1995) in parental support, Derrida (1997) in terms of professional decisions and the potential of reciprocity.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In two action research projects mothers were interviewed for their views on music and play. Ongoing participation was documented and recorded. Practitioners' views were explored through reflective seminars on critical incidents and challenges faced in acknowledging cultural differences.

### **Ethical considerations**

This work involves constant regard for change and uncertainty (Urban, 2008) as relationships of power between services, (eg Children's Centre staff) and families rely on conceptions of whose influence and knowledge takes priority.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Mothers' songs and stories were recorded for an audio CD. This recognises the significance of experiences as women and mothers. Principles for practice that seeks meaningful partnership with parents imply intercultural awareness in practitioners' approaches.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Services that support children's learning in families become effective through more meaningful conversations with parents about diversity and aspirations for their children,

**Keywords:** mothers; cultural diversity; music; balance of power; identities

## **B23 DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Chair: MANJULA WANIGANAYAKE | Macquarie University, Australia

### **The Impact of Educational Background on the Early Attrition and Job Commitment Among Kindergarten Teachers**

EEVA-LEENA ONNISMAA | University of Helsinki, Finland

#### **Co-authors**

LEENA TAHKOKALLIO | University of Helsinki, Finland

LASSE LIPPONEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

JYRKI REUNAMO | University of Helsinki, Finland

#### **Research aims**

In this presentation we focus on the themes of the survey which illustrate the differences between kindergarten teachers with different educational backgrounds: either a bachelor's (university) degree in early childhood education or a social pedagogue's (polytechnic) training.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

International studies on teacher attrition and job commitment.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Professionalism in early childhood education

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This presentation is based on the results of a survey (n=491), which was directed to the kindergarten teachers in five municipalities in southern Finland.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Anonymity of the participants of the survey has been taken into consideration.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The induction phase seems to be crucial for teachers with university degree: their commitment grows after induction period whereas the attrition of the respondents with polytechnic training escalates after induction phase and starts to decline only after twentieth year at work. Respondents with university degree define themselves as "teachers of young children" while those with a social pedagogue's training are more familiar with the role of "family counsellor". It would appear that the employers should pay more attention to the support of newly qualified kindergarten teachers.

These results are consistent with previous studies on teacher commitment and attrition.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

In Finland there is somewhat of a shortage of kindergarten teachers, especially in the capital area.

Consequently, the first aim of this study is to analyse the factors connected to either a strong or weak commitment to the profession of kindergarten teacher. The second aim of the study is to acquire information on the role of education in the formation of the students' professional identity.

**Keywords:** kindergarten teacher attrition; job commitment; professional identity; early childhood education system; professionalism in ECEC

## **Educational Goals of Prospective Teachers in Early Childhood Education: the Role of Personality Traits**

WILFRIED SMIDT | University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

### **Co-authors**

SUSANNA ROUX | University of Education Weingarten, Germany

THILO SCHMIDT | University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

### **Research aims**

The study addresses the question of the predictive role of personality traits for educational goals for preschool children, which are one important part of educational beliefs.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

For early childhood education, there has been some research into educational beliefs (e.g., Huijbregts, Leseman & Tavecchio, 2008) and personality traits (e.g., Vorkapić, 2012), but much less has been done on the significance of personality traits for educational beliefs.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theory and research concerning teacher professionalization (e.g., Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008) stress the importance of personality traits for educational beliefs.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data are drawn from the German study "Transition of prospective preschool teachers to the labour market". The sample size consists of 1,483 students, who were in the final year of training. Personality traits were examined with the Big Five Inventory (Schupp & Gerlitz, 2010), e.g., reflecting conscientiousness and extraversion. In accordance with previous research (Dippelhofer-Stiem, 2002), fifteen educational goals for preschool children (e.g., acquiring knowledge) were considered. Latent class analyses were conducted in order to identify profiles of educational goals. Multinomial logistic regressions with latent class membership as dependent variable and personality traits and several control variables (e.g., socio-economic background) as independent variables were carried out.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participation was voluntary and in compliance with data protection rules.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results reveal that personality traits predict class membership. Student's openness and conscientiousness were associated with a stronger emphasis of educational goals, i.e. sense for responsibility, competences in dealing with conflicts and self-dependence.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings are discussed in terms of practical implications for preschool teacher education.

**Keywords:** educational beliefs; personality traits; preschool teacher education; professionalization; preschool education

## **What Do We Know About Male Early Childhood Teachers and Their Professional Self-Identifications? Perspectives from England and China**

YUWEI XU | Tianjin Normal University, China

### **Co-author**

MANJULA WANIGANAYAKE | Macquarie University, Australia

### **Research aims**

This presentation provides an opportunity to question the taken for granted views about addressing the global patterns reflecting the under-representation of men in early childhood education (ECE). We will use research conducted in England and China as a way of highlighting the importance of broadening the debate beyond the gendered arguments, to explore workforce responsibilities of early childhood (EC) teachers.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Existing literature, mainly written about the global 'north', reflect an overwhelming focus on the gender imbalance in the workforce and on the assumed benefits of male presence. By analyzing key themes that emerged in the literature review, gaps in the empirical research base on men's participation in EC settings and challenges for future research are highlighted.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A conceptual framework on teachers' professional self-identification that emerged from this research reflect interconnections between three dimensions comprising personal background and qualities, professional knowledge and skills, and contextual understandings.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Five male teachers' professional self-identifications were explored through semi-structured interviews in England. Subsequently, focus groups comprising a mix of male and female EC teachers in China will be invited to reflect on the findings from England.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study satisfied ethical requirements of the respective universities for data collection.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings from the research based in England demonstrate that men could be highly motivated and professionally committed EC educators. Importantly, their professional self-identifications appear to be less gender-related. Data collection in China have not been completed yet.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This paper questions the integrity of policies aimed at promoting men's participation in ECE based merely on their gender for being indiscriminate.

**Keywords:** gender; early childhood education; professional self-identification; male early childhood teachers; professionalism

## **B24 CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY II**

Chair: HASINA BANU EBRAHIM | University of Free State, South Africa

### **National Parents Committee for Kindergartens in Norway**

ÅSE-BERIT HOFFART | The National Parents' Committee for Kindergartens, Norway

#### **Co-author**

ROGER SKARVIK | The National Parents' Committee for Kindergartens, Norway

#### **Research aims**

Information about NPCK in Norway The background of FUB the main goals of FUBs work the tasks FUB are in to A twofold need: 1.Strengthen the influence of parents when it comes to develop the 2. Norwegian kindergartens Consulting and information to parents "All parents in Norway have legal entitlement to a place in kindergarten."

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The missions of NPCK(FUB):Maingols The cooperation between the kindergarten and the parents, is to gain the best of care and learning for all the children in the institutions. A good relationship and cooperation is to counter social differences and achieve a good transition from kindergarten to school.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The way to make the parents voice heard, is through a national committee.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In our first years, NPCK (FUB) has prioritized making ourselves known – 7000 kindergartens in Norway – about parents to 250 000 children i kindergartens. Producing web and logo Producing flyers and brochures, Continue to

visit relevant institutions, including visiting universities . Give lectures for parents and employees in kindergartens.

### **Ethical considerations**

NPCK (FUB) is concerned about good quality in the kindergarten- Inviting, adapted and evolving premises - A long-term plan with progression in accordance with the children's age - Ethical guidelines - Good leadership and a stable staff

### **Main finding or discussion**

1. Quality 2. Parents participation 3. Personalization - increase male employees - increase the statue and reputation of the employees, including the - education for preschool teachers

### **Implications, practice or policy**

A good relationship and cooperation between the parents and the employees, make the children feel safe and create well-being.

**Keywords:** parents; participation; framework; empowerment; kindergartens

## **An Analysis of Four Family Support Programmes for Early Childhood in South Africa**

HASINA BANU EBRAHIM | University of Free State, South Africa

### **Research aims**

This study (commissioned by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation) compared four family support programmes for early childhood in order to understand approaches, strengths, challenges, changes, costs and sustainability.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This work extends the quest to find models for supporting ECD for poor and vulnerable children.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study valued the rights- and strengths-based approaches. Both are friendly to building capabilities. Through a rights-based approach people are given opportunities to empower themselves through active participation in the light of their entitlements. A strengths-based approach helps people to build on their strengths.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The interpretive paradigm and a qualitative research approach was used. Individual and focus group interviews were held with the service providers – director, project managers, and practitioners. Focus group interviews were conducted with parents/primary caregivers and members of the community support structures. Shadowing visits were undertaken to assist the researcher to gain ideas on context.

Documents also provided data on the programmes.

### **Ethical considerations**

Consent for the study was negotiated through the assistance of the participating organisations in the study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

All programmes used an integrated approach. They were creating access to early education, parent support and linkages to services. The challenges relate to focus on short term gains, changing of mindsets, delivery of a complex intervention plan and difficult community dynamics.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The implications for policy are as follows: - Development of a policy framework where the family is an intended target. - Incorporation of integrated family support objectives into sectoral policies and programmes. - Regulatory framework to recognise the ECD family support practitioners.

**Keywords:** early childhood family support; practitioners; poverty; policy; South Africa

# SYMPOSIA SET C

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30  
11.15-12.45

## C1 PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEW ON TODDLER'S LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

Self-organised symposium

Chair: STIG BROSTRÖM | Aarhus University, Denmark

The aim of the international study is to investigate how preschool teachers in Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, German, Greece, and Australia reflect and describe toddler's learning and participation in preschool (crèche). The study is a continuation of a previous study "Learning and participation - two interrelated key-concepts in the preschool (Johansson and Sandberg, 2008) and a study of Danish and Swedish preschool teacher's view on children's learning and participation (Broström et al, 2012). Based on an earlier survey on preschool teacher's view on children's learning and participation in Denmark and Sweden a survey were conducted for preschool teachers working with toddlers aimed toward to achieve more details and to get a more differentiated understanding. The results focus on differences and similarities between the countries involved.

### Danish and Swedish Preschool Teachers' View on Toddlers Learning and Participation

INGE JOHANSSON | Stockholm University, Sweden

#### Co-authors

ANETTE SANDBERG | Mälardalen University, Sweden

STIG BROSTRÖM | Aarhus University, Denmark

#### Research aims

Based on an earlier survey on preschool teacher's view on children's learning and participation in Denmark and Sweden a survey were conducted for preschool teachers working with toddlers aimed toward to achieve more details and to get a more differentiated understanding. .

#### Relationship to previous research works

The aim of the international study is to investigate how preschool teachers in Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, German, Greece, Australia and USA reflect and describe children's learning and participation in preschool. The study is a continuation of a previous study: Learning and participation - two interrelated key-concepts in the preschool.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Social-cultural with reference to Dewey, Vygotsky, and Rogoff.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Survey

#### Ethical considerations

The respondents were guaranteed non-maleficence, confidentiality, anonymity and with possibility to withdraw and not to complete particular items

#### Main finding or discussion

The main findings show only few differences between teachers working with 1-3 and 4-5 years old children. However, some few significant differences are visible. To the question about how children learn 1-2 years preschool teachers play a more active role according to children's learning compared with preschool teachers working with 3-5 years old children. More preschool teachers working with the young children also in a more strong way stress the importance of social interaction between children. Finally preschool teachers working with the youngest children assign a higher priority to children's possibility be allowed to be in a restful situation. The Danish and Swedish data show that are some differences that we will present during the conference.

#### Implications, practice or policy

The findings have implications for policy/ practice in the development of the work in preschool.



**Keywords:** learning; participation; toddlers; preschool; preschoolteacher

## **Estonian and German Preschool Teachers' View on Toddler's Learning and Participation**

CHRISTA KIEFERLE | State Institute of Early Childhood Research, Germany

### **Co-authors**

AINO UGASTE | Tallinn University, Estonia

ANGELA ROTH | State Institute of Early Childhood Research, Germany

ANJA SEIFERT | Ludwigsburg University, Germany

MAIRE TUUL | Tallinn University, Estonia

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to achieve more details and a deeper understanding of German and Estonian preschool teachers' view on learning and participation by investigating how preschool teachers working with toddlers reflect and describe children's learning and participation.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is an extension of a previous international study (Johansson & Sandberg, 2010), which investigated the views of preschool teachers on learning and participation in several countries.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical background is a complex of socio-cultural oriented theories with references to Dewey, Vygotsky and Rogoff.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We used a standardized questionnaire (with four main questions) to identify the participants' views about how children learn in creches.

### **Ethical considerations**

The respondents were guaranteed non-maleficence, confidentiality, and anonymity. They also had the possibility to withdraw and leave out particular items.

### **Main finding or discussion**

German teachers working with toddlers consider most of all situations, which contribute to the social development of a child, to be important for toddlers' learning. They believe that children learn best if they are involved in developmental appropriate, challenging activities with adults. Similarly to German teachers, Estonian teachers consider activities directed to children's social development very important. Further, they see the role of a teacher as a creator of the best conditions for learning (for the children) and as the one who involves children into activities. However, Estonian and German teachers differ in some important aspects. We will focus on these differences in our presentation at the conference.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Our findings have implications for policy/ practice in the development of the work in preschool and crèches.

**Keywords:** learning; participation; toddlers; preschool; crèche

## **C2 POSITION, PACE AND PROFESSIONALISM: INNOVATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO LEARNING**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: MICHAEL REED | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

These papers will explore the pedagogic philosophy and development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) to address the needs of a regional partnership delivering the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) programme in the UK. Our key approach reflects our core values of early childhood learning and leadership. We endeavour to facilitate a community of practice which supports ownership of the online space for learning by all involved. The use of technology has supported networking opportunities across the partnership and has stimulated the co-construction of understandings through shared experiences, dialogue and debate, and research understandings. Our experience of the active participation of students and partners in this evolving community has led to improved engagement in reflective thinking and application of theory to practice for qualitative improvement for children and families.

# **‘Growing’ a Virtual Learning Environment Is a Positive Relational Activity**

MANDY ANDREWS | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

This paper presents the relational journey towards the creation of community and virtual learning environment (VLE) for early childhood practitioners, mentors, students and trainers. As part of the University of Worcester’s role in delivering a the Early Years Professional Status across a wide geographical area a shared VLE was established. The intention was not to offer a ready prepared learning site but to enable the VLE to grow somewhat organically through dialogue and relative contribution.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This draws on the bodies of knowledge about relational activity, dialogue, power, esteem, community and unconditional positive regard.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A positive team identity is one in which members have accurate knowledge about one another’s expertise and share affective attachment to the team and its goals (Dutton, Roberts and Bednar 2009). This draws on early childhood pedagogic principles, and concepts of ‘community’ (Wenger 1998). New group identities and cultures of practice emerged where there was safe relational space.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A relational constructivist approach is adopted in this action research in which we explore the understanding that reality can be emergent when perceived relative to the contributions of others. It is not rationally created and imposed, but develops dialogically (Freire 1996).

## **Ethical considerations**

The concepts of ‘dwelling’, suspending ego and ‘being with others in relational honesty’ (Ladkin, 2006) were applied.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Seeking the ‘virtual’ through conscious steps towards a relational constructivism may lead to a creation of new realities and positive self-regard within the community.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Lessons can be learnt about humility, positive relational activity, hope, dialogue and safe spaces for respectful contribution.

**Keywords:** relational activity; dialogue; emergent community; positive regard; knowledge

# **What’s Behind the Technology, Is it Just About the Tools?**

MICHELLE ROGERS | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

This paper presents the principles of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) considers the implications of developing a fluid virtual community, which empowers and improves outcomes for its participants. The pedagogical implications for this development were examined.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This draws on bodies of knowledge about community empowerment, collaboration, co-construction, technology enhanced learning (TEL)

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The pedagogical understanding regarding tools of enquiry (Cowan and George, 1997, Hewitt et al, 1997) are considered, alongside the value of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), and the application of ‘virtualisation’ of the community (Salmon, 2010).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A collaborative constructivist approach is adopted in this research, which lecturers and students participate in a mutually reciprocal virtual platform to facilitate opportunities for contextualised learning to transpire.

## **Ethical considerations**

The ethical concepts of Levinas and the ‘inter-face of online education’ (2005), Volet et al Social affordance of online learning (2004) are both applied to this study as well as a developing protocol which is being developed within the



community for the continued development of the community from one which is research passive to research active.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The cognitive shift and ability of students to recognise this within learning environment is catalyst to ensuring students confidence in engaging with the VLE and supporting peers development within the community.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Expanding professional learning communities in virtual spaces to engage in intellectually challenging dilemma's ensures that the community is '21st century ready' to lead and enhance practice in both virtual and physical continuing development.

**Keywords:** virtual communities; virtual learning environments; online protocol; pedagogical challenge; student collaboration



## **C3 ARE MEN DIFFERENT? ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF MALE AND FEMALE ECEC WORKERS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: TIM ROHRMANN | Coordination office for Men in ECE, Germany

This symposium presents research results from three countries which shed light on the recently much debated issue of gender differences in the behavior of male and female ECEC workers. In Turkey, a fast developing country, the ECEC system is constantly growing. At the same time traditional gender roles begin to change. As ECEC has become an interesting career option for men, it becomes relevant if pedagogic strategies of males differ from those of their female colleagues. Results from the German „Tandem study“ show that men and women do not differ in dimensions of professional pedagogic behavior, but an implicit gender subtext permanently „accompanies“ pedagogic activities and daily routines. The Austrian „W-Inn“-study shows that boys react strongly on the presence of male workers. The three studies have in common that they focus not only on attitudes, but on concrete behavior in the classroom. - SIG gender balance symposium 1 of 3.

## **Behavior Management Strategies: Beliefs and Practices of Male and Female Early Childhood Teachers**

RAMAZAN SAK | Yüzüncü Yil University, Turkey

### **Co-authors**

İKBAL TUBA ŞAHİN | Bülent Ecevit University, Turkey

İBRAHİM YERLIKAYA | Adiyaman University, Turkey

### **Research aims**

This paper presents a study that aimed to investigate male and female early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices related to behavior management.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Recently, low level of male early childhood teachers has been the subject of many studies. These studies focus on male pre-service and in-service teachers, comparison of teacher-directors, and research concerning preschool children with male or female teachers. Also, there are some studies which compare male and female teachers but few focus on the comparison of the practices of male and female early childhood teachers.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Women are predominant in early childhood education area all over the world. According to various sources, the number of male early childhood teachers is 5.28 % in Turkey, 4.10 % in Germany, 1.8 % in Austria and 1-2 % in England.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The Teacher Strategies Questionnaire, developed by the Family Clinic of Washington University in 2001, was used. The study comprised forty-six male and forty-six female teachers. A t-test was conducted to compare male and female teachers' beliefs and practices.

### **Ethical considerations**

Before participating in the study, the teachers signed a volunteer participation form.

**Main finding or discussion**

Data analysis showed there were significant differences between some of male and female teachers' ideas of how often they used specific teaching techniques and how useful they found each one for managing their classroom.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Findings of the study suggest that gender differences are relevant for teacher's education. The Turkish Ministry of National Education can provide gender-sensitive in-service training for preschool teachers to increase developmentally appropriate behavior management strategies.

**Keywords:** male early childhood teachers; female early childhood teachers; behavior management strategies; teachers' beliefs; gender of teachers

## **Between Professionalism and Authenticity: a New Perspective on Men and Women Working Together in German ECE Teams**

MARKUS ANDRAE | Protestant University of Applied Sciences Dresden, Germany

**Research aims**

The purpose of the ongoing German Tandem Study (2010-2014) is to compare the pedagogic behavior of men and women working together as preschool professionals. Besides statistical findings from a quantitative analysis the Tandem Study provides deeper qualitative insights into the processes of doing gender between children and male and female professionals.

**Relationship to previous research works**

Several studies have analysed gender differences between male and female ECE workers. But most previous studies have focused on attitudes of workers, not on their concrete behavior.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on the ethnomethodological concept of doing gender (cf. West/Zimmerman 1987).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data includes videotaped individual and group situations and qualitative interviews. A qualitative-interactional analysis of the data has been conducted using ethnographical methods of video-analysis (cf. Knoblauch et al. 2010).

**Ethical considerations**

Male and female professionals, children and their parents were asked for permission of being videotaped and using the data for scientific analysis.

**Main finding or discussion**

There is indication of an implicit gender subtext that permanently 'accompanies' pedagogic behavior and daily routines. In scenes with a manifest gender connotation ECE workers often give the impression of acting in an especially authentic manner, tending to be rather more intuitive and less reflective.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Results support the assumption that children can benefit from gender-mixed teams. But it has to be clarified how authenticity of educators as gendered persons matches professional pedagogical standards. The connection of professionalism to authenticity should be discussed. Guidelines and recommendations for training and practice of ECE-professionals and for teamwork in gender-mixed teams will be developed.

**Keywords:** professionalism; authenticity; doing gender; male and female ECE-workers; video-analysis

## **Male Child-Care Workers and Their Effects on Boys' Development**

BERND TRAXL | University of Mainz, Germany

**Co-authors**

JOSEF AIGNER | University of Innsbruck, Austria

JOHANNES HUBER | University of Innsbruck, Austria

LAURA BURKHARDT | University of Innsbruck, Austria

GERALD POSCHESCHNIK | University of Innsbruck, Austria

**Research aims**

The team of the „Wirkungsstudie Innsbruck“ explores emerging effects of male child care workers and mixed (male/

female) child care staff compositions on children.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study continues research on men and gender relationships in ECEC in Austria started with the “elementar” project 2008-2010 (Aigner & Rohrmann 2012).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Our research is theoretically orientated on developmental psychology of gender and on psychoanalytic object-relation theory. Based on the transference concept we assume that children transfer their experiences in family and ensuing expectations to the pre-school context.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study used a multi-method approach. In ten ECEC centers, daily interactions between children and professionals (male/female) were videotaped. Parents and child care workers were surveyed (questionnaire) about the situation at home and in the ECEC centers. In a third approach we used a projective test (MacArthur Story Stem Battery) to reveal the inner world of the observed children.

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants were informed and declared their agreement to our study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Apart from general results of our study this presentation will focus on the effects of male child care workers on the development of boys. Boys in general show remarkable reactions on the presence of male child care workers in the institution. In turn male workers affect daily routines and pedagogical outcomes in specific ways.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Based on our findings we assume that children, especially boys, benefit from the availability of committed male child-care workers. A better gender balance in the work force leads to more diversity and thus can enrich the field of ECEC.

**Keywords:** gender; male workers; boys; father absence; development

## **C4 A COMPETENT FAMILY DAY CARE-SYSTEM?**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: SANDRA VAN DER MESPEL | VBJK, Belgium

The quality of ECEC depends on the competence of people working with children, families and communities. Recent research emphasizes that ‘competence’ in the ECEC context has to be understood as a characteristic of the entire early childhood system. What is the meaning of ‘the competent system’ in the context of family day care? One of the key challenges in this debate is the isolated position of the family day care workers. In this symposium, we will address some research findings which can be inspiring to build a competent system for family day care. These research findings are the starting point for three innovative practices on a competent family day care-system. In particular, these practices focus on following issues: - Introducing a method to strengthen the reflective competencies. - Stimulating professional networks of family day care workers. - Guiding candidate-family day care workers towards a motivated choice for the job.

## **Professional Networks and Communities of Practice for Family Day Care Workers**

BART DECLERCQ | Leuven University, Belgium

### **Co-authors**

FERRE LAEVERS | Leuven University, Belgium

MIEKE DAEMS | Leuven University, Belgium

### **Research aims**

The objective is support professional development by communities of practice (CoP) as form of workspace learning.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research is part of the ESF-project 'Building strong family daycare'. It's a continuation of the European EQUAL project Ecce-Ama (2008). One of the main conclusions was the necessity of a model for pedagogical support and professional development of family daycare workers.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Central in CoP's are 'involvement' – intrinsically motivated mental activity - and 'well-being' – feeling recognized . A CoP is a practice-led research community, starting from family daycare workers' own experiences. It is a form of praxeological knowledge, whereby praxis is locus of pedagogical knowledge development. It's learning in connection with colleagues.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Besides literature review, a pilot is set up: Fifteen coaches of nine childcare-providers, representing 700 family daycare workers and 2000 child-places explored possibilities of CoP by (1) setting up a CoP of family day care workers and by (2) participating to a supervised CoP. The pilot included seven half-day supervisions and three to six meetings in own CoP. The result is a toolbox with instruments.

## Ethical considerations

mutual trust, confidentiality, privacy, engagement.

## Main finding or discussion

This pilot supports the conclusion that (1) CoP has the potential to create an empowering learning community with (2) positive effect on job-satisfaction and interconnectedness between colleagues (3) influence on training-policy towards more participatory-approach. (4) It underlines the importance of using a range of methods to cover different learning styles.

## Implications, practice or policy

'Building strong family day care' project won the 'ESF- ambassador' price 2013 for his quality, transferability and practices-based strengths.

**Keywords:** family day care; professional development; community of practice (CoP); praxeology; experiential learning

## Stimulating Reflective Learning of Family Daycarers: Exploring a Co-Constructive and Practice Based Approach in the Flemish Community of Belgium (Wanda)

VICKY CAUWELS | Artevelde University College, Belgium

### Research aims

Artevelde University College leads the WANDA project (ESF) in collaboration with VBJK, Centre for Innovation in the Early Years. The project developed a methodology to stimulate reflective learning for family daycarers and childcare workers in ECEC services. In this methodology, a group of family daycarers critically analyze and value significant moments in their practice from different viewpoints (child, parent, myself, society, other colleagues). The ultimate goal is to create new understandings that ultimately will lead to change and improve the pedagogical quality of practice.

### Relationship to previous research works

The CoRe-research demonstrates how quality of ECEC is determined by many factors, including the competence of individuals at all levels of the early childhood system Moreover pedagogical counseling in which employees are stimulated to continuously innovate their pedagogical practice, can lead to high levels of reflective professionalism. (Urban et al., 2011).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

'analyse de pratiques' and the 'appreciative inquiry' approach.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

20 various organizations experimented with critically analyzing their working experience from various angles. Their experiences led to the development of the Wa=wanda, a hands on tool for pedagogical counselors for family daycarers and childcare workers.

### Ethical considerations

Mutual trust, confidentiality and safety are guaranteed.

### Main finding or discussion

By searching and reflecting together in group, family daycarers gain more confidence in their contact with children and parents. They have a more reflective attitude and judge less quick and show more self-awareness in their communication and practice.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

1000 products have been distributed and a training offer was developed. The Wanda project won the 'ESF-ambassador' price 2013 for his quality, transferability and practice-based strengths

**Keywords:** family daycarers; reflection; analysing practice; reflective attitude; methodology

## **A Good Start: Guiding Candidate-Family Day Care Workers Towards a Motivated Choice for the Job**

BRECHT PELEMAN | Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, Belgium

### **Research aims**

Although being a family day care worker is complex and demanding, no qualifications are required to start the job. In the Flemish community of Belgium, a downturn in the amount of family day care workers is noticed. Moreover, a large group of recently started family day care workers leave the job quite fast, due to little preparation and incorrect job expectations. The action research presented aims at building a framework for the preparation and guidance of candidate-family day care workers.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research is a part of the ESF-project 'Building strong family day care'. It builds on European EQUAL project 'Ecce Ama!' which explored the (de)professionalization of childcare in Flanders and abroad.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Competence requirements and professionalism in ECEC.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Action-research comprising literature review, survey, focus groups with family day care workers, and a feedback group of coaches from different umbrella organizations. This resulted in the development, testing and evaluation of an introduction course and a tool for self-evaluation.

### **Ethical considerations**

The project paid attention to male educators and educators of different origins.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First steps were taken to prepare and support candidates for the job. Nevertheless, there is a need for a supportive policy framework on different levels to make professionalization of family day care possible.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Several training centers and centers for adult education will organize the introduction course. The manual, as well as 3000 copies of the tool for self-evaluation were widely distributed. On policy level, the research findings paid a contribution to the current discussion about a qualification framework for family day care.

**Keywords:** family day care; qualification framework; introduction course; self-evaluation; professionalism

## **C5 OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING: INTERACTION AND PARTICIPATION**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: SHIRLEY WYVER | Macquarie University, Australia

This symposium is presented by members of the Outdoor Play and Learning SIG. Each paper examines interactions and experiences in outdoor play. The symposium brings together researchers from UK, Australia and Norway. It also highlights the diverse methods used to examine children's outdoor play and learning.

## **Scaffolded and Co-Constructed Interactions in Outdoor Experiences in Wales and NZ**

JANE WATERS | Swansea Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

AMANDA BATEMAN | University of Waikato, New Zealand

**Research aims**

This paper seeks to demonstrate what scaffolded and co-constructed interactions between child and teacher look like during outdoor experiences.

**Relationship to previous research works**

EECERJ forthcoming: Revealing the interactional features of learning and teaching moments in outdoor activity

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The New Zealand data was collected under an ethnomethodological framework (Garfinkel 1967), an inductive approach avoiding preconceptions and encouraging findings from the data. The Welsh data was collected under a sociocultural framework in which human development is seen as a cultural process in which all children develop as participants in their cultural communities' (Rogoff 2003 p.42). Episodes from both data sets were analysed using conversation analysis (CA) (Sacks 1984) which made visible the turn by turn processes in the child-teacher interactions.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Audio and video files were transcribed using CA methods.

**Ethical considerations**

Conformed to BERA (2011) ethical guidelines. Consent for anonymised use of data from the original research projects was established at the outset, parents provided written consent. No setting or participants are identified unless express consent was given to do so.

**Main finding or discussion**

The differences in interactional features between scaffolded and co-constructed episodes of teacher-child interaction in outdoor spaces are revealed.

**Implications, practice or policy**

The discussion addresses the question of whose agenda is privileged within the features of talk in scaffolded and co-constructed episodes in the outdoor environment. We discuss how pedagogues may understand construction of knowledge and how this may be played out in their interactions with children. Specifically if co-construction is valued then the interactional implications need to be clear in order to develop pedagogical practice.

**Keywords:** scaffolding; co-construction; teacher-child interaction; outdoor environment; Wales/New Zealand

## **The Outdoor Curriculum: Children's Participation in Active Experiences During Outdoor Play in Early Childhood Settings in Australia**

KELLY TRIBOLET | Charles Sturt University, Australia

**Research aims**

The aim of this study was to examine whether a curriculum model that leaves skill development and physical activity to chance is problematic.

**Relationship to previous research works**

In Australia, early childhood settings have been identified as important for promoting healthy lifestyles and increasing childhood physical activity, but, opportunities for children to engage in physical activity are typically provided through unstructured outdoor play periods where children are free to do activities of their own choice.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research draws on curriculum theory (Goodson, 1990) where curriculum is seen as a negotiated practice whereby what is planned (opportunity) is not necessarily what occurs (participation).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A case study design was utilised with data sources that included interviews with educators, photographs, direct observation and field notes. The outdoor play period was observed for 10 days at each of five different early childhood services. Observations were collected on a 10 minute cycle for the full outdoor playtime.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations for educators involved voluntary participation, informed consent, right to discontinue, anonymity and confidentiality. Parents from case study sites also consented to the collection and use of photographs of their children.



### **Main finding or discussion**

Results showed that while the outdoor curriculum provided many opportunities for physical activity, the children's participation in physical activities was low. Children's activity choices during outdoor play did not match educators' curriculum expectations or perceptions that children were being physically active.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

These findings show the imminent need for educators to be more aware of child activity during outdoor play and to rethink how physical activity can be incorporated into the curriculum.

**Keywords:** outdoor play; physical activity; movement curriculum; children's participation; early childhood settings

## **Preschool Teacher's Role in Promoting Physical Motor Play in Norwegian Kindergarten Outdoor Environments**

KATHRINE BJØRGEN | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **Research aims**

This presentation is based on a pilot-study as a part of a PhD project. The aims of the pilot study were to explore preschool teachers' reflections and understandings about their own role in motivating children's physical motor play in kindergartens' outdoors environments. The study focuses on the communications, interactions and support that take place between teachers and children in outdoors environments.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Health related issues in Kindergarten.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on a social-cognitive framework for understanding interactions and motivational processes in kindergartens outdoors environments. Theories of self-determination (Deci and Ryan, 2000, 2002), communication (Bateson, 1973, 1980) and social affordances (Gibson, 1979) are relevant in this project.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Interviews with four preschool teachers from two different Kindergartens in Trondheim, Norway.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study was notified to the ethics board of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services for approval.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The preschool teacher's role required being flexible and accessible for the children and prepared to perform many diverse tasks. They reflected that the pedagogical role was to facilitate, initiate and give responses to children in the physical motor play. They experienced that working for a supportive culture was very important for creating motivating learning environments. The staff's bodily communications, to show how to do things, to participate and to 'get loose' in the play is very significant for children's inspiration, intensity and direction in physical-motor play.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study has implications for the practice in Kindergarten, and for the framework plan for preschool education.

**Keywords:** preschool teacher's role; motivation; children's interactions and participation in physical motor play; kindergartens outdoors environments; social affordances

## **C6 EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY AND PRACTICE IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND: INTERROGATING VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS IN RECENT DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO CHILDREN'S DAY CARE**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: PAMELA CALDER | London South Bank University, United Kingdom

The four countries of the United Kingdom share a history of a growing recognition of the importance of the early years: both for the here and now and for the future of society. The drive to improve both access to early childhood services and their quality has led to a focus on enhanced training opportunities for staff, shifts in understanding about how high quality services might be achieved and increasing definition of what constitutes quality of provision, its regulation and a workforce fit for purpose. Across our countries documentation reflects a spectrum including

consultation, review, national guidance and top down directive: each of which has the potential to influence the field differently. We find it is essential to analyse both commissioned reviews and Government strategy in order to understand the nature of political change and whether policy direction can change lives.

## **More? Great? Childcare?: a Discourse Analysis of Recent Social Policy Documents Relating to the Care of Young Children in England and Wales**

MARY WILD | Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

### **Co-authors**

CAROLINE LEESON | Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

CAROLYN SILBERFELD | University of East London, United Kingdom

BEVERLEY NIGHTINGALE | University Campus Suffolk, United Kingdom

PAMELA CALDER | London South Bank University, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper considers the overt and covert discourses in two recent documents in England and Wales (Nutbrown Review (2012) and More Great Childcare (2013)) that advocate a number of significant changes to Early Years provision.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Educational researchers use Critical Discourse Analysis to ask questions about relationships between language and society, specifically how these are managed in policy documents.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A frequency analysis using an initial visual mechanism formed the key theoretical framework with a Foucauldian analysis on the power behind the words used as an additional analytical instrument.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis, we looked for indications of underlying values and assumptions, overt and covert agendas, asking questions as to what was not there as well as what was.

### **Ethical considerations**

The key ethical consideration was to take seriously the responsibility to be truthful, being objective by seeking to eliminate bias when engaged in a critique of policy documents

### **Main finding or discussion**

We noted a significant shift in concepts of quality, professionalism and childcare. The positioning of child as investment is a strong feature of the discourse within the latter of these documents as well as an increase in top down frameworks of surveillance and control.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Both documents assert that quality and professionalism will only occur if there is strong top down regulation and inspection (Osgood, 2011). They propose a strong consumer market based model of practice that has implications for professionalism of workforce and quality of children's experiences. The methodology facilitated the development of a tool for the critical discourse analysis of key policy documents

**Keywords:** childcare; policy; leadership; quality; professionalism; policy; leadership; quality; professionalism

## **Aspirations and Actions: from Policy to Practice in Scotland**

ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

### **Co-authors**

JOAN MARTLEW | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

DEIRDRE GROGAN | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

JENNY CAREY | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper considers Scottish social policy for young children through two key questions

1. what policy elements are associated with a high quality children's workforce?
2. which staff competences can be identified as contributing to successful policy implementation?

## **Relationship to previous research works**

The analysis is informed by prior research into aspirations of Scottish policy in early childhood (Dunlop et al, 2011).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A conceptual framework emerged from the initial analysis of three key Scottish policies and includes 'aspirations', 'principles and values' and 'inter-professionalism'.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The QSR NVivo data management package was used to facilitate a textual discourse analysis of Scottish policy affecting childhood.

## **Ethical considerations**

The policy based functional analysis of the children's workforce (2011) shows that there is a clear aspiration running through all Scottish policy to ensure all children's wellbeing and improve outcomes in order to tackle the unequal childhoods that lead to unequal lives.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The common message across many of the policy documents is that professionals working with children, young people and their families need to see beyond the boundaries of their own profession, put the best interests of children first, take account of the child's whole context, and share information about children and families within and between services ethically, efficiently and effectively.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Therefore initial education and continuing professional development (Dunlop, 2012) are vital to ensure an increase in professional confidence and articulation of professional beliefs leading to informed practitioners who are able to interpret policy, underpin this interpretation with theoretical understandings and take action in practice: so determining the transformation of policy aspiration into action.

**Keywords:** policy; practice; professional development; leadership; quality

## **Strategies, Standards and Services: a Northern Ireland Perspective**

DOROTHY MCMILLAN | Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

1. To explore the relationship between language and power in the policy discourse relating to young children's day care in Northern Ireland.
2. To discuss the findings of the Critical Discourse Analysis process and assess its potential usefulness for wider application.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

2012 saw the publication of two important documents - one from the Department of Education: Learning to Learn: a Framework for Early Years Education and Learning (DE 2012) and the other from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Ch

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2001)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) used in order to explore the relationship between language and power in the policy discourse illustrated by these key policy documents. Comparisons and contrasts are drawn between the language and assumptions made in the documents in relation to issues such as child care, quality assurance and professionalism.

### **Ethical considerations**

There are no anticipated ethical issues involved in this desktop exercise.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Both documents agree on the importance of consistently high quality services for children and families through effective collaboration. However, the „split system“ within the field of early childhood provision in NI plays a key role in the creation and legitimization of dominant discourses and accepted norms.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Questioning the values and assumptions made in current policy documents in education and childcare in NI.

**Keywords:** child care; policy; qualifications; quality; professionalism

## **C7 PROMOTING QUALITY WITH PARENT PARTNERSHIPS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: KAREN CAMPBELL | United Kingdom

Three University undergraduates share their research about how they have engaged in building upon parent partnerships.

The first presentation explores the significance of delivering Forest School learning activities at a Children's Centre. Specifically, keen to determine if parents and practitioners acknowledged a difference in learning dispositions. Experiences from perspectives of all who participated were defined through photographs, dialogue and questionnaires. The second presentation examines research to improve quality partnerships whilst sharing a common language. Studies showed differences of observational analysis from various people, highlighting the need for professionals to recognise how their use of language was interpreted by others including parents.

The final presentation investigates 'Parental Partnership' between a number of settings. Do governmental requirements reflect "collaboration" or "partnership" within setting associations? It is envisaged that there will be a number themes uncovered. However, parental involvement varies between families. How can settings achieve effective partnership with so many variables?



### **Institutional Case Studies Exploring the Value of Forest School Within a Children Centre and Nursery Settings**

JO MCLELLAN | Widemarsh Children's Centre, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

To determine the value of Forest School as an activity based learning tool. Gathered data determined how change may have occurred. Attitudes and dispositions were a relevant factor to engagement and considerations.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Communication between researchers develops an understanding of the value of continual reflection and learning. .

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Research was structured with settings on how best to approach and engage with families. Practitioners stipulated that they were able to link Forest School to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, (2012). A reflexive pedagogical approach shaped experiences.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Active research was approached through perspectives of all who participated. Photographs, dialogue and questionnaires formed reflective praxeological structure, Pascal, Bertram et al (2012). A focus for practitioners was also viewing footage of Forest School within another country

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical guidelines with regard to consent, communication and recording were followed, permissions were gained from participants in all settings. Insider research perspectives and subsequent influence of data has been addressed. Ethical considerations respected the right of participants to withdraw at any time

#### **Main finding or discussion**

How these parents, practitioners and children adapted to outdoor learning both positively or negatively. How a picture of practice developed critical thinking. Quality, understanding of themes and activities highlighted the value of practice, Linden, J (2012).

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Impact of findings will be used to shape future work developing an understanding of how collaboration builds foundations for a stronger landscape of practice and consolidation of ideas, Wenger (2011).The parental involvement has led to a better understanding of what families' value and what can be gained with this reflective approach.

**Keywords:** quality practice; holistic environment; partnerships; ethicality; values

### **Using a Shared Language to Develop Quality Improvements in Practice**

KAREN CAMPBELL | United Kingdom

## Research aims

Quality improvement in practice, in early years settings, building on improvement for parent partnerships through communication. Defining the common language used by parents and practitioners to allow a more confident communication with parents who can engage with the shared language.

## Relationship to previous research works

This research was formed after a study with other practitioners, discussing the importance of communication among all associated with childrens holistic development.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education (DfE 2012) and other practitioners observations, used to compare differences/similarities of already used language in practice.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

My research followed a mixed qualitative and quantitative praxiological methodology. Video footage of children playing allowed observations to be made by practitioners. These observations were collated and it is this data that has been analysed to develop a better understanding of communication sharing.

## Ethical considerations

The video was taken with child consent and assent, parental understanding and guidance of what is expected throughout the study. Total anonymity, privacy and respect for outcomes and questions raised as a result during the research process.

## Main finding or discussion

A whole host of questions were raised during the main study, with regard to different issues applied to next steps. The study showed a difference of observational analysis from practitioners using occasional similar language but at times for different perspectives of observation.

## Implications, practice or policy

This research should inform and encourage practitioners to engage and share language used and understood by parents, peers and multi-agencies, allowing for stronger links with parental partnerships whilst sharing information ultimately raising standards in practice for children and families.

**Keywords:** partnerships; information sharing; learning environment; quality practice; ethicality

## Parental Involvement: Partnership or Collaboration?

GAYNOR CORRICK | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### Research aims

To investigate and interpret practitioner and parents understanding of concept of 'Parental Partnership', looking at whether governmental requirements reflect collaboration or partnership within setting associations.

### Relationship to previous research works

Communication was identified as an integral part of parental / setting partnership, this research investigates further the understanding underpinning communicative pathways.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Desforges, C. and Abouchar, A. (2003) The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment. Department for Education. (2012). The Early Years Foundation Stage.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Methods of investigation was largely enquiry based involving questionnaires, Praxeological methodology, small discussion groups and informal conversations. Collation of information provided produced a collection of both practitioner and parental views of partnership and or collaboration, identifying driving forces and restrictive elements to effective co working. Qualitative and quantitative interpretation allowing reflection on personal perspective. Research data provided information for reflection on whether effective partnership can be achieved.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines with regard to personal communication, consent and assent were considered and followed, permissions were gained from participants in all settings. Insider research perspectives and subsequent influence of data has been addressed.

### Main finding or discussion

It is envisaged that there will be a number of main ideas regarding partnership uncovered however, parental

involvement will vary between families. How, therefore, can settings achieve effective partnership with so many variables?

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Effective partnership provides enabling environments for parental engagement at a comfortable and achievable level for all, whilst recognising the individual and unique needs of each family. In identifying and comparing interpretations.

**Keywords:** communication; partnership; quality of practice; enabling environment; collaboration

## **C8 OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, RISK AND INJURIES**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: ELLEN BEATE HANSEN SANDSETER | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

The three presentations in this symposium will focus on children's outdoor play and learning in ECEC, and particularly on issues about how different outdoor environments influence children's physical active play (presentation 1), how children's risk-taking in outdoor environments might be managed (presentation 2), and the risk of being injured during play and activities in the outdoors in ECEC (presentation 3). The three presentations are based on studies from Germany, Australia and Norway.

### **Physical Activity During Active Play on Differently Designed Playgrounds**

ANTJE LUCHS | University of Bremen, Germany

#### **Co-author**

MONIKA FIKUS | University of Bremen, Germany

#### **Research aims**

We conducted a comparative study on differently designed playgrounds. The contribution of our work lies on assessing physical active play of preschool-age children on a contemporary and on a natural playscape.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

After exploring the diversity of play activities on contrasting play areas, detailed research also requires studies on the physical activity.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The number of natural playgrounds is rising. Therefore, assessing activities on differently designed playgrounds gets gradually more into the focus of research.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using step activity monitors (Orthocare Innovations, USA), we recorded physical activities of 17(8f, 9m) pre-school children (5,85ys  $\pm$  0,49ys) on both a contemporary and a naturally structured playground. After an introductory play period measurements took place for a time of 45 minutes during active free play.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Parents gave their consent to the study.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Results show that there is no significant difference ( $p=0,119$ ,  $d=0,54$ ) between the assessed gait cycles/minute on the two playgrounds -different in size and facilities. Research did not show a direct link between special affordances of different playgrounds and the physical activities. Results of single activity patterns show a higher variability of gait cycles/ minute on the smaller and more equipped contemporary playground.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

There is evidence that especially inactive children seem to be more active on the naturally structured playground compared to the contemporary one. Even though step monitoring assesses children's physical activity during free play -sporadic and intermittent in nature -very good, direct observation might better include all dimensions of physical activity on different playgrounds.

**Keywords:** outdoor play; natural playground; contemporary playground; physical activity; step monitoring

# Outdoor Environments and Play Provision in Australia: Promoting Risk-Taking and Physically Challenging Play in Early Childhood Settings

HELEN LITTLE | Macquarie University, Australia

## Research aims

Early childhood education in Australia has recently undergone significant reform. This study aimed to investigate current practices in outdoor play provision in light of these changes.

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous findings that suggest the regulatory environment potentially impacts on pedagogy in relation to outdoor play.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

This study is situated within larger research examining individual, social and environmental factors associated with children's risk-taking during play and adopts Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This paper presents data from an online survey investigating outdoor play provision in terms of space, resources and planning for physical play.

## Ethical considerations

The study was conducted with Macquarie University Human ethics committee approval.

## Main finding or discussion

Findings indicate that participating centres are well resourced to promote physical play and provide a diverse range of experiences that support physical activity and motor development, although vary in terms of opportunities for risk-taking in play. In particular, there were diverse perspectives amongst the teachers as to behaviours that constituted risky play. Regulatory restrictions relating to heights, arrangement of equipment and having insufficient space were identified as factors limiting opportunities for challenging and physically active play. The diversity of responses and examples provided by the respondents suggests that there is inconsistency in the interpretation and enforcement of the regulations.

## Implications, practice or policy

Findings have implications for pre- and in-service training for teachers in understanding how risk-taking in play might be supported and managed, as well as investigation of the way in which the regulations are applied to ensure greater consistency as the new national quality standards and regulations take effect.

**Keywords:** outdoor environments; play provision; risk-taking; pedagogy; regulatory environment

# Accident and Injuries in Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Settings: Risk Management and Injury Prevention

ELLEN BEATE HANSEN SANDSETER | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

## Co-author

OLE JOHAN SANDO | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

## Research aims

This presentation is based on an ongoing study of accidents and injuries in Norwegian ECEC settings, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. The aims of the study are to map all injuries in Norwegian ECEC during 2012, gain information about the situations where serious injury occur, and gain knowledge about ECEC settings' routines of managing risks and preventing injuries.

## Relationship to previous research works

Norwegian ECEC practitioners have a liberal approach to children's risk-taking in play (Sandseter, 2012). The children thus have great opportunities to encounter risks in their play, and managing risks and challenges in play is in Norway looked upon as an important part of learning during the preschool age (Sandseter, 2010).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Risky play is assumed having a positive effect on children's risk management and injury prevention (Sandseter & Kennair, 2011). Still, research on injuries in Norwegian ECEC has been scarce and more knowledge is needed.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Questionnaires about the amount, seriousness and scene/situation of injuries and routines of injury prevention were distributed to managers of all ECEC settings in Norway with an e-mail address. Managers from 1697 settings completed the questionnaire (30 % response rate). Qualitative telephone-interviews were also conducted with managers in 20 randomly drawn ECEC settings.

**Ethical considerations**

The study was notified to the ethics board of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services for approval.

**Main finding or discussion**

There are few serious injuries in Norwegian ECEC, and injuries are often unforeseen and difficult to prevent.

**Implications, practice or policy**

The results will influence Norwegian policy and practice in ECEC regarding risk management and injury prevention.

**Keywords:** injuries; risky play; risk management; outdoor play; injury prevention

**C9 CHILDRENS' PARTICIPATION**

Chair: LORNA ARNOTT | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

## **Children as Competent and Autonomous Research Participants: Piloting Self-initiated Video Diaries to Understand Young Children's Perspectives of Creativity**

LORNA ARNOTT | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

**Co-authors**

DEIRDRE GROGAN | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

PAULINE DUNCAN | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

**Research aims**

This paper explores the challenges of 'listening to children' when using iPads for data collection with young children. Evidence is presented from a pilot study that explores 3- to 5-year-old children's creativity during play.

**Relationship to previous research works**

The paper is informed by the understanding that children are competent individuals with valuable opinions to be heard, the children's rights movement and the New Social Studies of Childhood. Thus children's participation in research is essential, particularly when moving beyond practitioner-inferred understandings of creativity.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The work is grounded in Contextualism, which explores everyday practices in context.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Children's creativity was observed across two early educational settings over a three-month period. Researchers' reflective accounts of children's engagement with innovative self-initiated and -directed video diaries on iPads and traditional child-centred methods provided insights into children's desire, and ability, to participate in research.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was granted, informed consent was obtained from parents/guardians and practitioners and assent was inferred from children.

**Main finding or discussion**

Findings revealed variations in children's desire to take part in research depending upon the methods proposed. Traditional methods proved appealing to children yet video diaries were unpopular, despite each method being used for the same purpose and project. iPads often distracted children, particularly when children were aware that the device offered alternative apps and games.

**Implications, practice or policy**

These findings suggest that young children's involvement in research may be driven by perceptions of fun activities, rather than an awareness of the research project. This leads us to question the ethical issues of

assent for involving young children in the research process.



**Keywords:** creativity; video diary; technology; methodology; children's voice

## Children's Participation in Preschool Documentation Practices

KATARINA ELFSTRÖM PETTERSSON | Linköping University, Sweden

### Research aims

The aim of this research is to study children's participation in preschool documentation practices and the role of artefacts such as computers, toys and children's crafts in these practices. In this paper I will use data from video-recordings of documentation practices in a Swedish preschool in order to analyse how participation is enacted.

### Relationship to previous research works

Previous research has focused on either children's participation or preschool documentation.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The analysis is inspired by post-humanist theory stressing the intra-action (Barad, 2007) of humans, discourses and material. Agencies emerge through this intra-action, that is; the components do not have agency by/in themselves. The benefit of the approach is seeing the artefacts involved as contributing to the production of the documentation practice.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Case study was chosen as a research method, the case here being the documentation activity as well as one specific preschool. Video recording was used as an extractive modality, capturing situations that could be analysed later.

### Ethical considerations

To ensure that the study was conducted ethically correct it was vetted by the Central Ethical Review Board. Teachers, parents and children were asked to consent to participating in the study.

### Main finding or discussion

The preliminary results evinces that artefacts played an important role for children's participation. For example, the use of the computer when documenting enabled a child to participate in changing the objective of the documentation.

### Implications, practice or policy

The implications of this study for practice are the importance of considering the complexity of relations between children, adults and objects such as computers or toys when focusing on children's participation in documentation practices.

**Keywords:** children's participation; pedagogical documentation; preschool practice; children's rights; childhood

## Young Children as Participants in Interprofessional Practice

JANE PAYLER | University of Winchester, United Kingdom

### Co-author

JAN GEORGESON | Plymouth University, United Kingdom

### Research aims

This paper aims to examine interprofessional practice from the perspectives of five young children with additional needs, aged three- to four- years, and their parents.

### Relationship to previous research works

The experiences of young children receiving interprofessional practice in their early years settings is under researched. Researchers have previously called for greater focus on the experiences of service users in relation to interprofessional practice to inform its future development (Anning, 2001; Anning et al., 2006; Freeth et al., 2002; Tucker et al., 1999; Wong et al., 2012), addressed partially by Broadhead et al. (2008) and Aubrey and Dahl (2006).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical stance of the study is framed by Social Practice theory, guided by the belief that everyday practice draws on, challenges and is constrained by history, institutional structures, context and relationships (Holland and Lave, 2009), and by Dreier's (2002; 2008) conceptualisation of trajectories of participation.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

It adopted a case study approach, examining digital video recordings of the ways in which the children participated in interprofessional practice in a variety of early years settings during routine activities and those influenced by targeted

interventions. To contextualise the data, the child's participation at home was considered through interviews with parents.

### **Ethical considerations**

Matters of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality were all addressed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings suggest that young 'children-in-families' (Warin, 2007) were active participants, shaping the nature of provision they received and contributing to the funds of 'potency' each setting had for working interprofessionally effectively.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Children's 'voices', expressed multimodally, need to be taken into account when planning and evaluating such practice.

**Keywords:** children's perspectives; interprofessional practice; additional needs; multimodality; social practice theory

## **C10 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT II**

Chair: URVE LÄÄNEMETS | Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia

### **Development of Supportive Learning Environments**

URVE LÄÄNEMETS | Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia

#### **Co-author**

MARIA ROSTOVTSEVA | Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this research project was to specify how our music teachers can perceive opportunities for development of best possible learning environments in our general comprehensive schools and kindergartens. As a pilot project it was also meant to prepare for a future more large scale research project.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Supportive learning environments are of particular significance for implementation of new national curricula and making learning for children enjoyable and successful when acquiring new knowledge, skills and values.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Design and development of desired learning environments largely depends on teachers' professional competence, especially how they can structure different learning environments considering space (school architecture, classroom facilities, health requirements), study aids (traditional textbooks and workbooks, musical instruments, opportunities to use virtual environments, etc.) and social environments (class size, positive atmosphere, rational time-tables, individual curricula/consultations, differentiation and individualization of learning processes)

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The used methods of research were document analysis, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Questionnaires were anonymous and the teachers interviewed agreed to the procedure.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

This pilot study has shown development of specification of learning environments in curriculum documents for kindergartens and general comprehensive schools. Working teachers need specific in-service training for improvement of professional skills for more precise structuring of learning environments and for integration of formal and informal elements for organizing learning.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Some recommendations can be made for further improvement of pre- and in-service teacher training by inclusion of new academic and practical themes into existing disciplines related to general didactics and music didactics, which could contribute to educational excellence and implementation of educational reforms in Estonia.

**Keywords:** learning environments; national curricula; teacher competences, structure of learning environments; design of supportive environments

# The Learning Environment and Social Agency in Preschool: a Lebanese Case Study

JENNIFER LE VARGE | Wellspring Learning Community, Lebanon

## Research aims

Under the broad theme of childhood studies, research was conducted in a classroom with three and four-year-olds at a Lebanese international school. The research project focused on the learning environment, local understandings of space, and the ways in which children's identities are shaped within and through particular spaces- answering the question: how do children exhibit agency over the classroom learning environment?

## Relationship to previous research works

This paper was inspired by the work on childhood and spatiality conducted by Holloway and Valentine (2000).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

A theoretical underpinning of childhood studies promotes children as competent social agents; an outlook which has inspired this paper.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Utilizing Holloway and Valentine's (2000) methods of ethnographic research on spatiality and childhood studies, teachers and children were observed on a daily basis for four weeks.

## Ethical considerations

Subjects were recorded using pseudonyms.

## Main finding or discussion

It was found that children exhibited agency within the learning environment by moving objects and using them in novel ways. They also independently changed areas of the classroom to suit their play. The data show that the learning environment, often controlled by adults, is a malleable entity. The local cultural context, agency, concepts of childhood and learning, and the reactions of teachers each play important roles in the early childhood experience.

## Implications, practice or policy

This project attempts to provide a context for the intersection of theory and practice. The data included in this paper are part of an on-going Master's thesis project in Anthropology from the American University of Beirut, which focuses on power, agency, space and the construction of childhood in the preschool setting.

**Keywords:** classroom spaces; agency; image of the child; spatiality; childhood studies

# “Are We in Agreement?” Small Group as a Context Where Pre-School Children Can Construct Collective Reasoning

CAMILLA MONACO | Provincial Federation of Pre-Schools of Trento, Italy

## Research aims

In order to help children to develop and improve their linguistic and conversational-discursive competences, we have to intentionally project and create specific activities and adequate learning contexts. Small group context is a favored framework to construct collective reasoning among 3-6 years old children.

## Relationship to previous research works

Pontecorvo and Pascucci Formisano made some studies on this specific issue, but they do not analyzed this way of using small groups in pre-schools.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The project is founded on a socio-constructivist approach. In this perspective, the school is a place of cultural socialization, where children can increase and improve their cultural tool-kit.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Within a class, teachers divide children in stable small groups. In turn, there is a group that is involved with the teacher in a discussion while the other groups are engaged in different activities autonomously managed.

## Ethical considerations

Discussions within a small group allow children to create a collective reasoning by moving in their Zoped, by verifying the validity of their models and by constructing more satisfactory ideas and representations.

**Main finding or discussion**

Initial results show that discussion is a situation where children competently construct collective reasoning, share a language and elaborate common solutions of the problem throughout meaning negotiation and constructive opposition. The discussion process is more effective when the teacher plays a modulation role (e.g. by promoting ideas circulation, by supporting oppositional situations, etc.).

**Implications, practice or policy**

Since the ability to collaborate and to reach an agreement comprehend both consensual and oppositional dimensions, it is useful – also for young children – to include these kind of competences within their cultural tool-kits.

**Keywords:** small group; discussion; collaboration; agreement; opposition

**C11 PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES**

Chair: LIA DE VOCHT | University of Canterbury, New Zealand

## **Pedagogical Approaches and its Perspectives by Children: an Ethnographic Multicase Research in Primary Schools with Alternative Pedagogies in the Netherlands**

SISSI AZEVEDO | University of Minho, Portugal

**Co-author**

FERNANDO ILÍDIO FERREIRA | University of Minho, Portugal

**Research aims**

To present pedagogical approaches and its perspectives from children, in the ambit of a doctoral research carried out in three primary schools with Jenaplan and Dalton pedagogies and “new learning” approach, in The Netherlands. Its main focus is to comprehend children’s participation, autonomy and learning at school, by understanding the pedagogical models adopted by the schools, the type of relationships and interactions and the effects of spatial organization, materials and time.

**Relationship to previous research works**

To strengthen and develop the master research initiated in a Jenaplan school about children’s participation at school.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Based on the framework of Child Studies, particularly the Childhood Sociology, to enhance and reflect about children as social actors and emphasize their active and competent role in the learning process, valuing the daily experience, perspectives and the principles of participation and autonomy.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Interpretative paradigm through an ethnographic multicase approach, involving participant observation, interviews, document analysis and visual materials (drawings and photographs), most of which made by children.

**Ethical considerations**

To enhance children’s participation respecting their place, choices and ways of communicate, ensuring confidentiality and discussing research processes and results with children and others involved in the research.

**Main finding or discussion**

Highlight children’s competence to participate in the research and in their learning processes. The development of children’s education through their own perspectives and participatory methodologies, as well as the importance of taking into account the teacher’s role in the creation of learning environments for participation and autonomy and significant learning with children’s collaboration.

**Implications, practice or policy**

To contribute to re-thinking pedagogical practices in the primary schools by children’s perspectives.

**Keywords:** learning; participation; autonomy; school; alternative pedagogies

# Using Bakhtinian Theories to Explore Possibilities for Open-Ended Teacher-Child Dialogues in an Aotearoa/ New Zealand Early Childhood Setting

LIA DE VOCHT | University of Canterbury, New Zealand

## Research aims

The study aims to increase understandings and promote teaching practice whereby children are active participants in teacher-child dialogue.

## Relationship to previous research works

Related research: Siraj-Blatchford & Manni (2008);

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The presentation discusses a doctoral study in progress, which uses a Bakhtinian framework to guide both the topic of teacher-child dialogues in early childhood (EC) settings and the dialogic research process. Bakhtin's concepts of open-ended dialogue and moral responsibility and his view of identity as 'becoming' provide guidance to transition from monologic education to a more dialogic approach.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Video recordings of teacher-child dialogues were followed by meetings with the participating teachers in a New Zealand childcare centre, to analyse video clips which were selected by the teachers and the researcher.

## Ethical considerations

The dialogic research methodology reflects a respectful ethical stance for the participating teachers.

## Main finding or discussion

Some of the data from the study are used to illustrate how interpretations of Bakhtinian theories shaped the project and helped find possibilities for open-ended teacher-child dialogue. The participating teachers and I are gaining a better understanding of children as active participants in a more equitable power relationship.

## Implications, practice or policy

Changes have been made to the research project and the teachers' practice as a result. A dialogic research process recognised that teachers are unfinished and accepts that we, participating teachers and researcher, will all continue to change. It is hoped that a presentation about the research to date will further increase understandings and open up thinking about finding possibilities of dialogue in EC settings in the wider global context of this conference.

**Keywords:** teacher-child dialogue; dialogic research; Bakhtin; open-ended dialogue; early childhood

# Decisions Based on Evidence: Young Children's Research Behaviour?

JANE M. MURRAY | University of Northampton, United Kingdom

## Research aims

Within the Young Children as Researchers (YCaR) study, two aims were: • To establish ways young children construct knowledge by basing their decisions on evidence • To promote social justice by revealing young children as agents who make decisions based on evidence.

## Relationship to previous research works

Extant research into children's participation and decision-making within educational contexts includes Rudduck and McIntyre (2006) and Cox et al. (2010).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

An argument is constructed suggesting that recognition of young children's decision-making based on evidence as an element in their constructions of knowledge can empower children as social agents (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981; Rudduck and McIntyre, 2006; Cox et al., 2010; Strega, 2005; Prout and James, 1997).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Designed according to the academy's protocols, the YCaR study was driven principally by a value orientation framed by emancipatory, participatory and inductive approaches. Plural paradigms, a 'jigsaw methodology' and multiple methods gave primacy to participants: 138 children aged 4-8 years in three English early childhood settings participated, joined by their practitioners, families and professional researchers.

## Ethical considerations

Whilst the study complied with BERA guidelines (2004), its ethical progress was secured by its value orientation.

**Main finding or discussion**

Participating academy members identified the basis of decisions on evidence as ‘important’ research behaviour. Subsequently, analysis and meta-analysis of data with participants revealed participating children aged 4-8 years as agents who based decisions on evidence according to certain factors and adopted this behaviour for constructing and applying knowledge.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Ways in which participating young children constructed knowledge by basing decisions on evidence carry important messages for practitioners, policymakers and the academy.

**Keywords:** young children; decision-making based on evidence; emancipatory; participatory; inductive

**C12 VALUE EDUCATION**

Chair: DIANA SOUSA | University of London, United Kingdom

**Democracy and Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Portugal: History, Values and Culture**

DIANA SOUSA | University of London, United Kingdom

**Research aims**

This paper aims to present a pilot study which explores the ‘meanings’ of democracy in ECE settings in Portugal.

**Relationship to previous research works**

This work emerges as part of a PhD research project, which is particularly concerned with education and democracy with a focus on the ECE system in Portugal. The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of ‘democracy’ and how it is understood and enacted. More specifically it is interested to see how intentions and realities are aligned in the specific context of ECE in this country since the liberal revolution in 1820.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The focus of this presentation lies primarily on three different dimensions: history, values and culture. Through the analysis of the historical, political, social and cultural contexts, this study will scrutinise the ways in which ‘democratic education’ is described, interpreted, and enacted by the major providers of ECE in Portugal.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data presented was collected from policy makers, ECE experts, educational institutions and school leaders, through a selected range of methods, such as: analysis of historical and policy documents, interviews to policy makers, ECE experts and researchers.

**Ethical considerations**

Individual interviews were conducted following institutional ethical approval and further to gaining each participant’s informed consent.

**Main finding or discussion**

This study highlights the complexities of democratic approaches, understanding the meaning of democracy in the remits of policy and practice in this particular context.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Although this research is restricted to the specific cultural context of Portugal, ECE, and democratic education, the study has broader implications for our understanding of the connections between education and democracy.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; democracy; values; culture; history

**Teaching for Social Justice: a Pedagogy for Twenty-First Century ECE**

KAREN HAWKINS | Southern Cross University, Australia

**Research aims**

To investigate ways that would assist preschool teachers to develop a pedagogy and curriculum that raised their preschoolers’ positive awareness of and sensitivities to social justice issues related to Difference, Diversity and Human Dignity (the Three Ds).

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Researchers and early childhood educators have aired concerns about young children's attitudes towards the three D's for decades (Ehrlich, 1973; Palmer, 1986; Harper & Bonano, 1993; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2002). However, the problem remains and preschoolers in the twenty-first century still have the propensity for negative attitudes towards others who are different (Hawkins, 2011a). The conversation needs to continue...

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Children are active participants in the social construction of their worlds. \* The preschool years are formative in shaping not only children's understandings of their world and how to act in it, but also in developing their moral structures by absorbing the attitudes and values of their family, culture and society.

Prejudices can form very early in life. \* The research was underpinned by critical theory that examines the notion of power when discussing the Three D's.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative paradigm Participatory Action Research Field notes, video-taping of storytime sessions, and sustained conversations as methodological tools

## **Ethical considerations**

University's HREC clearance Educators and parents informed written consent Children's informed assent

## **Main finding or discussion**

The judicious use of critical picture books was successful in assisting educators to teach for social justice and in facilitating the preschoolers' awareness and understandings of, and sensitivities to the Three D's.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Imperative to continue conversations regarding teaching for social justice in ECEC highlighting the Three Ds.

**Keywords:** teaching for social justice; the three d's; PAR; critical picture books; sustained conversations

## **Values, Relationships and Participatory Practice in ECE**

CLODIE TAL | Levinsky College of Education, Israel

### **Research aims**

The aims of this presentation are to offer a conceptualization that perceives –at a micro-system level-encouragement of children's participation as embedded in self transcendence values and adult-child relationships and to raise questions about the effectiveness of practicing children's participation that disregards this connection.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Relation to previous research work includes research dealing with values(Schwarz, 2009, Ryan 2009) and their relations with teachers' daily behaviors( Tal and Yinon 2002 ) as well as recent research focused on children's participation(i.e., Perci-Smith & Thomas, 2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This work is inspired by theories dealing with conflicts between self transcendence-self enhancement values(Schwartz, 1992, 2009; Turiel, 2002) , and the process of internalization of societal values (Grolnick, Deci and Ryan, 1997). Importance of children's participation and of adult-children relationships derived from Deci and Ryan's and Van Manen's theories. Dilemmas related to those is inspired by Buber, Bachtin and Sidorkin.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study is based on as a constructivist grounded –theory approach including analysis of social episodes written by ECE students participating in advanced courses of classroom management . 4 cases were distilled as prototypical of the conceptualization offered in this study.

### **Ethical considerations**

Identity of participants remains undisclosed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Congruence of participatory practice is closely related to internalized self-transcendence values stemming from moral dilemmas dealing with challenging daily situations, particularly those in which the adult's self- esteem is at risk.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Children participation should not be preached, taught or mandated but rather collaboratively developed with teachers

and students whose existing values and views-even if opposed to our own-are seriously taken in consideration.

**Keywords:** self transcendence values; adult-child relationships; participatory practice; self determination theory; internalization of values

## **C13 PLAY AS LEARNING METHOD**

Chair: ELLY SINGER | University of Amsterdam, Neatherlands

### **Teachers' Availabilty and Young Children's Level of Engagement in Play**

ELLY SINGER | University of Amsterdam, Neatherlands

#### **Research aims**

Theoretical: Exploring factors in the pedagogical context that effect young children's level of play engagement.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Studies of Play engagement (F. Leavers) Studies of peer relationships and friendship (E. Singer) Studies of teacher-child attachment and emotional bonds (C. Howes)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Play engagement (Leavers) Attachment theory Joint attention (Tomasello)

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We analysed 6 random episodes of 4 minutes of an hour video and audio recording per child. In total 119 two- and three-year-old children were involved in our study; that is 714 episodes. Per episode we analysed: Level of play engagement (dependent variable) Constant presence teacher; absence; walking in/out (independent) Constant presence peers; absence; walking in/out (independent) Chaos or order in physical environment (indendent) Quality of teacher-child interactions (independent) After the statistical analyses the data were analysed by qualitative methods to get insights into the mechanisms behind the statistical relationships that were founf.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent of parents Children's routines were as usual; their daily life was not interrupted by the research.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Low level of play engagement is strongly related to teachers and children walking around (that was the case in 72% of the episodes). Teacher's walking around and peers' walking around or being constantly present are strongly related. High level of engagement is related: - to playing nearby the teacher who is constantly present. - to playing with a peer in the absence of teacher. - reciprocal teacher-child communication

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

This research has inspired many Dutch day care organisations to start with action research to improve young children's play engagement.

**Keywords:** play engagement; joint attention; availability of the teacher; joint play of peers; chaotic environment

## **Play as a Teaching Method at the School**

HANNELE KARIKOSKI | University of Oulu, Finland

#### **Co-authors**

HANNA SORVISTO | University of Oulu, Finland

VESA-MATTI SARENIUS | University of Oulu, Finland

#### **Research aims**

This research Play as a teaching method at school, belongs to Play at the different contexts research project. The other contexts are home and day care. By this time the research at school context has finished. This research aims to examine the meanings of play as a teaching method at school.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Generally Play research has been related to the children under school age. But we need more research about play at school especially play as a learning and teaching method.



## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical and conceptual framework: 1. What is play? The play categories according to Roger Caillois (1958) 2. Playful environments and pedagogical models according to Hyvonen & Kangas & Kultima and Latva (2007).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Research questions: 1. what the fifth graders think about play? 2. what kind of play they play? Phenomenographical research: what the children (84) think about play? (questionnaire) what a teacher thinks about play as a teaching method? (theme interview) 3. Research question: how a teacher can use play and playfulness in teaching geometry? Case study: to plan and implement a teaching experiment (4 weeks) at one school class using play as a method in teaching geometry. The theoretical background in planning and implementing the experiment: Playful learning environment and pedagogical models according to Hyvonen et al (2007).

## **Ethical considerations**

The children as research informants.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The playful learning environment and pedagogical models could be used in a meaningful way in teaching geometry. The students got high qualitative and positive measurable learning results.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Discussion: how the teachers can use play as a teaching method at primary schools.

**Keywords:** play; phenomenography; case study; teaching experiment; geometry

# **Children's Play – Constructing Relational Space in Daycare Centre**

NIINA RUTANEN | University of Tampere, Finland

## **Co-authors**

RAIJA RAITTILA | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

MARI VUORISALO | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

## **Research aims**

The aim is to discuss relational-spatial perspective in research on children's play.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

In recent years children's spaces and places have been discussed in various studies in the context of early childhood education. However, studies focusing on play have utilized the theoretical framework of relational space only marginally.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical starting point is that social space is relationally (socially) constructed in everyday interactions. This refers to the processes that intertwine 1) the physical environment and concrete objects,

2) the personal interpretations of physical and cultural space as well as 3) the cultural and collective views about the space.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The ethnographic data for this paper is selected from two different research projects in two Finnish daycare centres. Children's ages range from two to six years. Children's construction of space is analyzed qualitatively with selected episodes of play.

## **Ethical considerations**

An informed consent has been obtained from children's parents and the daycare centres. Children have participated in observations voluntarily. The participants' names and the centres will be kept anonymous.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The analysis has shown how children's actions extend, challenge and reconfigure the space in their joint actions and play. In addition, the institutional space is heterogeneous, providing diverse opportunities for actions for different children who each build their personal, subjective space within the institutional setting.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The reflectivity about the processes of construction of social space in early childhood education is important in considering the development of practices that support children's agency and participation in practices.

**Keywords:** relational space/place; two to six-year-old children; ethnography; qualitative studies; play

## C14 ECE POLICY

Chair: MARESA DUIGNAN | Early Years Education Policy Unit, Ireland

### **Expansion of Nursery Places for 2 Year Olds. The Voice of the Providers**

CAROLE KEANE | Redcliffe Children's Centre and Maintained Nursery School, United Kingdom

#### **Co-authors**

HELEN PAYNE | Redcliffe Children's Centre and Maintained Nursery School, United Kingdom

LISA ALLEN | Redcliffe Children's Centre and Maintained Nursery School, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

The study compares the views of 10 early years settings who are set to expand their provision for 2 year olds.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Food and young children

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

By September 2014 the UK government aims to provide 260,000 lower income two year olds with 15 hours per week free early education. This will represent around 40% of all two year olds nationally. The possibility to offer an increase in provision is open to all nursery providers rated good or outstanding by Ofsted , the regulatory and inspection body for early years and childcare provision.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data was drawn from semi structured interviews conducted with a variety of early years settings including private day care , children's centres and primary schools. The research lies within a qualitative interpretivist paradigm. Information was gathered from many participants in which their interpretations were critical.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Consent forms were signed by all participants . These gave information about the purpose of the study including how information would be shared. Issues were made explicit such as the right to withdraw and the right to confidentiality. All participants have been given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Lack of communication and follow up support on the part of the local authority Economic sustainability of enhanced places which do not match hourly day care rates A reliance on outside partners to provide effective family support A need to build practitioner knowledge

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Employ a link family support worker Higher rate for enhanced places Practitioner training around the needs of 2 year olds

**Keywords:** expansion of 2 year old provision; quality educate; economic pressure; practitioner knowledge; needs of children and families

### **Surviving the Spotlight: the Challenge of a Rising Policy Profile for the Development of Professional Practice in Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland**

MARESA DUIGNAN | Early Years Education Policy Unit, Ireland

#### **Research aims**

This paper explores the challenges currently confronting the ECEC workforce in Ireland since the introduction in 2010 of universal free preschool education. Increase State funding has been accompanied by increasing demands for accountability and quality in service. Drawing upon analysis of national quality and curriculum frameworks for early childhood education which describe professional practice in terms of reflection, a focus on play and partnership with children and families, the paper identifies potential tensions arising from these apparently competing national policy agenda.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper draws upon my own doctoral dissertation (Duignan, 2011) and also draws upon the work of authors such

as Moyles, 2001, Dalli, 2010, Osgood, 2006, 2010, Taggart, 2011. In addition it refers to the EU Commission CoRE report (2011) which addresses the professionalisation of the ECEC workforce in Europe.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Valorisation is a concept which refers to the manner in which abstract or theoretical principles or ideas attain concrete value. In this case, the theoretical articulation of professional identity in the ECEC sector in Ireland and how this has interfaced with national policy is offered as an illustration.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The original research underpinning this paper took a mixed methods approach as articulated by Cresswell 2010. Qualitative and Quantitative research methods were used within a hermeneutic framework of iterative interrogation of discourse across a range of sources to inform the findings.

### **Ethical considerations**

This paper does not involve primary research

### **Main finding or discussion**

The paper concludes that the ECEC workforce in Ireland is at a critical juncture in relation to the development of professional identity and understandings of professionalism in practice. It identifies a range of factors which have the potential to influence the current and future trajectory of both these issues and discusses the implications for developments in both policy and practice relating to the professional development of the ECEC sector.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The paper recommends a careful review and audit of the key discourses of national policy pertaining to professional practice in Ireland with the objective of ensuring the development of a 'competent system'

(CoRe, 2011) that can support ECEC professionalism in practice.

**Keywords:** professional; play; pedagogy; practice; policy

## **C15 MENTORING AND SUPERVISION**

Chair: UTE WARD | University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

### **Reflection in Mentoring an Important Step in the Formation Process for Preschool Teacher Students in Norway and Nepal**

ASTRID ØIEN HALSNES | NLA University College, Norway

#### **Co-author**

PITAMBER NEUPANE | ECEC Nepal, Nepal

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this paper is to obtain and analyze how Teacher Trainers and Mentors use reflection in supervision and mentoring and how this influence on students formation process during preschool teacher education.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The theme of the presentation relates to Donald Schön`s The Reflective Practitioner (1983) and Kari Søndena`s study of reflection i Norwegian oreschool teacher education (2002)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Reflection and formation are seen in light of Schön`s theory about reflection-in action and reflection-on-action and Lars Løvlie`s discussion about formation i Teacher Education. I also see links to Charles Taylor`s philosophy of self-formation.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative observation/field research in College and preschools and focus groups interview with students, teacher trainers and mentors. Written material collected from mentoring cources and students practicals assesment are collected . The written material is analyzed and will give focus for the interviews.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Condition of anonymity is taken care of.

**Main finding or discussion**

The main findings are how mentors and teacher trainers use reflection in mentoring and how this influence on students formation process from students to teachers.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Important implications of the study are to improve the quality and practice of mentoring in our new Preschool Teacher Educational program, starting in fall of 2013 at NLA and to develop the Mentoring Program at Early Childhood Education Centre, Kathmandu.

**Keywords:** reflection; formation; mentoring; preschool teacher education; focus group interview

**The Emotional Work of Supervisors in Early Childhood Settings**

UTE WARD | University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

**Co-author**

CHRISTINE COLLINS | University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

**Research aims**

With the introduction of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage all practitioners in English early childhood settings must receive supervision which offers support, coaching and training for practitioners.

**Relationship to previous research works**

Based on two earlier masters-level research papers this study aims to inquire into the early childhood supervisor's feelings about supervision and to understand their influence on the supervisory process.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework builds on concepts of supervision in the helping professions (Hawkins & Shohet, 1989), of leadership in early childhood settings (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2008) and of emotion work (Hargreaves, 1998; Colley, 2006).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This phenomenological research uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative data gained from a small sample of early childhood practitioners in leadership roles in England using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

**Ethical considerations**

Considering the sensitivity of enquiring into the feelings of others every effort was made to be sensitive to participants' needs and emotional states, and the ethical guidelines of the University of Hertfordshire were adhered to.

**Main finding or discussion**

This study draws on the findings of two earlier studies relating to effective supervision in children's centres and the support for early childhood practitioners experiencing critical affective events. The main findings from this research will provide an insight into current supervision practice in early childhood settings.

**Implications, practice or policy**

The findings will offer some indication of how supervisors can be supported to offer their staff teams effective supervisions which enable them to undertake the challenging work with young children and their families.

**Keywords:** supervision; emotion work; staff support; effective practice; professional development

**C16 MULTIPROFESSIONAL WORKING**

Chair: WENDY MESSENGER | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

**The Influence of Professional Culture on Integrated Working in Children's Centres in the UK**

WENDY MESSENGER | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

**Research aims**

The research aimed to consider the influence of different professional cultures of integrated working in Children's Centres in the UK.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This doctoral study drew upon previous studies by Anning et al (2006), Mckinnes (2007) and Black (2008)

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

and was underpinned by cultural anthropological and socio-cultural theory.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

It was based firmly within the interpretive paradigm and sought to elicit the voices of teachers, early years practitioners, health workers and family support workers. 16 semi-structured interviews and a focus group took place within a case study children's centre and 12 semi-structured interviews took place with 'others' from children's centres outside the case study.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations in relation to the British Educational Research Association guidelines were followed and particular attention was paid to maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The research findings suggest that professional culture does influence integrated working in Children's Centres, but the personal qualities of the professionals themselves and intra-emotional challenges are also influential. Furthermore, different professional groups present with their own specific challenges .

## **Implications, practice or policy**

It is at the interface of respectfulness, professional culture and personal qualities that a new culture , the 'Third Space' emerges and it is in this space that high quality integrated working can take place. A new psychodynamic model is presented and discussed in relation to professional development in this important area.

**Keywords:** professional culture; integrated working; children's centres; personal qualities; professional development

# **Early Educational Reflexivity and Professional Habitus in Multiprofessional Teams**

PETER CLOOS | University of Hildesheim, Germany

## **Co-authors**

ANIKA GÖBEL | University of Hildesheim, Germany

ILKA LEMKE | University of Hildesheim, Germany

## **Research aims**

In Germany 95% of early educational staff have been trained at a non-academic level. Now there is discussion about what level this training should have. The research project examines whether academic programs make possible a more strongly reflexive teamwork during the processes of anamnesis, diagnosis and intervention.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

While international studies consider the correlation between the academic degree of teachers, the quality of the early childhood institutions and the level of development of children (et al. NICHD ECCRN 2000; Sylva et al. 2008), the reflexivity was barely accounted on. Cloos (2008) investigated the differences established between professional groups of early childhood education and youth services.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A profession-theoretical perspective is adopted. From this perspective, the processes of anamnesis, diagnosis, intervention and evaluation are seen as being at the very core of professional behaviour (Abbott).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The project follows a qualitative research approach. Team meetings of multiprofessional teams and biographical interviews with team members are reconstructed with grounded theory.

## **Ethical considerations**

Professional teamwork requires an ethically secured handling of professional interpretations and interventions as well as of the data relating to children and families.

## **Main finding or discussion**

It is seen that the individual experiences of the particular team members are compared with one another and translated into collective interpretations. In order to arrive at decisions in the planning of educational processes, elements of the anamnesis, diagnosis, intervention and evaluation are combined in very different ways.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings can contribute to professionalizing team processes and to empirically supporting educational policy debates surrounding the qualification standards in higher education.

**Keywords:** professionalization; teamwork; reflexivity; planning of educational processes; qualification

## **Construction of the Professional Space in the Multiprofessional Context of ECE**

PÄIVI KUPILA | University of Tampere, Finland

### **Co-author**

KIRSTI KARILA | University of Tampere, Finland

### **Research aims**

The paper studies the professional space in the multiprofessional context of early childhood education. The objective will be addressed by the question: How do professionals in ECE interpret their professional space and position in the day care workplace?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The concept of space suggests that professional identity is mediated through others, in ECE e.g. children, colleagues, parents, families, artefacts (see Edwards & Usher 2008; Dalli & Urban 2010). Day care work space carries also the meaning of social, cultural and discursive space (Dahlberg & Moss 2005).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Negotiating professional spaces (Alsup 2006; Iisahunter et. al.2011) Negotiation of work identity (Billett 2007; Fenwick 2002) Multiprofessionalism (Karila 2010)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative multimethod approach, individual interviews and audio taped team conversations. The participants are Finnish day care centre kindergarten teachers and nursery nurses and they represent different work generations. (See work generations Karila & Kupila 2010)

### **Ethical considerations**

The participation of data collection has been based on the professionals' voluntary decisions. All of the day cares and study participants will remain unidentifiable.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Professional spaces are negotiated in every day professional practices. Despite the professional background the professionals of the new generation challenge the professionals of the older generation. For example, they have more developed skills for reflection, they are more initiative to develop practice and they challenge the professional hierarchies. On the other hand, there is an effort to consensus in the team.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings will help to recognize how the differing working generations interpret their profession and professional claims. It will examine how to manage with the generational differences.

**Keywords:** professional space; work generation; negotiation; day care; multiprofessionalism

## **C17 FAMILY AND EDUCATION**

Chair: WILFRIED GRIEBEL | State Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, Germany

## **Parental Perception of Learning Problems in Primary School Children**

VARGHESE ABRAHAM | Christian Medical College Ludhiana, India

### **Co-authors**

MONIKA SHARMA | Christian Medical College Ludhiana, India

JUGESH CHHATWAL | Christian Medical College Ludhiana, India

### **Research aims**

To evaluate the parental perception of Learning problems in 6-7 year old children.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

HERON,E.& JORGENSEN, CM (1994) did a study on the teachers perception of learning disabilities in primary children. How ever we could not find research on research on parental perception in the same age group.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Learning problems occur in about 12 % of the school age children and the prevalence of specific learning disability is about 15.7%. Though the prevalence of Learning problems is high it is rarely diagnosed due to lack of awareness among teachers and parents. Early detection of learning problem contribute to better outcome.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

After initial briefing parents of children studying in class I &II(Ages 6-7) were requested to fill a screening checklist designed by NCLD . Responces were analysed and >1/3rd of the positive responces were taken as a likely problem in that area

### **Ethical considerations**

The students identity is maintained using roll numbers and clearance from ethical and research committee was taken.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Of the 398 children screened in the study 241(60.4%) were reported to have problems in any domain. Social/ emotional domain (56.8%) and writing (56.4%) were the domains with highest number of positive reports.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings of the study highlights the highest the high level of parental concern about learning in young children. It also encourages further analysis into the reason for specific concern.

**Keywords:** learning; problems; parental; NCLD; children

## **On the Way to Be Parents of a School Child: Follow-up in School**

WILFRIED GRIEBEL | State Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, Germany

### **Co-authors**

ANDREAS WILDGRUBER | State Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, Germany

JULIA HELD | State Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, Germany

BERNHARD NAGEL | State Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, Germany

### **Research aims**

How do parents from different cultural backgrounds experience their transition to being a mother or father of a school child in Germany? What kind of participation in cooperation of nursery school and school makes a difference between groups of parents and more or less successful transitions?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study builds on empirical and conceptual work on transitions.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The family development transition model (Griebel & Niesel, 2011) implies that not only children, but also their parents cope with transition to school. In transition management, cooperation activities between institutions and parents are critical. For parents' transition, experienced support (Perkonigg, 1993) is considered.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

749 parents of first-born and second children in Germany, 309 of which had a migration history, were interviewed before start of school by telephone in German, Russian, or Turkish by trained pedagogues. 207 were interviewed again 9 months after start of school, when they had got first reports about their children. Audio data were transcribed and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

### **Ethical considerations**

The parents were asked for informed consent to participate, confidentiality and the preservation of the anonymity of the parents is in all steps of the research project regarded. Parents advocate their children's right to education according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings shed light on expectations and experiences of parents in transition, and what kind of transitional activities are supportive from their perspective. Diverse needs of parents with socio-culturally diverse backgrounds are reflected.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for practice, teacher training and/or policy will be delineated.

**Keywords:** transition; school; parents; diversity; interviews

## **Family Forms and Social Representations in France. How Early Years Educators (EYE) and Kindergarten Teachers (KT) Deal with Diversity?**

CLAIRE BLETON-MARTIN | ESSSE, France

### **Research aims**

In french preschool system, split for 0-3 and 3-6, relations to families appear essential, even if they're not understood in the same way. Although international research shows that there is no causal link between family form and development of children, there still exists an educational standard supposed to preserve the success of children : the family "father-mother-child(ren) living together".

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Lots of researches are based on the effects of diversity in education : social class, culture... But there is currently no work on diversity of the family forms and how professionals manage with it : single-parents, homoparentals, step-families...

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research is grounded in theories of "conceptual fields" (Vergnaud 1990)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

I will use some aspects of the followings : \* questionnaires \* resolution of problem situations \* interviews \* official documents and training programs

### **Ethical considerations**

In order to guarantee fairness between children, professionals must be able to help every child to develop in respect of the unexpected changes occur in family life, or parental choices.

### **Main finding or discussion**

\* There is a gap between "saying" and "doing" \* Most professionals are flexible, but sometimes unexpected tensions appear ; "no classical" families are often subjected to arbitrary \* Experience (as confrontation with reality) resonates with the initial training, but also with the personal life, and can lead either to an enrichment or to a stiffness

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This work sets out to develop mobility, reflexivity and dual trainings for 0-6 years professionals. It advocates for a holistic approach of childcare, and supports a real place for all families.

**Keywords:** ECEC; preschool; family forms; training; professionality

## **C18 EARLY MATHEMATICS**

Chair: KARIN FRANZEN | Karlstad University, Sweden

### **Under Threes Mathematical Learning - Teachers Perspective**

KARIN FRANZÉN | Karlstad University, Sweden

#### **Research aims**

This project highlights toddlers learning and development in mathematics. The aim is to get preschool teachers views of how the youngest children in preschool develop math skills. The Swedish curriculum covers even the youngest preschool children, the 1-3 years olds. Interesting questions then is; what should mathematics be in these ages and how shall the goals be reached?

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Inspiration has been taken from theories asserting children 'are' not mathematical, but are more or less 'made' mathematical, depending on how they are treated, the contexts in which they participate and how mathematics is identified in the environments they participate in (Palmer 2010).



## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretically, inspiration has been taken from theories that asserts the body as an important tool for toddler mathematic development (Merleau Ponty, 1962; Barad (2007).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Data material has been collected by focus group interviews.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethically, consideration has been taken to guidelines from The Swedish Research Council .

## **Main finding or discussion**

All teachers mentioned, mathematics are everywhere in all situations, but teachers must set words on it. A difference in work with math today compares to earlier, is the knowledge on how to talk mathematic. And today they pay more attention to the environment. They take more account to what material they use and how the children interact with it. They use cartons, tubes, sand and water. Teachers asserts this material develops children's mathematical knowledge. It gives children challenges and invites them to explore mathematic concepts using thier bodies.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

This project expected to generate important new knowledge on mathematic education for toddlers in preschool.

**Keywords:** toddlers; preschool; mathematic learning; teachers perspective; interviews

## **Toddler's Mathematical Competencies Expressed Through Play and Daily Life Activities**

ELIN REIKERÅS | University of Stavanger, Norway

### **Research aims**

The objective of the study was to investigate which mathematical competencies a large group of toddlers' in Norwegian early childhood education and care (ECEC)-institutions expressed through play and daily life activities.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Few studies of early mathematics have surveyed mathematical knowledge in children younger than 5 years (Sarama & Clements, 2009), few have been conducted in natural settings (Tudge, Li, & Stanley, 2008), and few have been directed at a broad field of mathematics (Aunola et al., 2004).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Research on early mathematical development makes the theoretical framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A total of 1,003 children participated. Participation was based on the parents' written consent. The study has been approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. The toddler's competencies were registered when they were between 30 to 33 months. The assessment material consisted of 36 items covering three areas: number and counting, geometry and problem solving. The information was collected by the staff in the ECEC-institutions who observed the toddlers' competencies in play and daily life activities.

### **Ethical considerations**

The data collection was therefore gentle and non-intrusive for the children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The toddlers showed mathematical competencies in all areas observed. A wide dispersion was found for all scores. Our participants displayed lower levels of competencies in the numerical area than reported from previous studies.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results indicate that the assessment material may be a valuable tool for the preschool teachers in identifying the variety of competencies mastered by the children in ECEC-institutions. It also shows that focus on mathematics in Norwegian ECEC-institutions need to be strengthened.

**Keywords:** toddlers; mathematics; authentic; assessment; Norwegian

## **Pretend Play and the Cultural Foundations of Mathematics**

MAULFRY WORTHINGTON | Vrije University, United Kingdom

## Co-author

BERT VAN OERS | Vrije University, Netherlands

## Research aims

To uncover the emergence of mathematical thought and visual representations in young children's spontaneous pretend play narratives.

## Relationship to previous research works

Carruthers and Worthington, 2003, 2005; Worthington, 2009; Worthington and van Oers, (forthcoming).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

This study is based on Vygotskian cultural-historical and social-semiotic theory informed by 'funds of knowledge' (e.g. Moll et al. 1992) and considers how children draw on their informal knowledge of family practices, informing and enriching their play and mathematical understandings.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

A longitudinal, ethnographic study using case studies of children aged 3-4 years in an inner-city nursery in England. The teachers and researcher made written observations of children's pretend play, and collected visual data at the same time. Analysis is largely qualitative and supported by computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

## Ethical considerations

BERA's (2012) ethical research guidelines adhered to and participants (nursery staff, parents and children) consulted and informed at every stage.

## Main finding or discussion

A high proportion of episodes included aspects of mathematics and children's use of graphicacy to communicate. The children's home cultural knowledge underpinned their pretend play and interests and informed their mathematics. Where children are immersed in mathematical and graphical-rich environments, exploring home mathematical cultures becomes a natural feature of their pretend play.

## Implications, practice or policy

Practice: value and develop understanding of social pretend-play; acknowledge children's 'funds of knowledge'; develop effective learning cultures to support play, mathematics and graphicacy. Policy: acknowledge the importance of play; appreciating that the social and cultural aspects of writing and mathematics are best met in pretend-play contexts.

**Keywords:** pretence; role-play; funds of knowledge; mathematics; graphicacy

## C19 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN ECEC I

Chair: MAHIMA MITRA | The University of Oxford, United Kingdom

## Researching Australia's Reform Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care: Affordances and Challenges of Research Informing Policy and Practice

ANN FARRELL | Queensland University of Technology, Australia

## Research aims

Australia's reform agenda in Early Childhood Education and Care includes a new National Quality Framework (NQF), a national legislative framework for universal access to quality ECEC across all sectors and jurisdictions, a National Quality Standard, a national rating and assessment scheme, a new national statutory body, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (established in 2012) and Australia's first-ever national framework for children birth to age five years, *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years framework for Australia (EYLF)* (2009). This presentation provides an overview and synthesis of major research being conducted within the reform agenda. A research aim common to this body of research is to provide empirical evidence that will benefit young children, their families and educators.

## Relationship to previous research works

The research discussed here relates to foundational work conducted under the auspices of Australia's Productivity Commission.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The presentation draws upon the theoretical understandings of Pierre Bourdieu to explore the 'sites of performance' in which research is being conducted.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The presentation uses the work of Bourdieu as a theoretical lens for examining a corpus of research which features a range of paradigms, methodologies and methods.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations include voluntary consent, natural justice and beneficence (the relative benefit versus the risk) within the research under examination.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Work-in-progress is examined in relation to the affordances of triangulated data for policy and practice in Australian ECEC.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for policy and practice in the context of Australia stand to shed light on the affordances of research for policy and practice internationally.

**Keywords:** early childhood education and care; early years; reform agenda; early childhood policy; early childhood practice

## **Connecting Early Childhood Policy with Practice: the Take-up and Experiences of Using the ICDS and RGNCS by Working Mothers in an Indian Slum**

MAHIMA MITRA | The University of Oxford, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

Early Childhood Education and Care is recognized as a critical area in global Social Policy. Movements within the country as well as worldwide have lent support to the growth of ECEC programmes in India.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Although service provisions and benefits exist in support of parents and children, there are significant gaps in the take-up of these services by beneficiaries. This paper focuses on the take-up of two national-level early childhood programmes (the ICDS and the RGNCS) by working mothers from a low-income urban slum in New Delhi

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

It is nestled in Lilian Katz's theory on perspectives on childcare quality (1993), according to which quality in early childhood programmes can be viewed from a number of perspectives, each contributing uniquely to overall programme performance, although current research seldom focuses on parental views (Ceglowski and Bacigalupa, 2002).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The empirical data for this paper comes from surveys with 200 mothers of 1½ -5 year-olds, all residing in the same slum community.

### **Ethical considerations**

The dataset explored childcare arrangements of working mothers, take-up of government services vis-à-vis other options/alternatives, and mothers' experiences of using benefits under government services.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings revealed the take-up of both government programmes in the selected research community to be extremely low. Beginning with understanding why parents chose the above government programmes for their children, the paper goes on to analysing, in particular, reasons for non-enrolment/utilization and significant barriers preventing parents from taking up the selected services in their community.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The paper concludes with policy implications that can be drawn from this case example.

**Keywords:** ECEC in India; working mothers in India; barriers/facilitators to take-up; integrated child development; crèche services

# Changes in ECE in the U.S.A., Russia and Finland 1991-2011

JANNIINA ELO | University of Tampere, Finland

## Co-authors

JESSICA ESSARY | Zayed University, United Arab Emirates

EEVA HUJALA | University of Tampere, Finland

## Research aims

The study investigates changes in educational practices and ideologies of child care for the past two decades in the U.S.A., Russia, and Finland. The main discourse is that an education process cannot be viewed separately from the societal and cultural context.

## Relationship to previous research works

This research is part of a cross-cultural follow-up study “Education in a Changing Society”.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study is theoretically framed by Bronfenbrenner’s psychological concepts applied to education, and Hujala’s contextual theory of child’s growth, where children’s growth and wellbeing are seen as interaction between children and their growth environment.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The data was collected by focus group interviews with teachers of 3–5 year old children. Data sets were analyzed as case studies. Native researchers were involved in the analysis process to culturally validate the data analysis.

## Ethical considerations

The ethics of the study were assessed and officially proofed by the University of Tampere and Tampere Area Ethical Review Board.

## Main finding or discussion

Three main dimensions rose from the results. Firstly, ECE as an institution reflects the dynamic interplay of cultural, social, and educational aspects of each society. Secondly, on pedagogical level the societies’ investments in ECE are minor compared to the teacher’s educational goals. Thirdly, the status of the ECE profession is relatively low compared to the value of children in each society.

## Implications, practice or policy

The general aim is to increase the knowledge and understanding of the relationship between cultural and education system-related factors as reflected in teachers’ perceptions of ECE quality in each country. Furthermore this information may yield more understanding of culturally bound child care.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural; focus group; longitudinal; society; teachers’ perceptions

## C20 PARENTS’ INVOLVMENT IN FAMILY

Chair: PAULINE SCHREUDER | University of Groningen, Netherlands

## Comparison of Finnish and Turkish Early Childhood Educators’ Conceptualization of Parental Involvement

SEVCAN HAKYEMEZ | University of Turku, Finland

## Research aims

The aim is to identify similarities and differences between Turkey and Finland regarding early childhood educators’ conceptualization of parental involvement.

## Relationship to previous research works

Sabancı’s (2009) study on conceptualization of Turkish primary school teachers on parental involvement shows both similarities and differences in the associations between background variables and parental involvement applications, such as education level and understanding of parental involvement.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Previously conducted research show that parental involvement plays significant role on children’s academic achievement likewise their cognitive, social and emotional development. For an efficient parental involvement, which can be described as home school collaboration on child’s learning (Uludağ, 2008), understanding the

conceptualization of early childhood educators would be significant. Comparing two countries, depending on Epstein's parental involvement framework could help to develop better understanding of effective way of parental involvement.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Quantitative method was chosen. A questionnaire prepared by researcher has been distributed in Ankara and Helsinki.

### **Ethical considerations**

In this study, any information about children or families who takes part in daycare is not gathered. It was voluntary to respondents to take part to this study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The data collection is still proceeding.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This research will provide a better understanding of what are the similarities and differences between a Western and an Eastern country in terms of parental involvement conceptualization of early childhood educators. It also will help to see if the attitudes towards parental involvement and its types are influenced by the culture. The results will help to determine how to develop effective parental involvement in early childhood education institutions by understanding the affecting variables.

**Keywords:** parental involvement; teacher opinions; parental involvement types; early childhood education; Finnish-Turkish comparison

## **The Friendly Neighbour or the ECEC-Professional: Views from the Inside**

PAULINE SCHREUDER | University of Groningen, Netherlands

### **Research aims**

Investigating the ways in which caregivers relate to notions of professionalism within the field of family day care (FDC).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research in the Netherlands focussing on FDC is very scarce, and we have found none that places caregivers in the foreground. Internationally, the situation is only a little better (e.g. Peeters 2008; Williamson et al, 2011; Davis et al 2012).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This field is rapidly becoming more professional, but the implications for the way caregivers understand their own professional identity are as yet unknown. What knowledge and competencies do they value and is personal involvement compatible with being a professional? Thus the concept of professionalism in relation to FDC is challenged.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

By using semi-structured in-depth interviews, caregivers are invited to reflect on several aspects of professionalism and quality. Topics are both linked to research findings, and to contemporary discussions on childcare in the Netherlands. The constant comparative method (CCM; Boeije 2002) will be used to analyse the interviews; this allows for the appearance of patterns without making generalisations.

### **Ethical considerations**

Formal regulations, organisational culture of the agency, and the professional herself give shape to FDC. Therefore, we consider situativity as crucial in gaining better insight into the complexity of pedagogical professionalism.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The interviews will take place in Spring 2013. The first results will be presented at the conference.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Giving voice to caregivers allows for a more solid positioning of FDC in the field of ECEC. Agencies for FDC can further develop their policy, based on the views and expressed needs of the caregivers.

**Keywords:** family day care; professionalism; caregivers' perspective; interviews; quality

# Self-Evaluation of Teaching Competences for Cooperating with Parents

ADRIJANA VISNJIC JEVTIC | Kindergarten Cakovec, Croatia

## Research aims

Presuming the child's right to be educated, as well as the fact that the parents are responsible for the child's development and education, it is clear that the institutions for early and pre-school education need to establish satisfactory cooperation in the relationships with the children's families.

## Relationship to previous research works

Developments in the modern world reflects on methods, forms and quality of the cooperation established between teachers and family. Researches indicate that a good cooperation between the institutions and the family are a prerequisite for the child's academic and social success.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines parents as primary responsible for the education and development of the child, educational institutions need to support the parents in this endeavour. The responsibility for a satisfactory cooperation is shared also by the teachers who have the opportunity and responsibility to cooperate with the parents on daily basis.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

A research conducted on 67 teachers (N=80) of the Čakovec nursery school has given an insight into the self-evaluation of the teacher's competences.

## Ethical considerations

Research was done according to appropriate ethical standards, and participants undertaking the research were protected.

## Main finding or discussion

The results of the research exhibit interesting evaluations – the teachers feel competent for the cooperation with the parents but at the same time find this segment of their professional work the most stressful.

## Implications, practice or policy

Although the sample is too small to derive general conclusions, it is possible to repeat the research on a bigger population and based on the results, prepare a formal and non-formal education in this area.

**Keywords:** teachers; families; competence; cooperation; professional work

## C21 POLICY CHANGE IN ECE

Chair: SHIRLEY ALLEN | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

## How to Prepare Children for Living in a Complex, Diverse and Permanently Evolving Globalized Environment in the ECEC? A Practical Model

JOANNA SZAFLIK-HOMANN | Klax Berlin gGmbH, Germany

### Co-author

JULIA WOITZICK | Klax Berlin gGmbH, Germany

## Research aims

The main question is how to approach children in practice, in order to foster their social competence and prepare them for living in a complex, diverse and permanently evolving globalized environment? How to organize learning settings that help children to grasp and tackle the reality?

## Relationship to previous research works

The Klax pedagogy is a skills-based approach. It has been influenced by various ideas of progressive teaching: social-constructivist theory (Vygotsky, Fthenakis), experience-based learning (Reggio Emilia Approach), individual-centred approach (Montessori), the meaning of play in early childhood education (Fröbel). The Klax approach is being constantly improved and developed through exchange with current educational research and evaluation of its own practical work.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The Klax-Concept is based on a fractal with four pillars which sets the ground for pedagogical work: 1. Individual learning routes: excitement, creativity, challenge; 2. Social community: respect, participation, rules; 3. Authentic adult: reflection, belief in success, tutor; 4. Arranged environment: security, inspiration, meaningfulness.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We present the concept and how it is being evaluated by teachers, parents and children.

## **Ethical considerations**

The child is perceived as a responsible, sensitive and independent individual that sees him/herself as a part of the world is aware of his/her own skills/abilities.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The aim of this presentation is to propose a practical approach for the pre-school education sector that has been developed by the team of the Klax Group. The presentation fits into two strands: "Learning environments" and "Innovative/Alternative Methods". It presents a theoretical model, tools for its practical implementation and evaluation of the results.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

It sets the ground for a practitioners and researchers discussion.

**Keywords:** pedagogical practices; innovative approaches; learning environments; individualised learning; diversity

# **Investigating the Experiences of Early Years Practitioners to Manage the Complexities of Policy Change in Times of Economic Recession**

SHIRLEY ALLEN | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

## **Co-author**

ANGELA SCOLLAN | Middlesex University, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

This research aims to develop understanding about challenges experienced by Early Years practitioners in managing the complexities of policy change in times of economic recession.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper relates to previous research on the Early Years Professional role and practice (Whalley and Allen, 2011).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Urban's (2008) concept of 'dealing with uncertainty' provides a theoretical framework for this enquiry into current challenges to Early Years practice.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

An interpretive paradigm was used to explore the perceptions of Early Years practitioners on managing the challenges of practice in response to current policy.

## **Ethical considerations**

The research adheres to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines, including participants' right to confidentiality and right to withdraw.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Initial findings suggest that practitioners have concerns about (a) maintaining a professional approach to address the complexities of policy change during a period of declining opportunities for professional development; (b) the impact of the current economic climate on families in their settings.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Early Years policy change emphasises outcomes that are concerned with opportunities for employment and participation in global economic competition (DfE, 2013). If practitioners are charged with supporting children's future economic well-being, it is vital they are empowered to develop 'personal agency and resourcefulness' (Allen et al., 2012) to 'deal with uncertainty' (Urban, 2008) in the current economic climate. Implications for practice, therefore, affirm Nutbrown's (2012) call for opportunities for practitioners' professional development so that they can support the 'life situations of children' in their care and the 'realities and inequalities that shape them' (Urban, 2008: p149).

**Keywords:** policy; practice; professional; challenge; economic

# Transformation from National Welfare Policy to Global Economy and Learning? - ECEC in the Scandinavian Countries

SVEN PERSSON | Malmö University, Sweden

## Co-author

INGEGERD TALLBERG BROMAN | Malmö University, Sweden

## Research aims

The aim is to formulate and discuss a conceptual framework for the transition of ECEC-policies in the Scandinavian countries. Special interest is paid to how educational concepts are interrelated and transformed in transitions between European, national and local contexts.

## Relationship to previous research works

Sweden and Norway are in earlier research described as exemplars of an integrated ECEC-model, with an educational philosophy that stresses psychological and social development rather than formal instruction. The integrated model sees the role of ECEC as supplementing, not substituting for the family.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

In this study we analyse changes, silences and disturbances in policy documents from a critical discursive perspective.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Policy documents from OECD, EU, the Swedish and Norwegian national agencies and local arenas are analysed within the context of global changes in education.

## Ethical considerations

None

## Main finding or discussion

In this on-going study we find a discursive shift in the way ECEC is described, conceptualised and inter-related in educational contexts; from seeing ECEC within a “political welfare and childhood discourse” to seeing it within an “economic, social investment and learning discourse” the latter enhancing documentation, assessment, parental involvement and individual learning.

## Implications, practice or policy

From having been an expression of the welfare state policy in Nordic countries, focusing distribution of wealth and social justice, early childhood education and care (ECEC) has increasingly been linked to international agreements and strategies, and has become policy-steered by cooperative bodies at the international level. In the era of increased globalization of education the youngest children in ECEC has been in focus of national efforts to assert itself in international competition.

**Keywords:** ECEC; policy; transition; discourse; Scandinavia

## C22 ARTS IN ECE

Chair: CHRISTOPHER SCHULTE | The University of Georgia, United States of America

## Intergalactic Encounters: the Political Immediacy of Children’s Drawing

CHRISTOPHER SCHULTE | The University of Georgia, United States of America

## Research aims

Considering the specificities of a drawing encounter that materialized between a young boy and girl (5 years old) at a university Saturday Art School, this case study essay explores the political immediacy of children’s drawing performances, particularly the production of desire and the politics through which drawing desire is mobilized.

## Relationship to previous research works

This paper extends an aspect of my research program that relates to the social and cultural performativity of children’s drawing, and extends an already complex and ever increasing body of research and theory about children’s art as relational, performative, and politically entangled.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

This case study is grounded within and passed through the conceptual and theoretical leans of Gilles Deleuze



and Felix Guattari's articulation of minor literature. Particular attention in this case study essay is given to D&G's articulation of a politics of desire.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

For this case study (Dyson, 2005) essay, I use video and photographic techniques (Glesne, 2006), what Claudia Mitchell (2011) calls "participatory visual approaches" (p. 4) to listen to, finesse, and further perpetuate the density and specificity of the participants' drawing. In other words, I use documentation (with young people) to project into the scene of drawing, additional layers of complexity (Olsson, 2012).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethics of a relational inquiry;

### **Main finding or discussion**

This essay argues and locates a need to think children's drawing away from the prevailing discourses about children and children's art that situate them/it within a grid of certainty and predictability.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications are made for both research and pedagogical practices.

**Keywords:** children; drawing; political immediacy; desire; deleuze

## **The Culture of the Art Room Through the Lens of Socioeconomic Status**

AMY LYNN ELIZABETH PFEILER-WUNDER | Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, United States of America

### **Research aims**

This research is an account of the business of the art room - where notions of "freedom" and "creativity" are essential components of the curriculum. The mundane and everyday language used by young children in the art room is scrutinized for evidence of the production and regulation of social class, and the ways in which class is taught, learned and "normalized" in different school cultures.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research is shared in the book, "Young Children, Pedagogy and the Arts: Ways of Seeing" edited by Felicity McArdle and Gail Boldt.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theory draws from Foucault's examination of practices normalized in institutions and Ellen Brantlinger's notion of schools maintaining a white middle class ideology.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A poststructuralist qualitative narrative case study provides fragments of stories creating a bricolage of two boys, aged nine years, and their experiences in the artroom at their two different schools. Methods included observations, dual entry field notes, photos and informal interviews with students, art teachers and principals.

### **Ethical considerations**

The impact of one's own professional identity in the construction of the "child" was considered through the researcher's personal autoethnographic narrative.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The stories illustrate ways in which art education in schools works to produce particular identities for children, and particularly how class might be regulated through the art curriculum.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Social and relational spaces can intersect and tangle with class, and it is important to take into account how this can effect how teachers view children, how children see themselves, and the ways in which curriculum maintains or pushes on these spaces.

**Keywords:** identity and representation; production of social class; culture of schools; normalized curriculum; visual arts

## **C23 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT III**

Chair: TITTA KETTUKANGAS | University of Eastern Finland, Finland

# Basic Activities as a Concept in Early Childhood Education

TITTA KETTUKANGAS | University of Eastern Finland, Finland

## Research aims

This study is a part of ongoing doctoral research. The aim of the whole research is to clarify, expand and develop the concept of basic activities.

## Relationship to previous research works

The aim of the study was generated from the notice that basic activities has not been in the focus of research. Understanding basic activities as a child's activity call for theories about human basic needs. In addition to that, understanding teachers' activities in the practical situations of basic activities, pedagogical activity theories are needed.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The main theoretical and conceptual framework of this study is coming from Härkönen's Pedagogical Systems Theory. In it the concept of basic activities is linked with the whole pedagogical systems in systemic way. In it also the concepts of basic activities is a system itself. Related to curriculum data also theories of curriculum are needed.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This study is hermeneutic one and focuses on curriculum texts. Data is collected from the Finnish early childhood education curriculums 1972-2010. Data will be analyzed by content analysis.

## Ethical considerations

The study follows the rules of research ethics. It is also an ethical issue, that basic activities have not been research in focus.

## Main finding or discussion

Some preliminary findings related to problematic issues about concepts and expressions concerning basic activities are done and will be presented in this proposal.

## Implications, practice or policy

Clarifying of the linguistic expression of basic activities is related to the following four fields: to early childhood education practice, to early childhood education (teacher) training, to early childhood education research and to early childhood education thinking.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; basic activities; pedagogical systems theory; curriculum; content analysis

# Comparing Roots, Current Trends and Future Challenges of Early Childhood Music Education of Estonian and Finnish Kindergartens

KRISTI KIILU | Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia

## Co-author

INKERI RUOKONEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

## Research aims

The aim of research is to compare the developmental aspects of early childhood music education in Estonia and Finland.

## Relationship to previous research works

The authors have studied the field in depth, furthermore, in previous years they participated in different projects (Kiilu 2010, 2011; Ruokonen 2010, 2011, 2012).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Music is an inseparable part of the development of a human being. A child is exposed to music already before its birth and will be accompanied by music for the whole life. Music education of Estonian and Finnish people has a long tradition – singing, playing a musical instrument and delivering music instruction have always enjoyed a respectable position. The countries have a long history and now a day more interaction in music educational field.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research material of this comparative historical research includes documentary analysis (curriculum subject syllabus, educational materials, teacher education etc.) and the writings of the Estonian and Finnish researchers.



## **Ethical considerations**

All possible ethical issues are carefully considered in this research.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The current trends of Estonian and Finnish kindergartens early childhood music education is examined and compared through the tasks and values of music in national curriculums and documents. The similarities can be found in some music pedagogical trends in history and especially during current days. The most differences can be seen in the political changes of the society influencing also to the early childhood music education and teacher training.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The diversity, pluralism and intercultural issues are challenging the future music education in both countries.

**Keywords:** comparative historical research; Estonian early childhood music education; Finnish early childhood music education; kindergartens music education; early childhood music education

## **C24 TRANSITION TO SCHOOL**

Chair: SUSAN GRIESHABER | Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

### **Transition to School: Considering Continuity**

TESS BOYLE | Southern Cross University, Australia

#### **Co-authors**

SUSAN GRIESHABER | Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

ANNE PETRIWSKYJ | Queensland University of Technology, Australia

#### **Research aims**

In Australia early years education spans the prior-to-school and school sector. The aim of this cross-sectoral study was to investigate how teachers construct and define pedagogy and whether a shared understanding of points of convergence and divergence might lead to greater continuity during transition to school.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Pedagogical differences between early years teachers have been identified as contributing to discontinuity of pedagogy when children transition from the prior-to-school to the school sector. In Australia there are few cross-sectoral transition studies investigating shared understandings of theory and practice.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study adds to an emerging body of research and literature applying critical theoretical approaches to transition to school.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study adopts a participatory action research approach. Participants formed a professional learning community to collaborate on the design and implementation of a long-term transition program.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The study was formally reviewed and approved by the Queensland University of Technology's Human Research Ethics Committee Brisbane, Australia. A summary of ethical considerations was distributed to participants.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings of this and previous pilot studies reveal fundamental differences in the way teachers across sectors define and enact pedagogy. Models of transition to school that suggest continuity might be achieved through pedagogical homogeneity have been resisted by both sectors.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Participatory action research is used to investigate how philosophical and pedagogical differences between the sectors influence continuity during transition. Adopting a critical theoretical approach enables cross-sectoral dialogue and reflection to reframe taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs in order to transform practice and policy.

**Keywords:** transition to school; pedagogy; continuity; participatory action research; early years education

# Starting School as Cultural Interface: Indigenous Australians' Recollections

TUIJA TURUNEN | University of Lapland, Finland

## Co-authors

LEONIE MCINTOSH | Charles Sturt University, Australia

BOB PERRY | Charles Sturt University, Australia

## Research aims

This research examined Indigenous Australians' negotiations between two cultures at the time of starting school. It highlights the importance of building respectful relationships with families and communities to create a space where everyone is comfortable.

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous studies have indicated that starting school is a significant educational marker in one's life course and may have a long-term influence. The impact of transition is such that many people recall their experiences. Indigenous culture is an oral culture and recalling of these experiences often occurs within families.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Cultural interface is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional dynamic space and shapes how people understand themselves and others. Schools are interfaces where Indigenous children encounter the mainstream culture often with other children such as siblings or cousins, or by themselves.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The recollections were gathered during autobiographical narrative interviews with ten Indigenous Australians who started school between 1941 and 1988.

## Ethical considerations

The participants chose the time and venue for the interview and in most cases an Indigenous researcher was present. This created a comfortable and culturally appropriate space to share stories.

## Main finding or discussion

In their stories, the interviewees made sense of their childhood experiences and illustrated the strategies they used to navigate between two cultures. Some memories influenced a person's life goals and the story of 'continuing me'.

## Implications, practice or policy

The results help educators to become more aware of the impact of different cultural backgrounds on starting school experiences and promote the effort to provide positive experiences to all children. Moves towards empathy and understanding provide the basis a successful transition to school.

**Keywords:** transition to school; indigenous Australian; memories; cultural interface; autobiographical narrative

## C25 PARADIGMS, THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES I

Chair: DEBORAH ALBON | London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

### From 'Tasks to Do' to 'Being with' Children: a Reflection on Methodological Approaches to Researching with Children

DEBORAH ALBON | London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

#### Research aims

This presentation reflects on an ethnographic research project with young children, which examined food events in four early childhood settings. The presentation discusses the methodological turn towards participatory methods with children and will argue for an approach centred on being with children as opposed to presenting tasks to do with them.

#### Relationship to previous research works

The presentation will draw on my Doctoral Study as well as material presented in a new book co-authored with Rachel Rosen: *Negotiating Adult Child Relationships in Early Childhood Research*.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The presentation will draw on the ideas of Christensen and Prout on 'ethical symmetry' in relation to childhood research; Warming's notion of 'building common cause' with young children; as well as the Bakhtinian notion of 'sympathetic co-experiencing'.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research is located within the social studies of childhood and focused on eliciting the perspectives of young children and early childhood practitioners on food events in their settings.

## **Ethical considerations**

Relationships with participants are viewed as never finalised and always in flux/needing attention. A relational rather than technician approach to ethics was promoted throughout the research.

## **Main finding or discussion**

I will focus on the use made of participatory methods (in particular a visual tool employed at the beginning of the research) versus a more leisurely strategy of being with children - which is linked to Bakhtin's notion of sympathetic co-experiencing. A critique of participatory methods is put forward.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

'Being with' children offers a significant way in which research relationships might be conceptualised and is a context through which to build common cause with young children in research.

**Keywords:** ethnography; sympathetic co-experiencing; common-cause; children's perspectives; participatory methods

# **Photography in Research with Children**

JÓHANNA EINARSDÓTTIR | University of Iceland, Iceland

## **Co-author**

SUE DOCKETT | Charles Sturt University, Australia

## **Research aims**

The aim of the paper is to critically discuss the use of photography as a data-gathering method in research with young children.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper will be based on our earlier work. We will describe and critique how we have used photography in different research projects.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical foundations of the paper are the ideology of childhood studies in which childhood is viewed as a distinct period and children as competent thinkers; children's rights discourse and citizenship; and the use of visual methodologies in research with children.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

New ideas about the rights of children to influence their own lives and the importance of taking their perspectives seriously, have increased focus on participatory research with children using methods that suit children's interests and actively engage children with different competencies.

## **Ethical considerations**

We will describe how we informed the children about the research and gained their assent and how we addressed the power inequality between the researcher and the children by striving to empower the children. We also explore issues about confidentiality and privacy, and the use of images produced by and including children.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Examples from our research projects in Australia and Iceland utilizing photography will be given, and the advantages and disadvantages of its use will be illustrated. In problematising the use of visual methods in research with children, we will reflect on the method and its complexity.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The study will inform researchers who conduct research with children and promote awareness of the importance of approaching children's perspectives with respect and knowledge.

**Keywords:** participation; children's rights; methodology; methods; ethics

## Didaktik on Postmodernism's Doorstep

ANDERS SKRIVER JENSEN | Aarhus University, Denmark

### Research aims

My research aims to contribute to critical perspectives on early childhood education and care (ECEC). I want to update and revitalize the critical Didaktik tradition (Broström, 2012; Klafki, 2005) and its relevance to ECEC theory and practice in the 21st century.

### Relationship to previous research works

I am inspired by Broström's (2012) attempts at bridging Didaktik and postmodern perspectives. I am also inspired by Biesta's (2011, 2012) work on updating and criticizing the humanism that underpins much current critical theory (including critical Didaktik)

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The Didaktik concept is central to the study's theoretical framework. Didaktik refers to the Continental (German) approach to education (Bildung). Postmodernism - and postmodern perspectives - are concerned with knowledge/power entanglements, contextualized knowledge, etc.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The method is mainly narrative literature reviews of key publications from Didaktik and postmodern perspectives with ECEC-relevance, combined with theory development by synthesizing, categorizing, discussing and comparing key theoretical points across the paradigms.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are taken into account in relation to Danish rules (The Danish Social Science Research Council, 2002).

### Main finding or discussion

The study finds that Didaktik remains possible on a postmodern basis. Bildung (as formation) is reconceptualized from self-formation to relation-formation. Postmodern Didaktik thus operates with the relation as the fundamental category. Postmodern Didaktik can move from a legitimizing base of humanism and/or critical/unclouded consciousness to contextualized bricolages of the professional, the political, and the personal.

### Implications, practice or policy

The study contributes to the critical discourses of policy, research and practice that contests the current political overemphasis on isolated skills (i.e. literacy skills) in ECEC curricula.

**Keywords:** didaktik; postmodernism; kindergarten; first years of school; critical perspectives

## C26 COMMUNITY AND PRESCHOOL

Chair: ALISON WARREN | Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand

### Enriching the Intercultural Climate Within the Early Childhood Education Classroom

NEKTARIA PALAIOLOGOU | University of Macedonia, Greece

#### Co-authors

IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU | The University of Hull, United Kingdom

MARIA PAPANIKOLAOU | University of Macedonia, Greece

#### Research aims

The general aim was to teach to a group of young pupils attending an early childhood education classroom, in Thessaloniki in Greece, intercultural education and human rights issues.

#### Relationship to previous research works

A prior study, focusing on future teachers' education, during their undergraduate studies, was presented at last year's EECERA Conference.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Diversity characterizes modern multicultural classes at all levels of education. Thus, an important issue at the early years education is to initiate small children in diversity and human rights education issues in order to enrich the intercultural climate within classrooms and promote interaction with pupils coming from different countries, with pupils that do not speak the school's language and with the minorities.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study took place during the school year 2012-2013, at an early childhood classroom, using the 'Human Rights' material (developed by Unesco, 2011) and intercultural material created by the teacher in cooperation with her academic supervisors. Innovations and classroom practices which were followed are presented.

## **Ethical considerations**

The anonymity of small pupils who participated is guaranteed; also, upon agreement with the Principal of the school and parents' permit.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Innovative approaches and classroom practices (project method, interactive material, fairy tales and drama education) can be used at early education classrooms in order to address to small children intercultural education and human rights issues.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

This study is presented as an 'example of best practice' which shows that small children can be taught important social issues, such as human rights, equalities and inequalities, even from small age, in order to explore diversity within their social environment.

**Keywords:** intercultural education; early childhood education; diversity; human rights; classroom practices

# **Negotiating Subjectivities Within Discourses of Bicultural Teaching Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand: a Dominant-Culture Early Childhood Teacher Educator's Self-Study**

ALISON WARREN | Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand

## **Research aims**

I took a poststructural approach to self-study to explore my subjectivities as a dominant-culture early childhood teacher educator engaging in bicultural teaching practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi (1840) represents partnership between Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori) (Williams, Broadley, & Lawson Te-Aho, 2012). Early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996), professional teaching standards (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2007, 2009) and bicultural teaching competencies (Ministry of Education, 2011) reflect commitment to bicultural early childhood education. Knowledge, skills and attitudes of dominant-culture Pākehā practitioners influence bicultural teaching practice quality (for example, Jenkin, 2009; Ritchie, 2003, 2008).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Understanding my subjectivities to be multiple, dynamic and shaped within discourses reflected Foucault's poststructural theoretical ideas. Self-study methodology encouraged me to critically reflect on complexities of my teacher educator practice.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using a poststructural approach to self-study, I collaborated with Māori and Pākehā colleagues through reflective conversations and focus group discussions, and sharing my reflective journal and a videorecording of my teaching practice.

## **Ethical considerations**

Although willing to make public my own journey, I needed to safeguard colleagues' professional safety through use of pseudonyms, and member checking of data and reports.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Rather than one dominant discourse, my self-study revealed several discourses of bicultural teaching practice framing bicultural teaching practice in quite different ways.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Through engagement in self-study, I became aware of how I negotiated my subjectivities in complex ways within discourses of bicultural teaching practice. My story may resonate with other professionals negotiating tensions within multiple discourses.

**Keywords:** bicultural; subjectivities; poststructural; self-study; New Zealand

## **Landmarks of Estonian Kindergarten Culture in the 20th Century**

MARE TORM | Tallinn University, Estonia

### **Research aims**

To present landmarks of Estonian kindergarten culture in the 20th century.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This topic is a detail of the history of pre-school education in Estonia.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

-

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Method: document analysis.

### **Ethical considerations**

-

### **Main finding or discussion**

Estonian kindergartens were subjected to the Ministry of Education in 1918-1940. Educationist Jüri Annusson (1884–1965) published an article Kindergarten (1919) in the journal Education, as principles of pre-school education were still little known. As governments often changed (incl. ministers of education), kindergartens were paid little attention. In 1930 kindergarten teachers addressed the minister of education with an appeal, which unfortunately had no results as neither a law on kindergartens nor the national curriculum were completed. The years of WW II and the new Soviet occupation totally changed the organisation and content of education from kindergartens to universities. 1940s-1950s were the years of adjustment, which required great commitment from kindergarten teachers. Despite the Soviet ideology the need for methodological literature in Estonian for development of pre-school education was understood. In the first decades all materials had to be translated from Instructions for Kindergarten teachers published in Russian. Thanks to minister Ferdinand Eisen (1914-2000) the leading specialist in methods Meeta Terri (1906-1993) could initiate the curriculum for Estonian kindergartens and Pre-school education in kindergartens. Program and instructions reflecting national and international aspects was adopted in 1968, which was a unique educational document used only in Estonia. On June 9, 1993 the Law on Kindergartens was passed by the Estonian parliament Riigikogu.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Each period creates values to treasury of kindergarten culture. Let`s value them!

**Keywords:** pre-school education; kindergartens; kindergarten culture; program; law



# SYMPOSIA SET D

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30

14.15-15.45

## D1 THE PRACTICE OF PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS: ETHNO-GRAPHICAL, DISCOURSE-THEORETICAL AND PRAXEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON A HETEROGENEOUS CONSTRUCT

Self-organised symposium

Chair: MARC SCHULZ | University of Siegen, Germany

In the international discussion on ECEC, the significant role of the parents has become an essential paradigm for the individual support of children's learning processes. Also in Germany, this supporting role of parents is widely discussed in current educational policy debates. Beside these mostly programmatic discussions of 'good parenthood', there is increasing empirical knowledge concerning the practice. It's the focus of the symposium: Three empirically-based contributions will discuss the processes and the expectations on different levels. On a microlevel, the first contribution will discuss the performance of parent-teacher meetings which focus on the self-learning processes of the child. The second focuses on parenthood in political debates compared with parents' own perspectives on the responsibilities and expectations regarding institutions of education. The third paper will present different reconstructions of parents' involvement in primary school and emphasize the thesis that the involvement of parents in schools is itself an ambivalent policy.

### 'Let's Just See How Mario Is!' Construction of the 'Learning Child' and the Parents' Role in Parent-Teacher Conferences

MARC SCHULZ | University of Siegen, Germany

#### Co-author

KAJA KESSELHUT | University of Hildesheim, Germany

#### Research aims

With the introduction of the documentation of child learning processes, a change in parent-teacher conferences also takes place. These documentations are intended to support the exchange how the child's development can best be supported. The contribution shows on the basis of a comparative case study how using documents and reflections the learning processes of children are presented and how on this basis parents are assigned different functions.

#### Relationship to previous research works

The studies are imbedded in the discourse on ethnography, the sociology of childhood and ECEC discussions of learning documentation.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study developed a theoretical framework which takes into account ethnography, educational theory and practice theory.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The project is based on Grounded Theory, analysing documents which are audio recording transcripts and ethnographical protocols from the participant observations.

#### Ethical considerations

The research activity must take into account those types of practices, examining how professional settings act to construct normative patterns of a 'self-learning child' and 'good parenthood'. These normative goals involve the ethical issue of whether the needs of the individual child are actually being taking into account.

#### Main finding or discussion

Based on observations of parent-teacher conferences, the contribution reaches the following conclusions: Child learning is cited as an institutional achievement of the kindergarten. At the same time, the child is not always seen as a 'whole', but rather as a kindergarten child. The expectations of the institution with regard to the parents are that they support these institutional learning processes.



### **Implications, practice or policy**

Based on the analysis, the presentation will discuss the consequences and perspectives of these vigorous initiatives in ECEC.

**Keywords:** children's learning; parental involvement; ethnography; observation & documentation; practice theory

## **Parental Involvement: Silver Bullet to Cooperate with Parents in Primary School?**

GUNTHER GRASSHOFF | University of Mainz, Germany

### **Research aims**

This contribution discusses parental involvement in the transition process from pre-school to primary school by referring to the results from a research project which was concluded in October of last year. Focusing on the micro-structures of the educational relationship between parents and teachers in primary school we were able to highlight the different forms in which the involvement of parents changed during the transition period.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Parental Involvement is one of the most important strategies in the international educational research in the last two decades, especially in the United States of America. By contrast to this, Parental Involvement in Germany is still less discussed. The concept of Parental Involvement implies a lot of normative and pedagogical assumptions about how the partnership between teachers and adults should be shaped.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research project combined different empirical methods: Six different teams of nurseries and primary schools had been observed using an ethnographic approach that focused on transition management practices. In each team parents had been questioned twice in semi-structured interviews. The results of observations and interviews were set into relation.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study is conducted in the tradition of grounded theory.

### **Ethical considerations**

With respect to theories of social inequality we were able to show that involvement itself is an ambivalent process.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Parents with immigration background or from socially disadvantaged groups were particularly less likely to benefit from parental involvement.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Reflecting on those complex results of parental involvement in transition we make some suggestions about how to manage these challenges.

**Keywords:** transition; social inequality; parental involvement; grounded theory; qualitative research

## **The Reconstruction of 'Good Parenthood': Political Debates and Parents Perspectives on Institutional Settings of Education in Germany**

SOPHIE KÜNSTLER | Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany

### **Co-author**

STEFANIE BISCHOFF | Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany

### **Research aims**

Parents' expectations towards educational institutions as well as their childrearing responsibilities are currently receiving great attention in German political debates and reports. Our contribution discusses dominant political concepts of 'good parenthood' in Germany. The research aim is to study normative concepts of good parenthood and their relation to individual motivations as well as parents' ideas of how to educate their offspring. We therefore focus on the empirical results of two research projects with special attention to indicators of social inequality.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The contribution is based on two research projects: "EDUCARE – Models of a 'good childhood' and inequality in children's lives" (Prof. Tanja Betz, 2010-2016) and "School readiness and capabilities – the perspectives of the participants" (Prof. Sabine Andresen/Prof. Nadia Kutscher 2010-2012).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework focusses on social inequality and the concept of symbolic power (Pierre Bourdieu). Furthermore we rely on the tradition of social constructivism.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The presentation is based on qualitative social research: We combine a discourse analysis of 16 political documents at the German federal level with guideline based qualitative interviews.

## **Ethical considerations**

Results have ethical implications, as they involve social imbalance of power.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Within the current political discourse parents are held responsible for investing a great amount of specific resources in their children's early education. However, parents' own perspectives differ. They also perceive certain public pressure from society and institutions to educate their children using the best means available.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Our findings raise questions about the appropriateness of current political and societal expectations especially towards parents from low social income strata.

**Keywords:** parenthood; childhood education; inequality; qualitative research; policy

## **D2 FAMILIES AND ECEC - HOW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILIES AND ECEC INSTITUTIONS PRODUCES INEQUALITIES**

Self-organised symposium

Chairs: SABINE BOLLIG | University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

TANJA BETZ | Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany

The symposium focuses on the relationship between families and ECEC institutions, which has become a central topic in ECEC-related research during the last decades. This relationship is often discussed from a psychological or pedagogical point of view and therefore with regard to 'problematic' family backgrounds and the compensatory effects of ECEC or the question how ECEC-practitioners can establish a fruitful partnership with families. The symposium will take an alternative stance by discussing this relationship against the background of sociological studies of childhood, welfare research and theories of social inequality. The main question is how unequal structures in ECEC are produced by an interplay of ECEC discourses, institutions and practices on one side and parental strategies when choosing and combining ECEC offers on the other side. It will be asked for class differences and practices of distinction, but also for the unequal positioning of children as actors in ECEC.

## **Unequal Familial Education and Care Arrangements in Early Childhood**

TANJA BETZ | Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany

### **Research aims**

Overcoming disparities in early childhood is currently on the political and also on the educational science agenda. The former, inter alia, demands more educational and language training within ECEC institutions. The latter focuses on exploring the effects of early ECEC attendance and the impact of different programs within ECEC institutions. The paper argues that for investigating the complex ways in which social inequality gets reproduced, the research focus has to be enlarged to the different, social class specific education and care arrangements parents choose for their children. Following a Bourdieuan approach, it is stated that parents organize their young children's education and care options depending on their social class preferences and scopes. We use multinomial logistic regression to analyze the education and care arrangements of parents from different social classes with kindergarten-age children from the German nationwide AID:A sample. Moreover, we present first results of the ongoing EDUCARE study in Germany about the supposed class specific mix of education and care arrangements in the family, in ECEC institutions and beyond. The findings are discussed against the background of a theory of social inequality.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Overcoming social disparities in early childhood, family research, Bourdieuan approach to education and social inequality

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

social inequality theory

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

quantitative paradigm German nationwide AID:A sample EDUCARE study in Germany (Goethe-University)

### **Ethical considerations**

secondary data analysis of the AID:A sample, analysis of the EDUCARE data set in the LOEWE research center

### **Main finding or discussion**

class specific mix of education and care arrangements in the family, in ECEC institutions and beyond

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for further research in early childhood

**Keywords:** ECEC institutions; education and care arrangements; social inequality; early childhood; disparities

## **Exclusive Commercial ECEC-Providers - Institutional and Familial Practices of Distinction**

JOHANNA MIERENDORFF | Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

### **Co-author**

MARIUS MADER | Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

### **Research aims**

Across Europe, there is an ongoing public debate on the spread of economic principles in the provision and organization of educational systems. The study is situated in Germany, where commercial provider has begun to spread. They are typically financed by high tuition and offer uncommon services. Their expansion is discussed as a possible renunciation of the established principle of equal and affordable child care, which has a long tradition in Germany. We trace the ways in which commercial providers establish themselves and manage to persist. We focus on the question how the establishment of commercial providers and a new separation is legitimized and on the knowledge shared by different actors.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research on childhood and welfare state, parental strategies against poverty, child poverty.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

On the basis of a Bourdieuan approach we are looking at institutions' and parents' practices of closure and distinction which they use to form specific identities and to distance themselves from others.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Interviews with parents, teachers, directors of institutions Documentary method Comparison of commercial and publicly funded ECEC-institutions Short time ethnography

### **Ethical considerations**

The study is following the ethical rules of the National German Research Foundation. All interviewees are informed about their rights and about our rules of data protection.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Reconstructing familial as well as institutional practices and strategies, we show that different types of parental orientations correspond to specific cultures of care in the respective institutions, which reveal different processes of distinction.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results are from importance for further political strategies against social inequality in early childhood.

**Keywords:** commercialisation; social inequality; practices of distinction; cultures of care; shared knowledge

## **Unequal Geographies of 'Day-Care Childhood' – ECEC Policies, Familial Strategies and Children's Activities**

SABINE BOLLIG | University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

### **Co-author**

SYLVIA NIENHAUS, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

## Research aims

European ECEC-Systems are highly complex fields, where especially for the group of 2 to 4-year-olds the boundaries between different care settings accumulate: between family and professional care, for-profit / non-profit care, non-familial care and preschool education and – with regard to the highly multilingual situation in Luxembourg – different linguistic settings. Parents combine these diverse offers to care arrangements in line with their economic/working conditions, images of a ‘good childhood’ and cultural and linguistic milieus. Considered from the “vantage point of the children”, this diversity in/of familial care arrangements (CAs) forms the distinct structures of ‘day-care childhood’. It causes various horizontal crossings during the course of a child’s day, which do not only define children’s daily experiences and social relations, but also create a distinct space of actorship and learning.

## Relationship to previous research works

Research on differences in care-arrangements, children as actors in ECEC-Institutions, horizontal transitions

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study follows a practice-theoretical approach (Schatzki, Goffmann, Giddens) that highlights the unequal structures of ECEC by following children throughout their diverse CAs, exploring their shifting role in the transitions between family and (different) day care settings and analyzing how the ‘hidden curricula’ of CAs are actively performed by the children themselves, fractal identities of children (James/Prout)

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Sociology of Childhood, Practice Theories, Ethnography

## Ethical considerations

Ethnographic methods have to be dialogical

## Main finding or discussion

Researching ECEC-Systems from the vantage point of children does not mean to investigate ‘children’s perspectives’, but their “structured agency” (Giddens). Conceptual framework, methods and first findings of the Luxembourgian CHILD-Study will be presented.

## Implications, practice or policy

Implications for child-focused research on ECEC-Systems

**Keywords:** inequality; care arrangements; children as actors; agency; ethnography

## D3 PROFESSIONALIZATION AND GENDER BALANCE IN ECEC

Self-organised symposium

Chair: BERNHARD KOCH | University of Innsbruck, Austria

This symposium focuses on relations between gender balance in the workforce and professionalism. Results from three research projects offer different perspectives on the issue. The Swiss research project „(Un)doing gender in the nursery“ analyzed male workers’ discursive strategies. Results show that most strategies refer to gender difference or sameness, whereas a strategy highlighting professionalism seems to move beyond binary gender structures persisting in the field. Views of female colleagues were captured as part of a nationwide study on men in ECEC in Germany. The authors point out that strategies towards a better gender-balanced work force have to take into charge the views of female colleagues to avoid conflicts and resistance against men in ECEC. Finally, results from the „ProPos“ research project indicate that professionalization processes in ECEC in Germany could lead to gender disparities instead of opening advanced career opportunities for women. SIG gender balance - Symposium 3 of 3.

## Doing Masculinity and Professionalism: Exploring the Intersectionalities of Gender and Professionalization in Early Childhood Education

WIEBKE POPPEN | University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

### Co-authors

JULIA NENTWICH | University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

STEFANIE SCHÄLIN | University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

FRANZISKA VOGT | University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

### Research aims

Our research project „Dolls, building blocks and outdoor activity days: (un)doing gender in the nursery“ investigates

how interactions and everyday practices in the nursery tend to either emphasize differences between women and men or make gender differences retreat into the background.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Increasing men's presence in early childhood education is closely connected to expectations of as well increasing professionalization of the occupation. However, there is also a huge contradictory discourse constructing them as potentially dangerous, somehow suspicious or ill-motivated. Men are not only positioned by but also have to position themselves according to these discourses.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Using discursive psychology (Edley and Wetherell, 1997; Davies and Harré, 1990) as well as the concept of doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Deutsch, 2007) as theoretical framework, we analyze how our interviewees position themselves as male childcare workers by engaging in several discursive practices.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

For this paper, the results of the narrative interviews with ten male childcare workers will be introduced. The interviews focused on their entry into the organization, their perceptions of daily routines, and their experiences in the interaction with their female colleagues.

### **Ethical considerations**

Focusing on gender as a social and discursive accomplishment illuminates the mechanisms of gender inequality.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Six discursive strategies that men engage in were identified: Three refer to discourses of gender difference, two to equality/sameness and one strategy, which highlights professionalism, seems to move beyond this binary gender structure.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

A better understanding of discourses of gender difference and sameness contributes to gender equality in the field of early childhood education.

**Keywords:** discourse analysis; gender; subject positions; male childcare workers; professionalism

## **Ambiguous Attitudes. How Female Teachers View Their Male Counterparts in Early Childhood Education**

JENS KRABEL | Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, Germany

### **Co-author**

MICHAEL CREMERS | Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, Germany

### **Research aims**

Studies on Men in ECEC show that male teachers are welcome in ECEC institutions. Most female teachers support the aim of increasing the ratio of men in early childhood education. Against the background of these findings this paper explores how female ECEC teachers perceive their male colleagues.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Our research project is based on the findings of our study Male teachers in ECEC, carried out 2008 - 2009 and financed by the German Ministry of Family Affairs.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Gender is understood as social constructed. Findings are interpreted against the background of the existing gender regime.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper presents results of a re-analysis of qualitative interviews of ECEC trainees and teachers in our study from 2009 with the aim to go deeper into the narratives of the female interviewees. Within the re-analysis we contrast the interviews related to position, age and working experiences with men.

### **Ethical considerations**

The increasing debate about Men in ECEC tends to devalue the work of female teachers. With our research we'd like to make perspectives of female teachers regarding men in ECEC more visible.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Most female teachers welcome male teachers in ECEC. Nevertheless gender images, biographical experiences

and personal slights of female teachers influence working relations of mixed ECEC teams. This can cause gender-related conflicts in gender-mixed teams.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Our research work shows that strategies to increase the ratio of men in ECEC have to deal with the perspectives, personal resistances and slights of female teachers to achieve success.

**Keywords:** male ECEC workers; female ECEC workers; gender-mixed ECEC teams; gender; gender images

## **New Gender Perspectives on German Early Childhood Education? Consequences of the Current Process of Academisation**

JOHANNES KEIL | University of Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

### **Research aims**

German early childhood education is undergoing a dynamic process of professionalization, which is increasing levels of qualifications. A central motive of this process is to increase the prestige of professions in ECE. The study focuses on relations of professionalization and gender: Is the profession becoming more attractive for men, and does academization open new career opportunities for the majority of female workers?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research has shown that processes of professionalization in women-dominated fields have led to gender-hierarchic divisions, e.g. men tend to take over leading positions.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study gives an overview on gender balance of women and men in the various professional positions in the early childhood field. A constructivist theoretical framework is applied in order to combine the elements of gender and professionalization.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Research results of two online surveys will be presented. The professional image of students of the academic and non-academic sector will be compared with that of career entrants.

### **Ethical considerations**

By exploring the impact of professional development on gender the topics equity and diversity gain a new perspective.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Higher-quality education, increased social status and the emerging professional opportunities tend to be seen as career options rather by men than by women.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Only with sufficient knowledge about the professionalization process, appropriate measures can be designed in order to face a great challenge: For pedagogical reasons, as well as for reasons of gender equality, men have to be recruited for positions below management level. Otherwise the professionalization process would be to the detriment for the advancement opportunities for women.

**Keywords:** male ECEC workers; female ECEC workers; professionalization; gender balance; academization

## **D4 VIDA - SOCIAL INNOVATION IN DANISH PRESCHOOLS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: BENTE JENSEN | Aarhus University, Denmark

VIDA-knowledgebased Efforts for Socially Disadvantaged Children in Danish Preschools.

## **VIDA - Effects on Children of Interventions in Danish Preschools**

BENTE JENSEN | Aarhus University, Denmark

### **Research aims**

This VIDA study investigates the effects on children of the VIDA intervention in Danish preschools from 2011 to 2013. The aims of VIDA are to improve child learning and socio-emotional outcomes, especially for socially disadvantaged children.

**Relationship to previous research works**

Blau and Currie conclude that the existing evidence from both model programmes and Head Start studies suggests that social disadvantaged children benefit more from early intervention than other children do

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This approach is based on studies of professional development, learning and innovation in the public sector as well as research in practice-based innovation. More specifically, the VIDA program aims at improving pedagogical work based in learning and knowledge sharing of preschool teachers

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

VIDA is a randomized controlled trial, some preschool institutions received extra training of the preschool teachers (VIDA Basis), some received extra training of preschool teachers along with implementing a programme for the parents (VIDA +), and some institutions have not received any training (control).

**Ethical considerations**

The RCT design means that some centres receive the VIDA-interventions while others do not (control group). For ethical reasons, the control group is offered the VIDA programme once the study is completed

**Main finding or discussion**

Results of the first analysis of the VIDA intervention show positive effects from both VIDA Basis and VIDA + on the children. Child outcomes are measured on five dimensions of the SDQ scale

**Implications, practice or policy**

The main findings indicate that this form of intervention improves child outcomes. Implications for policy and practice are the need for a greater reliance upon knowledge-based efforts such as VIDA.

**Keywords:** preschools; childcare; child development; intervention; RCT

**VIDA - Casestudies of Organizational Learning and Innovation in Danish Preschools**

ULRIK BRANDI | Aarhus University, Denmark

**Research aims**

This part of the VIDA study inquire into how the VIDA intervention (the VIDA training and education program) translates into new, shared actions and practices, i.e. does it lead to a potentially innovative organizational learning result?

**Relationship to previous research works**

This work connects to the findings from Pianta et. al on professional development.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In the VIDA programs the concept of organizational learning as associated with innovation takes it point of departure in the crossover between a psychological and sociological organizational learning perception.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The case study of organisational learning and innovation is based on three sequential measurements: baseline, midline and an endline measure. Two types of data tools are deployed. First, daycare managers were asked in a survey about the principles for, and practical organization of, existing pedagogical practices and knowledge based approach in relation to the issue of improving conditions for socially disadvantaged children. Secondly, in addition to the survey qualitative interviews were conducted.

**Ethical considerations**

The case study design implicates that some day-care centers are better at implementing the VIDA intervention than others. Analytical results will not be able to be traced back to the informant.

**Main finding or discussion**

The first results from a thematic analysis of data shows that systematic and knowledge based work have positive influence on the renewal of pedagogical practice. Further, the analysis demonstrates the importance of leadership for creating organisational learning.

**Implications, practice or policy**

The main findings indicate that the way the day-care centers are organizing knowledge sharing in practice has an impact on the success of the VIDA intervention.



**Keywords:** case study; innovation; knowledge sharing; organisational learning; professional development

## **VIDA - Implementation of Vida Programmes in Danish Preschools**

CHARLOTTE BUCHHAVE | Municipality of Randers, Denmark

### **Co-author**

DORTE LE COQ | Municipality of Randers, Denmark

### **Research aims**

The Research aims in this abstract will focus on the Implementation of the VIDA programme in Danish Preschools. 20 preschools from the represented municipality have been working systematically with the principles, the training program for leaders and teachers, the tools, and templates from the VIDA intervention, with the purpose to improve child outcomes.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The implementation is based on previous studies in organizational learning and the Danish project HPA

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Facilitated organizational learning, coaching and, reflection in action.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Based on the three VIDA principles two educational consultants have coordinated and facilitated the project in the Municipality, cooperating with the scientists, the educators and the other Municipalities. The consultants have noticed engagement and motivation through facilitated exchange of experience gathered in networks, and therethrough coached the participants. The consultants have followed, and supported the preschools throughout the intervention. The consultants have worked differentiated to support the professionalism, reflections, and innovative perspective of the preschool leaders and teachers, according to their local strengths and challenges.

### **Ethical considerations**

From an ethical point of view of, it is of major importance that the municipalities support and facilitate scientific projects as the VIDA project. With the aim to develop and improve acting skills and life chances for all children. Based on the work of Heckmann, Melhuish, and others focusing on the importance of early childhood Education.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The value of leadership, strategic planning, facilitation, and organizational learning

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The value of working strategically with leadership, facilitation and organizational learning in a project focussing on improved child outcome in Danish preschools.

**Keywords:** implementation in practice; learning in preschools; innovation; improved child outcome; organizational learning

## **D5 LEADERSHIP LEVELS, CONTEXT AND INTERACTIONS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: CATHRINE FROGH | Telemark University College, Norway

The Norwegian ECE-sector has gone through major upheavals the last decade. The kindergarten has become an important social institution and is regarded a solution to a variety of societal challenges. This has in turn led to new demands for leadership and quality contributing to a need for revisiting leadership and organisational issues. This symposium will focus on leadership practices and interactions between different levels of organisation. The aim of the symposium is to shed light on contextual leadership, practical knowledge, structural and cultural dimensions of organisation, and fruitful methodological approaches in researching leadership. The presentations are based on ongoing PhD. Projects.

### **Governing Quality**

CATHRINE FROGH | Telemark University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

The aim of the project to be presented is to investigate the significance of interactions between different levels of the kindergarten organisation and to examine the bearing such interactions can have on the local ECEC-leaders ability

to govern and develop good quality kindergartens.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The project takes outset in prior research focusing on the shift from government to governance, regarding organisations as systems of interaction.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This projects theoretical foundation is situated in organisational theory. I intend to apply two theoretical perspectives, an instrumental perspective and a symbolic interpretative perspective. The first perspective takes outset in Adam Smith's division of labour and Weber's bureaucratic ideal type but also Boulding's general systems theory (Boulding, 1956). The second theoretical approach takes outset in Weick's action theory (Weick, 1969), Berger and Luckmann's theory on reality as social constructions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and Selznick's (1957) institutional perspectives.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The project is placed within a constructivist paradigm, applying a case methodology where data will be gathered from different qualitative approaches, like focus group interviews, in-depth interviews and observations.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical practices will be followed in accordance with The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, NESH guidelines.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The presentation will discuss how coordination and dialogue can improve quality, and debating the significance of structural and cultural organisational traits.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The project opens up a possibility for improving cooperation and strengthening quality work in uncovering restraining or promoting factors.

**Keywords:** organisation; municipality; interaction; quality; leadership

## **Rethinking the Purpose of Educational Leadership in Kindergarten**

KARIN HOGNESTAD | Telemark University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

With an increasing instrumentalistic approach to leadership there is a danger that professional practical knowledge is undervalued in leadership discussions. This brings about the question on what epistemological and ontological approaches to leadership that could be best suitable when research aims to describe leadership actions and the meaning behind them. This presentation will respond to this issue by discussing what should be the purpose of educational leadership in kindergarten.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper is part of a collaborative phd- project, Practical knowledge in educational leadership in kindergarten.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study explores the relation between the Aristotelian conceptions of practical knowledge and leadership. The concept 'internal goods' is highlighted to frame leadership practice.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The results emerge from a focus group interview with six pedagogical leaders. The research questions concentrated on the significance and purpose of leadership.

### **Ethical considerations**

The demand for anonymity and confidentiality of the informants is honored. Main findings will be discussed in relation to the purpose of educational leadership as a strategy for rethinking the purpose of educational leadership in kindergarten.

### **Main finding or discussion**

We discuss whether rethinking the purpose of educational leadership could be a useful contribution to the development of praxeological research and leadership in early years.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Rethinking the purpose of educational leadership can contribute to develop new understandings of leadership in kindergarten from a ground-up perspective and highlight practical knowledge in leadership discussions.

**Keywords:** contextual leadership; practical knowledge; praxeology; praxis; focus group interview

## Shadowing- a Fruitful Approach to Leadership Research?

MARIT BØE | Telemark University College, Norway

### Research aims

In this paper presentation we present Shadowing as a valuable approach in leadership research. Following the growing interest in educational leadership in kindergarten, researchers call for contextually rich leadership studies of organizational life that emerge from a ground-up perspective. We respond to this shortcoming with a methodological paper.

### Relationship to previous research works

This paper is part of a collaborative Phd. project: practical knowledge in educational leadership in kindergarten.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The shadowing method is one of several field techniques that can be used to gather contextually rich empirical data on what people actually do in social organizations and how to understand such work. Shadowing has been used as a research method in leadership studies that acknowledges leadership and management as a social practice.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Our research interests are to explore and describe how professional practical knowledge is an important dimension in educational leadership. Shadowing seems to be a useful approach to describe complex leadership actions (praxis) and the purpose behind them.

### Ethical considerations

Shadowing involves closely following a person over an extended period of time that requires ethical considerations during the shadowing process.

### Main finding or discussion

We discuss whether shadowing can be a fruitful methodology when attempting to construct empirical knowledge about complex educational leadership contexts.

### Implications, practice or policy

The aim of the presentation is to argue that shadowing can give an important contribution to praxeological research. The shadowing results could have a huge impact in developing leadership studies within a praxeological paradigm.

**Keywords:** shadowing; educational leadership; methodology; methods; praxis

## D6 PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IMPROVED QUALIFICATIONS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE

Self-organised symposium

Chair: ANNIKA ELM FRISTORP | University of Gävle, Sweden

The research team Early Childhood Education (ECE) at the University of Gävle, Sweden, would like to prepare a self-organized symposium to discuss a two-year project funded by the Swedish Energy Agency. The first presentation will be about the project background, the theoretical framework (socio-cultural theory) as a relevant didactic view of preschool teachers' learning that took place. The following papers will give a rich variety of empirical examples concerning this perspective and implications for practice.

### Preschool Teachers' Improved Qualifications in Sustainable Development and Quality Evaluation

ANNIKA ELM FRISTORP | University of Gävle, Sweden

#### Co-author

INGRID NORDQVIST | University of Gävle, Sweden

#### Research aims

This paper discusses a two-year project Sustainable Development in Preschool (2011-2013) supported by the Swedish Energy Agency. The aim was to contribute to improved qualifications of preschool teachers in sustainable development and quality evaluation. A research circle focused on the participants' work and issues was the starting

point for the content.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The project relates to Participatory Action Research - the examination of questions formulated by both participants and researcher during the work in progress.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Socio-cultural theory has been used as a framework to understand the preschool teachers on-going process, emancipating collective knowledge and constructed transcending according to what participants had from the start.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The focus in the reserach circle was on the preschool teachers' professional development adapting a critical point of view towards their own practice. The data consist of participants' documented project work and individual interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

The purpose of the research circle did not include the investigattion of individual children. The children, were indirectly present as the participants referred to their experiences in working with them. Ethical considerations regarding the question of confidentiality were taken according to ethical rules published by the Swedish Research Council.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results show the participants developed strategies to improve their ability to work with sustainable development that contributes to children's learning processes.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

A continuous change in perspective took place during the length of the circle. Knowledge acquired throughout the process implicates that professional development that could not have been formed solely through practice or through research, has been created.

**Keywords:** participatory action research; preschool teacher; professional development; research circles; sustainable development

## **Thematic Work with Building and Construction in Preschool**

INGRID NORDQVIST | University of Gävle, Sweden

### **Co-author**

MARIA BJÖRKLUND | Municipality of Gävle, Sweden

### **Research aims**

One can argue that it is important for preschools to arouse curiosity for science and technology among children and give them a positive experience of these subjects. The aim of this study is to find out how this can be done in the educational context of the preschool with the focus on the teachers' communicating with the children and how documentation can be used to enhance children's learning.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study relates to earlier research according to co-operative learning in preschool and preschool teachers' professional development.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The concept of children's cooperative learning is an overarching theoretical view. Vygotsky argues that children learn through interaction, communication and imitating each other. Problem solving with a more experienced peer helps the child to construct knowledge.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A preschool group's work with building and construction was documented by field notes, photos and reflection notes by the preschool teacher during ten months. The starting point was a dramatization of the book *The Smartest Giant in Town* at the local library. The book provided a framework for building and construction throughout the year.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations was taken according to Ethical Rules and Guidance for Research (2005) published by the Swedish Research Council.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The teacher's supporting approach through communication and documentation contribute to the children's curiosity for building and construction for a sustainable future in an innovative way.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Documentation of the children's work used as guidelines for an ongoing process and not as a final product for evaluation proved to be a powerful tool in supporting the children's learning.

**Keywords:** building; construction; co-operative learning; documentation; preschool teacher

## **Pedagogical Documentation a Model for Sustainable Development and Quality Evaluation in Preschool**

ANNA ERIKSSON | University of Gävle, Sweden

### **Co-author**

LOTTA LINDBERG | University of Gävle, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This paper discusses pedagogical documentation as a model for sustainable development in preschool education. The main aim of the study is to investigate the function of pedagogical documentation for sustainable development and implications for quality evaluation in preschool education.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study relates to earlier research according to pedagogical documentation in preschool and preschool teachers professional development.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework is based on international, national and local policy documents about sustainable development and quality evaluation.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data is based on a questionnaire answered by preschool teachers in one municipality.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations related to the project was taken according to Ethical Rules and Guidance for Research (2005) published by the Swedish Research Council. Ethical questions are for example questions dealing with the manner in which research persons are chosen, in what way participation affects the participant during and after the project, and what effect publication may have on the individual.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The result of the study shows that preschool teachers regard pedagogical documentation as a useful tool for developing the preschool practice and didactic considerations about the implementation.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The preschool teachers need a more comprehensive knowledge about the whole process of pedagogical documentation in order to frame the educational setting. The study gives a possibility to view the connection between teacher's role and the working process and implicates the importance of further development and knowledge about preschool teachers Every-day-life-skills.

**Keywords:** every-day-life-skills; pedagogical documentation; professional development; quality evaluation; teachers' role

## **D7 SYMPOSIUM ON „LANGUAGE“ IN THE RESEARCH PROJECTS AND TRAINING PROGRAMS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL IN FLANDERS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: SISKI VAN DAELE | Karel de Grote University College, Belgium

Language facilitates communication. Language enhances participation in society. Language underlies the construction of identities. Hence language plays a crucial role in pedagogical innovation. It is no surprise, then, that the new degree in Early Childhood Education in Flanders recognizes the prominent role of language in both its research and its curriculum. This symposium wants to clarify the university colleges' views on language in a broad sense. A first contribution will address the way language awareness is implemented in the curriculum and the research projects of one of the university colleges. A second contribution will report on a dialogical method of language stimulation for toddlers that two of the colleges have collaborated on and a third contribution will focus on

an ongoing language stimulation project by the third university college in Brussels.

## **Language Awareness of the Early Childhood Professional: What Does it Entail?**

SISKA VAN DAELE | Karel de Grote University College, Belgium

### **Co-author**

DIETLINDE WILLOCKX | Karel de Grote University College, Belgium

### **Research aims**

This paper investigates the importance of language awareness for the early childhood professional.

Relationship to previous research works: Interdisciplinary research on language use, language teaching and intercultural communication has long proven the beneficial effects of teacher language awareness on pedagogical innovation (Svalberg, 2007).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

We argue that this interdisciplinary approach to language and communication can also be applied to the practice of the early childhood professional and that language awareness should be seen as “an entitlement for citizens, especially children developing towards citizenship in the educational system” (Alim & Alim, 2005: 24).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

More specifically we want to clarify how language awareness contributes to the communicative, reflective and coaching skills of the students currently enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program.

### **Ethical considerations**

While safeguarding the well-being and societal participation of each, they will soon take up an intermediate role between children, parents and caretakers.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First, we will try to demonstrate how the future childhood professionals are trained to be sensitive to the multiple layers of meaning each communicative message entails. Second, we will report on the link between the curriculum and two language related research projects the university college is involved in.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Using examples from the curriculum we will illustrate how the students grow to be more proficient in the verbal and non-verbal language they use and perceive in their dealings with children, parents and professionals. Then we will clarify how the research projects tie in with the language awareness perspective and how the tools and training methods that result from them may contribute to an innovative pedagogical practice.

**Keywords:** language awareness; intercultural communication; reflective dialogue; coaching skills; pedagogical innovation

## **In Dialogue with Child Care Staff: Development of a Video Coaching Program on Language Stimulation for Young Children**

INE HOSTYN | Artevelde University College, Belgium

### **Co-author**

ANN STEVERLYNCK | Artevelde University College, Belgium

### **Research aims**

Though child care professionals spontaneously stimulate language in daily interaction with children, there is few time to explicitly focus on their language stimulatory behaviors, feelings and thoughts. Also, there are few tools to support this process by enhancing reflection. Therefore, the Artevelde University College and the Karel de Grote University College collaborated in a practice-oriented research project aimed to investigate how child care staff can be coached in language stimulation.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

It is generally acknowledged that language development is an important aspect of children’s overall development. Consequently, a stimulating language environment is a crucial aspect of quality early childhood care.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In that view, the Centre for Language and Education (KULeuven) developed advices to create a rich language

learning environment (Verhelst et al., 2011).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

32 caregivers engaged in a training based on video coaching and reflective dialogue

### **Ethical considerations**

guaranteeing confidentiality.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Based on video analyses, caregiver focus groups, and a researchers' logbook, we found that professionals need support on two levels: first regarding language development in toddlers (e.g., what about silent children?), and second regarding language coaching (e.g., creating a positive environment for video coaching).

### **Implications, practice or policy**

On that basis, a language coaching program „Allemaal taal“ was developed, consisting of ten language cards, seven coaching cards and a DVD. The program is useful for caregivers as well as for their coaches, and can be integrated in the bachelor programs for early childhood professionals in Flanders. This project offers directions for future research on video coaching and other forms of professionalization in dialogue with a coach.

**Keywords:** early language stimulation; coaching; video coaching; reflective dialogue

## **‘Growing-in-Kuregem’ Bridging Language Differences by Means of Educational Support ECEC**

KAAT VERHAEGHE | Erasmus University College of Brussels, Belgium

### **Co-author**

GEERT DE RAEDEMAEKER | Erasmus University College of Brussels, Belgium

### **Research aims**

The main aim of the research is to understand the role of the pedagogical coach in stimulating ‘language’ as a broad concept in a multilingual context. Although it is not the goal of the project to teach language, the spoken word has a central role in all formal and informal activities.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

There’s an understanding that language is better acquired by young children in informal situations. Therefore the parent-child relation is an important starting point for language stimulation.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In that view the research believes in play as a natural learning process (Vygotsky). Also the role of interaction in learning is endorsed. We recognize the importance of mother tongue (as part of the identity) in language stimulation (van den Branden, 2009).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

During the group sessions we observed how the pedagogical coach stimulates the positive interaction and communication between parents and children by using creative activities. Through participative observation and interviewing we learn more about their role.

### **Ethical considerations**

Consent of parents, guaranteeing confidentiality.

### **Main finding or discussion**

By participating in this project student were faced with the complex and challenging lingual context in Brussels. Through activities with children and their parents they dealt with the language difficulties by using the creative activities to stimulate children and parent interaction. This interaction indirectly stimulated the language development of children. The use of the official language by the coach alongside the mother tongue in the parent-child interaction created a language stimulating context.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This project is a source of inspiration for dealing with language stimulation in a challenging multilingual and unprivileged environment.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication; educational support; parent-child relation; creative activities; multilingualism

## **D8 MAKING CHILDREN'S LEARNING VISIBLE: A PRACTITIONER RESEARCH METHODOLOGY EXPLORED IN THREE CONTEXTS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: KATE HAYWARD | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

As part of a UK Government DfE funded project to create 'Early Years Teaching Centres' (EYTCs) across England, early years staff in Children's Centres undertook action research projects. This symposium brings together three EYTC projects, all of which have used a methodology devised by Pen Green Research called 'Making Children's Learning Visible' (MCLV).

The first focuses on the development of the team in considering their 'Image of the Child'. The second project illustrates the way MCLV has enabled staff to work with parents more effectively. The third project examines how this approach has enabled a new leader to support and develop change in her setting.

### **The 'Image of the Child': Sharing a Vision for Working with Children and Families**

LINDA CONNELLY | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This project illustrates the way Making Children's Learning Visible (MCLV), a methodology devised at Pen Green Research, has enabled the development of a staff team in a Children's Centre through the consideration of their 'Image of the Child'

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Pen Green researcher, Kate Hayward presented on MCLV at EECERA in 2012, this project illustrates the next cycle of the research where settings have been supported through the MCLV action research approach and have developed their reflective practice through engaging their teams in this journey.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The conceptualisation of the 'Image of the Child' draws on the work of Loris Malaguzzi in Reggio Emilia, who challenged the deficit view of children that can be created by detailing what they cannot do. He introduced pedagogues to the 'hundred languages of children', seeing children as active agents in their learning, as capable and competent learners (Edwards et al, 1998).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is interpretive research. The researchers used a qualitative methodology to understand the perspectives and shift that workers experienced as they discussed their 'Image of the Child' and negotiated a shared vision for their setting. Interviews, reflective accounts and video analysis were used.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Anonymity of participants was ensured and informed consent negotiated through clear to access information about the study and their participatory rights.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Workers experienced a renewed energy through the discussions on the 'Image of the Child' in their setting.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Workers were encouraged by the development of a shared ethos and expressed how this project had reignited their passion about working with children and families.

**Keywords:** image of the child; pedagogy; reflective practice; video analysis; ethos

### **'Developmental Partnerships' Between Parents and Practitioners: Shifting Perspectives and Making Children's Learning Visible**

KAREN MCGOVERN | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This project illustrates the way Making Children's Learning Visible (MCLV), a methodology devised at Pen Green Research, enabled staff to work with parents more effectively. Sharing dialogue about a child's learning using rich documentation and video observations from home and the setting enabled parents and workers to make shared, considered summative assessments at three times in the year and to review the child's progress.



## **Relationship to previous research works**

Pen Green researcher, Kate Hayward presented on MCLV at EECERA in 2012, this project illustrates the next cycle of the research where settings have been supported through the MCLV action research approach and have developed their reflective practice through engaging their teams in this journey.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This work builds on Patrick Easen's notion of a 'developmental partnership' between workers and parents (Easen et al, 1992) and the use of video reflection to focus on children's learning used in the Pen Green Parents Involvement in their Children's Learning (PICL) approach (Whalley, 2007).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is interpretive research. Researchers used a qualitative methodology to understand the perspectives and shift that parents and workers experienced. They discussed the child's learning and the progress they had made. Interviews, reflective accounts and video analysis were used.

## **Ethical considerations**

Anonymity of participants was ensured and informed consent negotiated through clear to access information about the study and their participatory rights.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The MCLV approach supported parents and workers to assess and track children's learning.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Parents reported greater involvement in the child's learning and increased sense of advocacy for their child as they made their transition into school.

**Keywords:** parents; assessment; video analysis; transition; pedagogy

# **Ways of Looking, Ways of Seeing. Making Children's Learning Visible: a Collaborative Journey**

SUE BENNETT | Pen Green Research Centre, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

This project illustrates the way Making Children's Learning Visible (MCLV), a methodology devised at Pen Green Research, has enabled a new leader of a Nursery and Children's Centre to support and develop change in her setting.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Pen Green researcher, Kate Hayward presented on MCLV at EECERA in 2012, this project illustrates the next cycle of the research where settings have been supported through the MCLV action research approach and have developed their reflective practice through

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study draws on the work of Kubler Ross (1969), and Fisher (2003) to understand a team's reaction and response to a change of ethos in the setting. Using an action research approach the researcher explores what Herold and Fedar (2008) describe as 'change savvy leadership'.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is interpretive research. The researcher used a qualitative methodology to understand the perspectives and shift that workers experienced as they undertook the MCLV project. Interviews, reflective accounts, a focus group and video analysis were used.

## **Ethical considerations**

Anonymity of participants was ensured and informed consent negotiated through clear to access information about the study and their participatory rights.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The MCLV project enabled the team to collectively generate an action plan to further their use of display boards to illustrate the progress children make.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

To continue to track children's progress so that vulnerable children's learning can be 'made visible' and to develop the use of video for pedagogical reflection.

**Keywords:** leadership; action research; pedagogy; change; image of the child

## **D9 OUTDOOR LEARNING**

Chair: MAI SEIN-GARCIA | Tallinn University, Estonia

### **Teachers Opinions of the Possibilities to Use Outdoor Learning in Estonian Kindergartens**

LEHTE TUULING | Tallinn University, Estonia

#### **Co-authors**

TIIA ÕUN | Tallinn University, Estonia

AINO UGASTE | Tallinn University, Estonia

#### **Research aims**

The purpose of the research was to find out how aware the teachers are of the outdoor learning essence and how well-prepared they are to start using it in everyday work.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Outdoor games give children good possibilities for imagination and creative games, develop their social skills and support their communication with other children and adults (Canning 2010). According to the study by Waite (2011) teachers associate practising outdoor learning with values like freedom, joy, independence and they have described these experiences through experimental pedagogy. The importance of studying and playing outside is emphasised, which is the best way to increase children's physical activity (Pate et al 2004) and avoid overweight (Tucker et al 2011).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Outdoor learning means that practical experience is acquired mostly through outdoor activities. Outdoor learning consists of integral experience, thematic integration and learner's direct contact with the learning object (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 2005).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

To complete the aims of the research the authors of the study chose the selective research strategy. As the amount of kindergarten teachers planned to include in the research was really big, the quantitative approach was chosen to collect the data. We used a structured questionnaire.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Studied kindergarten teachers' anonymity is guaranteed. The data used in the analysis only in aggregated form.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The biggest obstacles in implementing outdoor learning are the absence of proper environments and little knowledge about outdoor learning methods also poor weather conditions and children's age.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Results of this study will help to improve the training of kindergarten teachers in outdoor teaching methodology.

**Keywords:** outdoor learning; early childhood; teacher's awareness; environment; learning process

### **Nature as Learning Environment: Natural Materials in Early Childhood (0-3) Art Education**

MAI SEIN-GARCIA | Tallinn University, Estonia

#### **Research aims**

The presentation focuses on the meaning of nature as learning environment and natural materials in toddlers' art activities. The presentation presents the results of the Promoting Natural Materials (ProNatMat) project (2009-2012). It was a Finnish-Estonian joint project that involved 10 partners.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Louv, R. (2005). Last Child in the Woods Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, New York.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Richard Louv (2005) describes a phenomenon called “nature-deficit disorder”, that mainly appear as attention-deficit disorders or behavioural disorders. Creative activities and the possibility of being in contact with nature help children to re-gain balance, to avoid fears, to work on one’s self-image and to increase autonomy and independence (Berger 2004). The use of natural materials in creative activities and therapy is promoted by the fact that children prefer natural materials in their play (More & Wong 1997).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The Tallinn University published a book called “Natural Materials in Toddlers’ Art Activities”. The handbook is a collection of toddlers’ teachers methodologies.

## **Ethical considerations**

Person’s identity and personal contentment is dependent on one’s relationship with nature (Wilson 1984).

As teachers we can ask, how much our teaching is link with nature? What are our dilemmas in nature-friendly art education?

## **Main finding or discussion**

The handbook is a complete collection for teachers - the theoretical part explains the importance of choosing materials for hand activities and why it is very significant to use natural materials. The second part of the book is a collection of practical activities.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Additional information can be found on the project’s homepage: [www.pronatmat.eu](http://www.pronatmat.eu)

**Keywords:** natural materials; nature as learning environment; creative activities; early childhood art education; project pronatmat

## **D10 LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

Chair: HILDE HOFSLUNDESENGEN | Sogn and Fjordane University College, Norway

## **Reflecting on the Early Childhood Environment Using PEMQ: Focus on the Language Environment**

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### **Co-authors**

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### **Research aims**

The purpose of this research is to show the framework reflecting on the early childhood education environment using photographs focusing on the language environment including picture books, letters and numbers.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

About the evaluation of the early childhood education environment in previous research, like check lists have been used mainly. On the other hand, this research suggests the method to reflect on the early childhood education environment using photographs.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In this study, we suggest PEMQ (Photo Evaluation Method of Quality) to reflect on the early childhood education environment.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

(1) We collected 943 pieces of photographs about the early childhood education environment among 5 year old children's class in 11 day care centers and kindergartens in Japan. (2) We chose typical 99 pieces from 943 pieces of photographs. (3) 6 early childhood teachers commented on each 99 pieces of photographs. (4) We tried qualitative data analysis about those comments.

## **Ethical considerations**

We explained the purpose of this research to all participants and gained agreement. Participants understood that this research is entirely voluntary.

## **Main finding or discussion**

We clarified 4 points as the framework which reflected on the early childhood education environment using photographs. (1) The environment where the young children want to be active. (2) The environment that easy to use for young children. (3) The environment that support the activity processes for young children. (4) The environment where the track of the young children's activities appear.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Using these four points, we can reflect the relations between the early childhood education environment and the activities of young children.

**Keywords:** photo evaluation method of quality; early childhood environment; language environment; early childhood teachers; reflection

## **Emergent Literacy Intervention in Norwegian Preschool**

HILDE HOFSLUNDSSENGEN | Sogn and Fjordane University College, Norway

### **Co-author**

BENTE E. HAGTVET | University of Oslo, Norway

### **Research aims**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the effect of two literacy intervention programs in Norwegian preschool.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Within the emergent literacy tradition literacy is seen as a phenomenon starting long before the formal literacy training in school (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). This places kindergarten at a center of literacy stimulation that it by tradition has not had.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

One intervention group focused on invented spelling (Ouellette & Sénéchal, 2008), while the other intervention group focused on dialogical reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The control group received a typical preschool program.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

110 children at an average age of 5.7 years participated in the study the year before they started school. The children were divided into two intervention groups and one control group. An experimental pretest- posttest design was applied, and the interventions were conducted by trained preschool teacher students and preschool teachers.

## **Ethical considerations**

The study was approved by Norwegian Social Science Data Services, and permission to participate was given by the parents.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Both the experimental groups outperformed the control group in invented spelling. Even though the control group had a better starting point at pretest, there was a large effect size in favor of the invented spelling group. There was also a small, but positive effect of the dialogic reading intervention.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Implication for practice: The findings appear to have several practical implications. A main implication is that experimental writing should be encouraged in preschool.

**Keywords:** emergent literacy; preschool; invented spelling; dialogical reading; intervention

## **Emergent Literacy Environment as a Quality Indicator in Norwegian Preschools**

SIGRID BØYUM | Sogn and Fjordane University College, Norway

### **Co-authors**

KJERSTI S. HAUKEDAL | Sogn and Fjordane University College, Norway

LILLIAN PEDERSEN | Sogn and Fjordane University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

The present study examined quality of emergent literacy support in Norwegian preschool in relation to a) the read-alouds and b) the preschool emergent literacy environment. For example how do preschool teacher's support children's language development while reading aloud? And what kind of environmental print is represented?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Early childhood is a significant period for children's language development. In Norway 89.7 per cent of the children between the ages of 1 to 5 year attends preschool. Language environment seems to be an indicator of quality in preschool (Saint-Laurent & Giasson 1999, Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

International research has indicated literacy activities such as read-alouds has a positive effect on children's vocabulary and emergent literacy skills (Lonigan, Shanahan & Cunnigham, 2008, Mol, Bus & de Jong 2009, Whitehurst, Epstein, Angell, Payne, Crone & Fishel 1994).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data was collected from 20 preschool in the west coast of Norway. Observation was used as research method, and was conducted by preschool teacher students in practice. The observation had two main themes: the preschools environmental print and teacher read-alouds. In the observation of the preschool environment the students filled out a questioner.

### **Ethical considerations**

Students participated voluntarily. The anonymity of the preschool was maintained through fictitious name. No personal information is collected in this study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

What characterized emergent literacy environment in Norwegian preschool and how the findings can be relate to preschool quality.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Norwegian preschool belong to the Scandinavian tradition with no formal literacy training before school. How can language literacy environment reflect quality in preschool?

**Keywords:** diversity; emergent literacy; read-alouds; diversenvironmental prints; observation

## **D11 REFUGEE CHILDREN**

Chair: DEIRDRE HORGAN | University College Cork, Ireland

## **The Reception of Refugee Children and Families in the Swedish Preschool. Opportunities and Contradictions**

JOHANNES LUNNEBLAD | University of Göteborg, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This paper is about the integration of young refugee children and their families in a large city in Sweden. Exploring the texts and types of knowledge that govern the practice of how educators and municipal officials receive refugee children and their families.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Studies of refugee children as well as children and families with a minority background show that stereotyped notions of class and race influence teachers' treatment of children and parents in the preschools and schools (Conolly 1998, Lunneblad 2006).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Firstly, there is the interest to identify, describe and analyze contextual meanings, practices, rules and routines offering that govern educators and social workers opportunities for action. Secondly, there is the interest to generate theories about social structures, processes and relations extending outside the contexts being studied.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodologically an extended case method is used (Burawoy's 1991). These approaches link theory and ethnographic findings as a means of extending viable theories and not as a means of beating qualitative findings into theoretical submission.

**Ethical considerations**

This study follows the Swedish Research Council guidelines for social sciences (2009)

**Main finding or discussion**

The Educators have an ambivalent attitude toward the reception off refugee children and there families On the one hand there an argumentation of fostering the parents on the other hand the educators see a risk that this can have negatively affects for the children how have to take the consequences for there parents behaviour.

**Implications, practice or policy**

This study contributes to a greater understanding of the possibilities and constrains working with refuge children and there families in the preschool.

**Keywords:** preschool; refugee children; ethnography; diversity; inclusion

**Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children in Ireland: Educational Transitions**

DEIRDRE HORGAN | University College Cork, Ireland

**Research aims**

Examines key educational transitions faced by refugee and asylum seeking children. Draws on research undertaken with parents which focused on the educational experiences of children engaged in the refugee process in Ireland.

**Relationship to previous research works**

Research on the Irish education system (Lynch and Lodge 2002) highlights a tendency to understate the diverse identities and needs of students. It has also established that educational success is essential for refugee children's acculturation and has the potential to provide some continuity and connection to the more positive aspects of their lives.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Transitions are complex and multi-layered - language, culture, physical accommodation - and involve moving from another country, moving through childhood, moving to another education system, moving between school and direct provision accommodation. (Vogler et al., 2008)

**Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Interviews were conducted in 2011 with migrant parents, both couples with status and mothers parenting alone and living in Direct Provision accommodation. Accessed through contacts with NGO's who work with migrant groups. Interviews were held in neutral venues, timed to facilitate childcare/school, with transport provided.

**Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations surrounding some participants concerns regarding anonymity and criticising state services while awaiting leave to remain in Ireland.

**Main finding or discussion**

Preschool and school as key settings that facilitate integration into the social fabric of communities. The research examined factors that influence educational participation and attainment - accommodation, community and material conditions; social and educational needs; and the strengths these children bring to the educational setting.

**Implications, practice or policy**

Looks at the implications of contemporary understandings and responses to cultural diversity within educational contexts and migration systems in Ireland.

**Keywords:** refugee; asylum seeking; children; education; transitions

# Communicative Events in Swedish Preschools – Newly Arrived Children’s Meetings with a Majority Language

ELLINOR SKAREMYR | Karlstad University, Sweden

## Research aims

The aim of this work in progress is to study communicative events between children of 3 to 5 years with different native language than Swedish and other children in a preschool context and to investigate communicative events to describe when children with different native languages are in the beginning of their Swedish language development and in the beginning of their career at preschool.

## Relationship to previous research works

Swedish preschools today consist of a multitude of different nationalities and have evolved to be more multilingual. The number of children having a different native language than Swedish has increased from 12,5 % in the year 2000 to 20,6 % in the year 2012.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Taking a sociocultural perspective, this study is focusing on material, verbal and bodily tools used by children communicating in a preschool context, i.e. how and what the children communicate.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Using an ethnographic approach including conversation analysis, a number of communicative events are observed and analyzed during spring 2013.

## Ethical considerations

The preschool teachers and parents were asked for written consent prior to the study and children’s consent sought during observation.

## Main finding or discussion

Preliminary results show how children use many different communicative tools in combination when communicating about daily routines and events of play. Newly arrived children use shadowing and invented language to take part in these communicative events. I’ve also observed how children changing participation and communicative tools and will be analyzing this further.

## Implications, practice or policy

Preliminary results from the study will be presented and discussed in relation to possible implications for teaching, learning and educational development in preschool contexts.

**Keywords:** communication; newly arrived children; multilingualism; ethnography; conversation analysis

## D12 SCIENCE AND MATH

Chair: NICOLE KELLY | Deakin University, Australia

### Science in Early Childhood Education

NICOLE KELLY | Deakin University, Australia

#### Research aims

Through everyday experiences, children are engaging with science. An educators’ ability to mediate these experiences into scientific concept formation can create life-long learning for children. This research aimed to understand educators perspectives, pedagogy and practice in relation to the role of science in the early years.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Past research has found that early childhood educators generally have poor science subject knowledge, and limited understanding of science concepts (Garbett, 2003). Research has also found that educators’ lack of confidence in teaching science challenges their ability to provide children with scientific experiences (Coulson, 1992), and when educators are reluctant to include science into their program, children’s scientific learning can suffer (Fleer & Ridgway, 2007).

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Socio-cultural theory supports this research.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This research employed a mixed methods approach using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethics approval was gained before research was undertaken. Participants were guaranteed anonymity in the research.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Educators believe it is important to include scientific experiences for children, however this is mainly occurring unintentionally. Educators also revealed they are only somewhat comfortable in their ability to provide science experiences for children.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Ensuring early childhood educators have access to professional development training in the area of science is recommended.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; science; pedagogy; practice; childcare

# **Mathematically-Rich Interactions in Early Childhood**

KATHY SWINKELS | Deakin University, Australia

## **Research aims**

Given the new direction and focus toward education in the early childhood sector, this PhD research study will investigate the mathematically-rich interactions that are occurring in three early childhood settings. RQ1: What constitutes a mathematically-rich interaction in the early childhood centre? RQ2: How do early childhood educators plan and scaffold for mathematically-rich interactions? RQ3: What role does the physical and socio-cultural environment play in the mathematically-rich interactions? RQ4: What role do children play in scaffolding each other's mathematically-rich interactions?

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This study will refer to researchers such as Douglas Clements; Julie Sarama; Herbert Ginsburg; Bob Perry; Sue Dockett;

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The use of Vygotsky's theory of social-constructivism underpins this research where I am exploring how both the educators and children themselves scaffold the mathematical concepts that occur during the play-based programs.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The methods for this research included collecting video data of three early childhood centres where the children were engaged in their normal day-to-day activities.

## **Ethical considerations**

It was important educators and parents understood the practicalities of data-collection and the dissemination of the results. It was also important to ensure children knew they had the right to ask for the cameras to stop at any time.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The main theme emerging appears that while there are numerous concepts identified, the educators are focused on other priorities and at times unaware of the mathematics that is occurring.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Teacher education and professional development to assist educators in becoming more aware of the mathematics that is occurring naturally through play and encourage them to scaffold this further.

**Keywords:** mathematics; early childhood; play; educators; professional development

# **How Do You Teach Calculation to Young Children?**

ELIZABETH CARRUTHERS | Redcliffe Children's Centre and Nursery School Research and Development Base, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

This research aims to identify key aspects that support teacher's pedagogy in developing children's mathematical graphics in calculation.



## **Relationship to previous research works**

This is based on my previous co-research which uncovered children's intuitive calculations in mathematics (mathematical graphics) Carruthers and Worthington (2006). In 2008 the Williams Review of Mathematics in England after visiting Redcliffe Children's Centre and Nursery recommended that early years teachers take note of children's own forms of written mathematics.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical underpinning comes from a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky,1978). It is an ethnographic study based on narratives from six reception class teachers as they reflect on their teaching strategies and classroom based learning theories.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In England it has been identified that many reception teachers are unsure of how to introduce and teach calculations (Gifford, 2003). From national data calculation is identified as being one of the lowest scoring areas in assessment. The data is collected through ongoing dialogues and interviews with 6 reception teachers.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The teachers gave their written permission and understood the focus of the study and that they could withdraw at any time (BERA Guidelines,2012)

## **Main finding or discussion**

The teachers highlighted the constraints of the current educational landscape. Key issues arose included; - That it is not just about the mathematics but the open culture of the classroom and seeing mathematics as wholistic. - Opening up the mathematics for children trying not to restrict their thinking - Valuing children's own methods and graphics on paper.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Government policy writers need to consider the strength of young children's own thinking in mathematics when considering curriculum policy.

**Keywords:** mathematical graphics; calculation; pedagogy; reception teachers; risk taking

## **D13 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Chair: HELEN TRORY | University of Northampton, United Kingdom

### **Inclusive Daily Childcare for Children with Disabilities (0-5) in England: a Policy and Practice Overview from 1997 to Present Day**

HELEN TRORY | University of Northampton, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this paper is to present a policy and practice overview of the field of inclusive daily childcare for children with disabilities (0-5) in England from 1997 to present day.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper utilises data drawn from previous research.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This paper will employ the bio-ecological systems conceptual framework proposed by Bronfenbrenner (2005) to consider the development of policy and practice with regard to provision for young children 0-5 years old in England with a view to focus on childcare provision for children with disabilities within this age range. Discussion will note the children's characteristics (the biosystem), early years childcare settings' practice (the microsystem), partnership with parents (the exosystem), culture (the macrosystem) and the analysis of changes across time (the chronosystem).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Data and research will be drawn from policy and relevant literature.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Clear referencing and attribution of sources

#### **Main finding or discussion**

This paper will argue in England between 1997 and 2010 the previous Labour administration oversaw a general

shift towards acceptance of disability and diversity. Furthermore there was demonstration of understanding between disability, diversity, child poverty and early years education and care. The current Conservative-led coalition government has provided mixed messages in this area committing to improvements in the childcare field but also to deregulation

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Within a political and policy context this paper will argue that there is a lack of systemic and rigorous research in this field. It will also suggest issues remain with definitions of disability, training, and qualification levels of the workforce to support inclusion of children with disabilities.

**Keywords:** bronfenbrenner; disability; childcare; early childhood; policy

## **The Preparatory Childhood: Kindergarten as an Early Interventional Institution**

INGEBORG HOLTEN | Oslo and Akershus University, Norway

### **Research aims**

The aim of this research is to identify the last decade's inversions regarding kindergarten's role and mandate in the Norwegian society, statements in relation to kindergarten's mandate as the first step in the educational system.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research points at how the Nordic social tradition in early childhood education and care meets the readiness for school tradition, and how the Norwegian society is influenced by neo-liberal discourses.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Concepts of power and knowledge following Foucault, Kristeva, Derrida and Habermas will serve as a theoretical basis for the discussions, concerning current political views of kindergarten as both a preventive, interventional and in collaboration with other institutions in the community.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodologically I will, through Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough, identify discourses in a selected range of policy documents and highlight the dialectic and importance of the text, and discuss this in connection with social practice.

### **Ethical considerations**

Through my encounter with political texts, Levinas' perspectives of "The Other" and Gadamer's notion of presuppositions in research will be central in relation to ethical considerations.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Furthermore, I pose the question: Are we heading for a more instrumental, fragmented and individualistic program in the kindergarten? I will argue that critical readings of political texts are urgent and necessary in a society where kindergartens are explained and defined by politicians.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

By focusing on the concept of power, this research project will analyze and discuss critically whose voices, at the political level, are setting the premises for kindergartens content, responsibility and mandate.

**Keywords:** power; policy; discourses; rhetoric; ideology

## **D14 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS**

Chair: ALISON WARREN | Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand

## **Competence to Act and Competence to Verbalize: the Importance of a Professional Language in Kindergartens**

LIV TORUNN EIK | Vestfold University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

A main aim is to inquire and discuss the importance of a professional language in mutual learning processes in kindergartens.

## Relationship to previous research works

The presentation is related to my newly ended PhD-study on further professional qualification process of newly qualified kindergarten teachers.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework is socio-cultural learning theory (Vygotskij 1978, Säljö 2001) and theories connected to the key concepts profession (Molander og Terum 2008), competence (Eraut 2004), culture (Kvalbein 1999) and language (Vygotskij 1962).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The theoretical framework is socio-cultural learning theory (Vygotskij 1978, Säljö 2001) and theories connected to the key concepts profession (Molander og Terum 2008), competence (Eraut 2004), culture (Kvalbein 1999) and language (Vygotskij 1962).

## Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are taken care of through institutional ethical procedures regulating research in Norway (NSD).

## Main finding or discussion

One perspective on professional competence is that it consists of two main components (Molander og Terum 2008). The first one is the competence to act professionally, to master the main tasks of the profession. The second component is the competence to describe, analyze and discuss professional actions. Main findings from my study are that the new kindergarten teachers mastered most of their tasks related to the children. They showed professional judgement and improvisation skills in their work. However, they found it difficult to describe and analyze their practices and further to discuss them with their colleagues. My presentation will discuss how kindergarten teachers can develop their professional language further.

## Implications, practice or policy

A professional language is seen as a prerequisite of mutual competence construction and critical reflection on professional actions.

**Keywords:** professional development; competence; professional judgement; improvisation; professional language

## Metaphor a Bridge into the Pre-School Educators' Thinking

ANNELI NIIKKO | The University of Eastern Finland, Finland

### Research aims

In the study it is considered metaphors, which emerge in three educators' speech. The questions are: What kind of metaphors do the educators use when they talk about the pre-school? What kind of meanings do they give metaphors?

### Relationship to previous research works

Relationships to Finnish metaphor studies e.g. Niikko 1992, Auranen 2004, Lappalainen 2012

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Metaphor is understood as a linguistic expression where two non-related conceptions are in interaction so that one concept domain is described with the other concept domain (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Onikki 1992). Illustrating A is a source of metaphor and B is a target of metaphor. This means that it is transferred to the concept of the target the new elements from the source, which do not naturally belong to the target concept (Anderson 2004, Saban 2006).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The study is a qualitative case study. Data has been collected in discussions with the educators. In the analysis process of data has been applied Armstrong's et.al (2011) metaphor model.

### Ethical considerations

In the research it has been ethically followed the principles of good scientific practices.

### Main finding or discussion

According to the findings the educators used metaphors whose source domains were connected with school, factory and hospital. For example with the school metaphor was referred to goals and regulations, timetable, order and discipline.

### Implications, practice or policy

The results provide opportunities for a broader review of the things that educators equate pre-school. The results are valuable to reveal what and how these educators experience working from the viewpoint of metaphors.

**Keywords:** educator; pre-school; metaphor; linguistic expressions; case study

## **Early Childhood Teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand Negotiating Dominant Discourses: Is a Critical Ecology of the Profession Possible?**

ALISON WARREN | Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand

### **Research aims**

A poststructural collective case study investigated how five newly-qualified early childhood teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand negotiated their professional subjectivities.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

A considerable body of international research has investigated early childhood practitioners' subjectivities and professionalism (for example, Dalli & Urban, 2010; Miller, Dalli, & Urban, 2012; Osgood, 2012). Dalli has called for early childhood professionals to advocate for their sector in a critical ecology that views professionalism as situated at all levels of the professional system.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Early childhood teachers negotiate subjectivities through positioning and agency within dominant discourses of professionalism. Postmodern subjectivities comprise multiple and dynamic self-understandings shaped within discourses.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research study used qualitative collective case study methodology within a poststructural paradigm. Methods comprised focus group interviews, reflective writing and individual interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

As I had been teacher educator of the participants, I attended to ethical issues to minimise repressive power relations and safeguard participants' professional safety.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Three dominant discourses of early childhood teaching emerged: the authority discourse, the relational professionalism discourse and the identity work discourse.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Government planning encouraged early childhood professionalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand through target levels for qualified and registered teachers in early childhood centres. Funding and policy changes have stalled this professionalisation process, although research clearly shows benefits to children's learning of qualified teachers (Meade, Robinson, Smorti, Stuart, & Williamson, 2012; Sylva, 2009). I will explore two early childhood teachers' reflections about their subjectivities and consider: is Dalli's call for a critical ecology possible within dominant discourses of early childhood teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand?

**Keywords:** professionalism; poststructural; subjectivities; critical ecology; New Zealand

## **D15 CHILDRENS' SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Chair: COLETTE GRAY | Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

### **Promoting Quality Care: an Intervention Program Based on Improving Caregiver's Sensitivity at Child Care Centre**

ELENA LOPEZ DE ARANA | Mondragon University's Humanities and Education School, Spain

#### **Co-authors**

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#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to put into practice an intervention program and analyze if it is suitable to improve caregiver's

sensitivity at child care centre.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Fukkink and Tavecchio (2010) attempted to improve caregivers' sensitivity at child care centre a video feedback program.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Child care research has demonstrated that caregivers' sensitivity affects children's well-being (Gunnar et al., 2010) and healthful development (Ahnert and Lamb, 2003; Love et al., 2003; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000 and 2002). Sensitivity is the ability for consistent recognition and accurate interpretation of child's signs, which are reflected in a contingent and appropriate response (Ainsworth et al., 1974; Mason and Cherry 2001; Kivijärvi et al., 2004; and Shin et al., 2006).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We are going to present a case analysis. The participants are: one caregiver and thirteen 2-3 year old children. The program is based on video feedback intervention. We recorded two kind of contexts: ones which permitted children's free play and another ones with structured activities. Our attention was focused only on caregiver's sensitivity interactions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Parents' written consent to record

### **Main finding or discussion**

The caregiver reported that the intervention program was useful to change her view, the way that she interpreted the children's signs. The caregiver was more sensitive in the context where free play was permitted, but she was less sensitive in the context with structured activities.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Video feedback training could be a promising method to increase caregivers' sensitivity. It would be necessary to create more contexts which allow children's free play and which guarantee caregivers' sensitivity.

**Keywords:** caregiver's sensitivity; intervention program; child care centre; quality care; children's well-being

## **Inviting Small Children to Dialogue; Scaffolding Conversational Skills**

BARBRO BRUCE | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

Joint attention and social interaction are important prerequisites for language development. Reciprocal turn-taking in dialogues fosters and challenges language development. The aim of this study was to highlight the process of inviting young children to participate in dialogues.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In an earlier study we focussed on interactional style in conversation. In this study we explore professional elicitation strategies and scaffolding in early communication.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework relies on the assumption that children develop language by participating in social interaction as active conversationalists (Holquist, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Dialogues between 7 speech therapists and 11 children representing an early stage of language development were recorded and transcribed. The elicitation strategies of the speech therapists that preceded the most elaborated utterances from the children (mean length of utterance plus 2) were analyzed with respect to interactional style.

### **Ethical considerations**

All the participants had approved to participate in this study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The main findings reflect three succeeding types of elicitation strategies. During the first phase the speech therapist is eager to follow the child's focus of interest in order to co-construct a common ground. The second phase is characterized by emerging mutuality, in which turn-takings and sharing of experiences are expected and encouraged. During the third phase the child is given less active scaffolding but positive feedback and challenge in order to grow as an independent conversationalist.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

In order to be able to support, scaffold and challenge children's language development it is important to know about how to invite, support and challenge children to participate actively in conversations.

**Keywords:** conversational skill; elicitation strategies; scaffolding; language development; dialogue

## **Children's Social Conflicts and Ethical Guidance in Norwegian Kindergartens**

RUTH INGRID SKOGLUND | NLA University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

Explore how staff understand and manage ethical guidance in situations when children are in social conflicts, In what ways are the children's perspectives attended to in social conflicts when staff give ethical guidance What sort of values are being emphasized when staff gives ethical guidance to children in social conflicts. The staff is responsible for helping children who are experiencing conflicts, to find constructive solutions and counteract rejection, bullying and violence. They must also ensure that the kindergarten's values are reflected in practice. There are little knowledge about how staff understands ethical guidance to children in conflicts and what it means in relation to a democratic upbringing and formation.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Professionalism and teachers role

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Professionalism and ethical guidance are seen in light of Honneth's theory about recognition and violence, Mollenhauer's and Biesta's understanding of formation into democracy.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative field research and interviews with staff in focus groups. Children are not interviewed, but observed.

### **Ethical considerations**

Condition of anonymity is taken care for, according to Social Science Data Service.

### **Main finding or discussion**

How staff understand ethical guidance, and dilemmas in practical everyday life which constrain and force their way when handling children's social conflicts, will be discussed. The findings will be seen in light of theoretical questions about children's participation in democratic upbringing and formation processes in kindergartens.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The reseach project has implications for theoretical and practical understanding of etichal guidance in kindergartens, but also for understanding of professionalism as a theme in the new Preschool Teacher Education Program in Norway.

**Keywords:** etichal guidance; children's social conflicts; formation and democracy; professional ethic; preschoolteacher's role

## **D16 HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Chair: JACKIE MUSGRAVE | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

## **Unpacking the Complexities of the Effect of Children's Health on Well-Being and Exploring Implications for Practice**

JACKIE MUSGRAVE | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This presentation aims to explore the separate and complex concepts of children's health and well-being and how they can impact upon early childhood education. Definitions of these concepts are explored and implications for practice are identified

### **Relationship to previous research works**

in contrast to previous presentations, this presentation takes a broad view of health and well-being and examines policy context and aims rather than focussing on specific health conditions

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This presentation examines international policy and research on the relationship between children's health and well-being

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

this is a literature review and policy analysis using international examples that have informed a chapter in a forthcoming book

### **Ethical considerations**

not relevant

### **Main finding or discussion**

Health and well-being are nebulous concepts to define and whilst they are interrelated, they are separate concepts. However, there is little research in educational databases that has examined how they weave together and the potential impact on early childhood education and practice. In a diverse and migrant world, it is important that practitioners have a global understanding of the socio-cultural, religious; economic and political influences on health in order to be able to work successfully with parents and to aim for optimal health, good well-being and good levels of development for children

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Practitioners in early years settings are key players in the global government aims of promoting good well-being in the early years, therefore education and training of practitioners to enable interpretation of policies must be underpinned by robust knowledge of issues relating to health and the impact of positive or negative influences on well-being

**Keywords:** health; well-being; policy; practice; global

## **'What Would I Have Done?' Pre-Service Elementary Teachers' Sense of Responsibility After Sandy Hook**

AARON BODLE | James Madison University, United States of America

### **Co-author**

NANCY BARBOUR | James Madison University, United States of America

### **Research aims**

How do traumatic memories, such as terror attacks and school shootings, influence pre-service educators' sense of responsibility to their students?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Of the extant literature related to school trauma, few explore the classroom teachers' role in supporting students after trauma (Lunsford-Mears, 2012; p. 4). Furthermore, no studies explore how pre-service teachers' memories of indirect school-related trauma color how they perceive their responsibility as teachers. Individuals maintain an "assumptive world," or a strongly held "set of assumptions about the world...used as [for] recognizing, planning, and acting" (Janoff-Buhlman, 1992; p. 5). We use "assumptive worlds" to explore how pre-service teachers' memories of trauma contribute to their "assumptive worlds" related to teaching.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Through the lens of narrative theory, fragments of personal narratives graft (Knoespel, 1991) onto others' narratives shaping discourse into "public narratives" (Bruner, 1970). These narrative network, produced through social interaction situated in and amongst particular places and times, serve as "snapshots" of experience.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This work is part of a longitudinal "narrative inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Using this methodology, narrative is both the phenomenon under investigation and the method used for data collection. Following a recent school shooting, we conducted focus groups and interviews, asking pre-service teachers to recount and write about the moment they learned of the event.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participants shared difficult memories. Many thanked the researchers for breaking silences around these topics.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings indicate indirectly experienced trauma, even from years past, inform students' sense of

responsibility as teachers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Preparing teachers to cope with social trauma requires investing traumatic memory.

**Keywords:** teacher identity; school responsibility; teacher education; narrative inquiry; school trauma

## **Sexuality of Childhood Between Child Protection and Education**

MIRIAM K. DAMROW | University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf, Germany

### **Research aims**

This study concerns the question how educators deal with the topic sexuality in childhood in order to take both the aspects of sexual and physical education and child protection into appropriate consideration.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The author has presented some corresponding results at the EECERA congresses 2010 and 2011.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Children have a right to being protected and a right to being educated. These 2 aspects may collide, particularly within the field of child sexuality. Lately, the German discussion was primarily focussed on child protection, leaving aside the aspect of education within the range of childhood sexuality. However, within the past months the relevant literature keeps emphasizing this aspect much more although so far there have been no practical consequences.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Both national and international research literature is being investigated and interpreted by means of qualitative content analysis. First results are being presented for discussion.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study is to theoretically explore the topic. Further investigation and field research work are intended in connection with the capability approach. In this context ethical consideration will be presented. In literature studies such problems may be largely excluded.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First results of the literature review are presented and discussed. National and international differences form the crucial point of discussion. Child protection as a part of social policy (particularly childhood policy) rather neglects the field of sexual education. Research work on sexual education of children does rarely consider the field of child protection.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Within further research work 2 different groups of addressees are to be taken into consideration in future.

**Keywords:** sexuality of children; education; child protection; childhood policy; children's rights

## **D17 SCIENCE IN ECEC**

Chair: SHUKLA SIKDER | Monash University, Australia

## **What Are the Scientific Concepts in Everyday Life of Toddlers? Toddler's Everyday Play and Learning of Scientific Concepts Are Dialectically Related**

SHUKLA SIKDER | Monash University, Australia

### **Research aims**

The study will investigate what type of development we will call scientific concept development at toddler's age and the involvement of parents in developing toddlers' scientific concepts in family play.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The paper is the part of my PhD research

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Play is a cultural form of development of the child. Children usually learn to play within the home as part



of everyday family practices. According to theoretical analysis of play, the topic of play reflects the specific conditions of the child's life; on the other hand the content of play is the child's reproduction as its central characteristic the activities and interactions among adults in their lives at work and in society. Therefore, play in child's life is influenced by their family-society and culture which help to develop their everyday concepts. Vygotsky state, the restructured form of everyday concept to a higher level is result of scientific concept. For young children, concept formation foregrounds the value of everyday circumstance; however adults can support children to develop scientific concepts. concepts.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Vygotsky's cultural-historical research has been used as the basis of the theoretical framework for guiding the research reported in this presentation. Hedegaard's dialectical-interactive approach has been used for the analysis of the data.

### **Ethical considerations**

I have approval from Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) to conduct the research

### **Main finding or discussion**

It is argued that parents act as mediators and support young children to develop scientific concepts in play.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study will contribute to the development of pedagogical approaches in early childhood education

**Keywords:** toddler's everyday play; scientific concepts; dialectical relation; cultural-historical theory; dialectical-interactive approach

## **Teaching Science Through Play: Evaluation of Kindergarten Children's Conceptual and Social Development**

MIZRAP BULUNUZ | Uludag University, Turkey

### **Research aims**

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of teaching science through play on kindergarten children's science conceptions and social development.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

According to Thomas and Brown (2011), it is through play and questioning that children build their understanding of the world. Therefore, this study examined the dynamics and effects of encouraging children to combine their natural talents for asking questions, imagining "what ifs" and playing on learning new knowledge and correcting misconceptions.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Playfulness is stimulated by questioning and experimenting with various materials. Meaningfulness is provided by integrating science concepts with other areas, such as art, reading, music, drama, and math.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

At the beginning of each science session, children's preconceptions about concepts were assessed through teacher questioning. These sessions were videotaped and transcribed. Based on students' preconceptions and ideas related to these concepts, the teacher provided instructional experiences and guided students to confront their thinking.

### **Ethical considerations**

Study don't have ethical considerations

### **Main finding or discussion**

After teaching through play, children advanced their conceptions about color, magnetism, and electricity. To analyze children's social development the teacher'-second author- written observations from their portfolios, teacher' observations of children's reactions to the intervention, and the teacher's newsletter to parents were used. Results indicated that the instructional intervention over the semester had an especially big impact on one child who has a speech impairment and social development problems, such as: being too dependent on the teacher, timidity, and problems in working and sharing with peers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This instructional intervention provides a playful and meaningful teaching model for kindergarten children.

**Keywords:** teaching science through play; social development; integrated practice; science conceptions; kindergarten

## Dancing Dinosaurs – an Infinite Adventure

INGRID LINDAHL | University of Kristianstad, Sweden

### Research aims

The aim of this study is to describe and interpret the trans-disciplinary exploration of children, in constructing the choreography of the “Dance of the dinosaurs” where mathematics is one of the disciplines used. . The central question is: In what way does children’s trans-disciplinary exploration emerge? Other questions are: What could be learned about the mathematical understanding of children through their applications? What problems emerge during the process and how are the children acting?

### Relationship to previous research works

The study is a part of a larger pedagogical development project in preschool class and primary school, initiated by the Swedish Reggio Emilia institute.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Deconstructive dialogues, fantasy and rhizome constitute central conceptions in the theoretical framework.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Methodologically, the study is an example of dialogical research, enabling a bridge between post-modern and modern theories and approaches. The children attend an F-1 form. Their interest in dinosaurs resulted in a dance project, including a few groups of children. The empirical material consists of a total of six hours of video-tape, completed by diary-notes. By posing question to the empirical data, patterns of actions is emerged which interprets according to the theoretical framework.

### Ethical considerations

The study adheres to the ethical guidelines of the Scientific Council regarding research, where the participation and approval of children are seen as fundamental.

### Main finding or discussion

Some findings: Time, space, pattern, size, number emerge in the mathematical work of children, children cooperates and aims for more.

### Implications, practice or policy

The study illustrates a trans-disciplinary exploration where children explore and identifies new problems, reflects critically and calls in question.

**Keywords:** trans-disciplinary exploration; problems; choreography; mathematics; cooperation

## D18 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN ECEC II

Chair: OLIVER THIEL | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

## Emergent Science in Preschool

KENNETH EKSTRÖM | Umeå University, Sweden

### Co-authors

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### Research aims

The main purpose of the research presented is to provide insight into how beliefs about preschool, preschool teacher role and the learning objectives in science may influence pre-school practices; Research questions: • What perceptions do principals and preschool teachers have about the preschool assignment?

How will these perceptions influence preschool practice in science? • How are activities in science shaped, in relation to learning object and tools used?

### Relationship to previous research works

In contrast to previous findings showing that preschool teachers lack science knowledge and confidence (Appleton

2008, Garbett, 2003, Harlen & Holroyd 1997, Rice & Roychoudhury 2003, Saçkes, Cabe Trundle, Bell & O'Connell 2011; Skamp & Mueller 2001), our results in a previous study indicated that the clash between different learning cultures might be the major obstacle for purposefully framed science education in preschools (Sundberg & Ottander 2013).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The approach of the presented study is interpretative, and analyses are mainly done by use of activity theory. (Engeström, 1987, 2001)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative data were collected from interviews of preschool teachers and principals, video observations of science activities and video recalled group interviews based on the recorded practices.

### **Ethical considerations**

Main demands for research are followed such as informed consent, participant voluntariness and right to discontinue at any time. Since it may be difficult for children to understand and predict the meaning of informed consent, it is important to treat consent as an ongoing process constantly renegotiated.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results show that prevailing local preschool cultures influence the form of practices taking place. The study also reveals methodological implications that points to a need for discussing what researchers in the field recognize as science in preschool. The results also imply that the practitioners must be involved in

this process of coming to an understanding of what science and science teaching in a preschool context might be.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Hopefully this can lead to a research based discussion about what Science Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) might look like for preschool teachers.

**Keywords:** preschool teachers; science; practice; perceptions; activity theory

## **Different Cultures, Different Contexts: Teaching Mathematics and Science in Botswana and Sweden**

KERSTIN BÄCKMAN | University of Gävle, Sweden

### **Co-authors**

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ANNIE HAMMARBERG | University of Gävle, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This paper investigates preschool teachers' existing work with mathematics and science in the early years in Botswana and Sweden. The aim is to present a comparative study regarding the pedagogical and didactical knowledge preschool teacher considers necessary in teaching math and science.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In the study we highlight Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and how this can be understood in early childhood education (Clements & Sarama, 2009; McCray, 2008; OECD, 2006; Shulman, 1986).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

PCK in early childhood includes didactical considerations in relation to context and culture. The importance of teachers' Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) is also investigated (Shulman, 1986).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The Research Objectives: 1. To find out best methods in the teaching process of math in countries with diverse cultural tradition and theoretical framework 2. To benchmark PCK and SMK of the ECE teachers in Botswana and Sweden. For data collection, the same survey has been conducted in Botswana and Sweden with preschool educators. The surveys consisted of both open and closed questions. Comparison of groups in the research material has been made by quantitative methods. To gain a deeper knowledge of certain issues, we also used focus groups interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

We follow the ethical roles for researcher in both countries.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The data shows that preschool teachers need a base of knowledge when they are supposed to teach math and

science. This knowledge base includes pedagogical and didactical knowledge together with subject knowledge.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Building a strong foundation for lifelong interest and sustainability in math and science among children are necessary.

**Keywords:** mathematics; science; pedagogical content knowledge; subject matter knowledge; preschool teaching

## **ECEC Teacher Students' Beliefs About Mathematics**

OLIVER THIEL | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **Research aims**

We investigated ECEC teacher students' beliefs about mathematics before and after a one year teacher training in mathematics. The aims are: - to describe ECEC teacher students' beliefs about mathematics, - to compare the beliefs of German and Norwegian teacher students, and - to analyse the impact of teacher training on students' beliefs.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research is based on work by Thiel (2010) and Benz (2012) as well as Grigutsch, Raatz and Törner (1998).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Van Oers (2004) has proven that teachers would support the mathematical development of children only on the basis of their mathematical epistemology. The mathematical epistemology includes objective and subjective knowledge about mathematics and teaching mathematics. Beliefs are composed of this relatively lasting subjective knowledge of certain objects as well as the attitudes linked to that knowledge. Attitude learning involves a dynamic interaction with the environment, in which attitudes both guide approach and avoidance behaviours, and are updated by the feedback that such exploration provides.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is a comparative, longitudinal, quantitative study. Data mining included: - descriptive analyses, - confirmatory factor analyses to examine the quality of the scales, - scaling of the data with the Item Response Theory, and - identification of development processes with a three-factorial model (person x item x time).

### **Ethical considerations**

Students' participation was optional and anonymous.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings show that Norwegian students have a more restricted view on mathematics and are more reluctant than German students. To a certain degree, teacher training can change students' beliefs.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Teacher training is needed that focuses on both mathematics education, mathematics itself and attitudes towards mathematics.

**Keywords:** teacher beliefs; mathematical epistemology; early mathematics; mathematics education; teacher training

## **D19 LITERATURE PRACTICES I**

Chair: EVA MAAGERØ | Vestfold University College, Norway

### **Cockoos and Napoleon Cakes. Non-Fiction Picture Books in Kindergarten**

EVA MAAGERØ | Vestfold University College, Norway

#### **Co-author**

ANNE ØINES | Vestfold University College, Norway

#### **Research aims**

Our aim is to analyse recent non-fiction picturebooks for young children to investigate how meaning is realised through image and text, and how and to which extent such picture books are used in kindergarten.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Text analyses: Nikolajeva & Scott (2006), Sipe (2008), Anna Karlskov Skyggebjerg (2009, 2011) and Maagerø &

Østbye (2012). Empirical study: Sipe (2008), Skyggebjerg (2009), Granly & Maagerø (2012).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Our text analytic approach builds on social semiotic text analyses (Halliday 1978, Kress 2010, Nikolajeva & Scott 2006) and the concept iconotext (Hallberg 1982). The empirical analysis is mainly based on semi-structured qualitative interviews.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Our research consists of analyses of 10 non-fiction picturebooks for young children and semi-structured interviews with 15 kindergarten teachers in 5 kindergartens, field notes and photos. The text analyses investigate visual and verbal meaning making. The interviews are related to non-fiction picture books. Field notes and photos document the variation of books and their availability.

### **Ethical considerations**

Only teachers and assistants were interviewed. They received written information about the research project. The interview topics were sent a week in advance.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The text analyses show that many recent non-fiction picturebooks for young children are based on both facts and narratives. Humour and playfulness are important features. The empirical research shows that the knowledge of such books is limited. More traditional non-fiction books and Internet are used, often related to project works.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

More knowledge of recent picturebooks can stimulate the development of literacy among young children.

**Keywords:** non-fiction picture books; iconotexts; literacy; reading in kindergarten; project work

## **Fighting “Gentleness”. Analysis of the Picturebook “Snill”/”Gentle”**

GURI LORENTZEN ØSTBYE | Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway

### **Co-author**

EVA MAAGERØ | Vestfold University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

Our aim is to analyse the picture-book Snill (Gentle) (2009/1992) author Gro Dahle, illustrator Svein Nyhus, and discuss if and how the text can inspire young children, especially girls, to emancipation of oppressed roles given them at home and in school. The main character of the book shows how emancipation is possible.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Our previous study of picture books (Maagerø & Østbye 2012). Other: Nikolajeva & Scott (2006), Sipe (2008), Solstad (2011), Maagerø & Tønnessen (2011).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Our analysis of verbal text and images and relation between these modes build on social semiotics by Halliday (1985) and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), Hallberg (1982) and Nikolajeva & Scott (2006). The interpretation of our findings draws on the philosophy of Freire (1999) and feminist and gender theory by Haraway (1997) and Lindner (2010).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Text analyses using social semiotic tools. We investigate meaning realised in image and text; how the two modes work together to develop overall meaning. Micro-macro-level considerations in the spreads and text-context and text-audience relations are part of the investigation.

### **Ethical considerations**

The research is text analyses, and no empirical readers are taken into account.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Our text analysis show that the picture-book is a rich multimodal text with many layers of meaning. This opens up for different audiences, both young children and adults with more reading experience. Another important finding is the strong intention of emancipation realised through image and text.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Modern picture-books like “Snill”/”Gentle” contribute to children’s, especially young girl’s, potential value and thus opportunities to be treated as full-fledged citizens.

**Keywords:** picture-book; multi-modal text; emancipation; dignity; gender

# Street Art and Literacy. Children's Meeting with Multimodal Texts in Their Daily Surroundings

BIRTE SIMONSEN | University of Agder, Norway

## Co-author

EVA MAAGERØ | Vestfold University College, Norway

## Research aims

Our major concern is to analyse multimodal street art texts painted on buildings and walls in and around the city of Vardø in the North of Norway, and to investigate the potential of such texts in the development of literacy.

## Relationship to previous research works

Studies of street art and murals have been done by Rolston (1992), Kunzle (1995), Zelaya (2011), and Maagerø & Zelaya (2012). Literacy studies connected to visual art have been conducted by Narey (2009) and Østbye (2009). We combine both these research areas in our work.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Our text analytic approach is based on the theoretical framework of social semiotic and multimodal text analysis (Halliday 1978, Kress 2001, 2010). In the literacy analysis, we draw on the concept of multimodal literacy (Kress 2003, Jewitt 2006, Narey 2009, Brooks 2009). Aesthetic theory of Bale (2009) and Hausken (2009) is also important.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The analytic tools are developed especially for multimodal text analysis by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), van Leeuwen (2005), and Baldry & Thibault (2006). The literacy potential is a part of the text analysis. This analysis is supported by semi-structured interviews with 10 children (6 years old).

## Ethical considerations

The texts are official texts in the outdoor room. The parents of the children are informed about the project, and have accepted the children's participation in the interview.

## Main finding or discussion

Our text analyses show that the texts are rich aesthetic and multimodal texts.

## Implications, practice or policy

We believe that street art texts, like the ones we have analysed, offer text experience and develop multimodal literacy.

**Keywords:** multimodality; street art; environment; participation; literacy

## D20 PARENTS AS EDUCATORS

Chair: LINDA MITCHELL | University of Waikato, New Zealand

### Parent Decision-Making About ECE: Reducing Barriers to Participation for 'Priority' Families

LINDA MITCHELL | University of Waikato, New Zealand

## Co-author

PATRICIA MEAGHER-LUNDBERG | University of Waikato, New Zealand

## Research aims

The research examines government policy initiatives aimed at increasing ECE participation for children defined as 'priority'.

## Relationship to previous research works

Research on family engagement in ECE highlighted the need to reduce barriers for 'priority' families.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical frame characterises families in terms of their 'funds of knowledge' and 'cultural capital' to explore ways in which providers successfully worked with families.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Providers and families completed a survey and Ministry of Education staff, providers and 'priority' families were interviewed face-to-face.

### **Ethical considerations**

The research has University of Waikato research ethics approval. Particular attention was paid to informed consent and social and cultural considerations.

### **Main finding or discussion**

In addition to well-known barriers of cost and no transport, the research found parents feared the unknown, and were reluctant to separate from their children and place them into the care of unknown adults. Parents' aspirations for their child were academic, social and emotional, but they needed support in accessing the knowhow to enter into the ECE world. Providers were the intermediary in parents accessing ECE, ensuring pragmatic concerns of cost and transport were attended to, and stepping parents through

an introduction to ECE services that were a good fit for the family. Thus fear of the unknown was alleviated and parents started to become confident to engage with ECE services.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

There may be a mismatch between home and the ECE service in respect to cultural aspirations, preferences and practices. Engagement of 'priority' families in ECE calls for culturally responsive pedagogy and an approach to curriculum that generates a sense of belonging for all comers.

**Keywords:** family engagement; barriers to ECE participation; cultural capital; funds of knowledge; culturally responsive pedagogy

## **Representations of Portuguese Parents About Child Care Education**

MARINA FUERTES | Lisbon School of Education, Portugal

### **Research aims**

To study parent's representations about child care: quality, educational programs, organization and impact on children development.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Child care (CC) good practices have positive impact on infant development and well-being. Studies performed in Portugal indicate that CC quality is only moderate. Parent's involvement in CC is a key factor on practices effectiveness. Nevertheless, parent's point of view about CC practices is understudied.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Bioecological (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1988)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Two independent qualitative studies and one quantitative study were performed. In first qualitative study, 20 parents were interviewed in order to access their knowledge related CC organization and educational programs. In the second study, 20 other parents were interviewed about their experiences and beliefs concerning CC quality. Using indicators from both studies a questionnaire was organized, validated and applied to 300 parents ( 80% private schools, 62% first born, 57% girls).

### **Ethical considerations**

None

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings indicate that parents: value CC as educational setting to promote child development; value teacher's practices; choose their children school considering localization, facilities and materials; want to be respect and to be integrate in CC practices. Factors like children gender, first born status and school status (private vs. public) affect parent's opinion. Parents prefer to not share their questions about CC with teachers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Overall our findings indicate that Portuguese parent's participation in CC is mostly passive. Although information is given, parents rarely are invited to take part in school planning and to be partners in activities. According to our results school-parents relationship need to be enhance by promoting partnership and open communication.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; child care; family-school relationship; parenting; culture

# The Parent's Chance to Influence the Use of Religious Stories in Kindergarten

RAGNHILD FAUSKE | Volda University College, Norway

## Research aims

The parent's chance to influence the use of religious stories in kindergartens. The five research questions focused on in this paper are about how, when and in what way the kindergartens' staff give the parents information about the use of religious stories. Do the parents have a real chance to influence the use of this? In what way is the parent's right to give their children a religious upbringing safeguarded?

## Relationship to previous research works

I have published an article in the Norwegian journal *Prismet* nr. 1, 2012 (Oslo: IKO-forlag ) with some of the results.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

I will illuminate my discussion with other results from my own research, published in the journal *Prismet* in 2012 (Fauske 2012, Hovdelien 2012:97 – 112, Nilsen 2012:239 – 260, Sagberg 2012:39 – 47, Sveen 2010).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

I distributed a survey with 39 questions to all section leaders in the kindergartens situated in a county in western part of Norway. The data is based upon responses from 343 section leaders from 183 kindergartens.

## Ethical considerations

I want to look at this theme in light of the rights of parents after the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and discuss why religion seems to be a difficult area of knowledge to work together with the parents in the Norwegian kindergartens.

## Main finding or discussion

Other results already published Now I am working with the results of the five questions about the parent's chance to influence the use of religious stories, and will present these results on the conference.

## Implications, practice or policy

See ethical considerations

**Keywords:** kindergarten; parent's rights; kindergartens staffs' mandate; religious upbringing; multireligious society

## D21 PLAY AND LEARNING

Chair: MAELIS KARLSSON LOHMANDER | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### Memories and Images of Play

MAELIS KARLSSON LOHMANDER | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

#### Co-author

INGRID PRAMLING SAMUELSSON | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

#### Research aims

Historically, play has been and continues to be an essential and fundamental part of early childhood education throughout Europe and beyond. Play is often considered one of the most important factors for the child's growth, learning and development. However, when it comes to definitions and conceptualisations of play, much remains to be discovered and clarified. In his book *The Ambiguity of Play* Sutton Smith claims that "There is little agreement among us and much ambiguity" (Sutton Smith, 1997, p.1). In order to get a deeper understanding of how play is understood and defined in different cultural contexts the aim of this research was to examine recollections of experiences of play compared to perceptions of children's play today

#### Relationship to previous research works

N/A

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The overarching theoretical position is Variation Theory (Marton and Pang, 1999).

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Drawing on written narratives from 31 students participating in an international early childhood education master



programme from 23 different countries across the world, this study adopted a phenomenographical approach (Marton and Booth, 1997).

### **Ethical considerations**

Overall the Swedish Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research were taken into account. For this particular study, a written consent form was signed by all participants.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings indicate that there is variation in the perceptions and understandings of the concept 'play'; these seem to be embedded in cultural beliefs and values with implications for practice.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study will contribute towards expanding the knowledge base and understanding of perceptions of play and learning and how these are put into practice in early childhood education in various countries.

**Keywords:** play; memories; culture; context; early childhood

## **Why Should Early Childhood Educators Examine Play from the Child's Perspective?**

AVIS RIDGWAY | Monash University, Australia

### **Co-author**

GLORIA QUINONES | Monash University, Australia

### **Research aims**

To examine Australian early childhood student conceptualizations of play-based learning and in particular discover if the pedagogical approach proposed in concept diagrams includes understanding play from the child's perspective.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The original study by Ridgway and Quinones, (2012) sought to understand early childhood students' conceptualisations of play-based learning as articulated in the Australian curriculum framework, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia* (DEEWR, 2009). The EYLF aims to improve the quality of early childhood education suggesting educator guidance in sustaining play using the child's perspective is essential for learning and development.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A cultural-historical approach frames the investigation and proved generative as using a cultural-historical framework acknowledges the research context, gives insight into how student conceptualizations of play were mediated by language and artifacts, and how their different and contrasting perspectives helped re-conceptualize historically formed ideas encountered in practice.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Assignment data included concept diagrams (play models) and associated theoretical discussion with analysis, based on institutional practices from each student's placement experience. We used discourse analysis to identify common themes building a coded table around the concepts used by our students.

### **Ethical considerations**

This research was approved by Monash University ethics committee. Twenty-six final year students from a cohort of seventy-two volunteered their de-identified assignments with play models after marking

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings showed early childhood students focused on the adult's pedagogical role, and understanding the child's perspective as a pedagogical approach to play needs re-thinking.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This finding has implications for future provision of effective early childhood education.

**Keywords:** child's perspective; play; learn; role; concept diagram

## **D22 INNOVATIVE APPROACHES**

Chair: ROSIE WALKER | University Worcester, United Kingdom

# Participation in Research Circles – to Enable New Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Didactics (Part of Childhood Learning and Didactics)

ANNIKA MÄNSSON | Malmö University, Sweden

## Co-author

LENA RUBISNSTEIN-REICH | Malmö University, Sweden

## Research aims

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss new perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Didactics derived from participation in so called research circles.

## Relationship to previous research works

(Härnsten, & Beach, 2001).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Research circles have a tradition with roots in Swedish study circle tradition. These circles are built on ideas of participation and democracy (Härnsten, & Beach, 2001). The participants contribute in research-like processes which can be viewed upon as emancipatory learning processes (Rönnerman (2008). Values like influence and mutual understanding are supposed to contribute to insight and knowledge development (Härnsten & Beach, 2001; Rönnerman, 2005).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This paper draws its argumentation mainly on content analysis of documentation from three different research circles including two publicly available research reports.

## Ethical considerations

Overall the Swedish Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research has been taken into account, However, given the reliance mainly on publicly available research reports, there are no particular ethical issues to adhere to other than a rigorous and careful selection of sources.

## Main finding or discussion

This paper is a work in progress and the results are preliminary. The teachers' choice of questions to study indicate that they are related more to learning conditions and context rather than school subjects.

## Implications, practice or policy

There are several implications for practice and policy. Research circles are practice-based and the model can easily be used in Early Childhood Educational settings.

**Keywords:** research circles; participation; didactics; knowledge development; teachers

# Explorative Action Research in Kindergarten

TIRI SCHEI | Bergen University College, Norway

## Research aims

Critical knowledge about formatting processes is embedded in every kindergarten practice, but how is it possible to reveal such knowledge and to learn from it? Researchers from Bergen University College collaborated with kindergarten staff about these issues during a one-year research project. Questions of identity formation, subject positioning and agency were important. Various tasks were tried out. One of these is the topic of this presentation: The kindergarten teachers were asked to position themselves together with a chosen artifact in front of the children. A picture was taken and the teachers should reflect upon why they chose this particular artifact. The purpose was to increase awareness of own habits and ways of positioning in daily kindergarten life and to contribute to reflection upon how the conditions for cultural formation is embedded in daily practice.

## Relationship to previous research works

This research is a continuation of research within the research group "Kindergarten as an arena for cultural formation" at Bergen University College, Norway.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework is social epistemology.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Explorative and collaborative action research was used as a method.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are taken into account.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Self-staging is a conscious action. Such an action might reflect the numerous unconscious actions that conduct everyday life in kindergarten. Everyday actions constitute kindergarten as a learning arena and as an arena for cultural formation.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Close collaboration between researchers and kindergarten staff might offer new ways of understanding kindergarten practice.

**Keywords:** explorative action research; self-staging; performativity; kindergarten teacher; cultural formation

# **Using Dynamic Assessment of Cognitive Development to Establish the Norm of Taiwanese Preschoolers**

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## **Research aims**

Not only to establish the norm of Dynamic Assessment of Cognitive Development in a Taiwanese preschooler sample, but also to investigate any cognitive developmental difference between Taiwanese and Polish preschoolers.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

The investigation duplicates Kulesza's studies (2004, 2008 & 2011) and Huang et al., (2011).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Cognitive achievement is intended to be measured with the task-support procedure based on Bandura's social learning, Piaget, Case and Vygotsky theories.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

(1) To identify 326 Taiwanese preschoolers in their levels of ADZ, ZPD and DDZ. (2) To establish the norm of 3 to 6 years Taiwanese preschoolers by Dynamic Assessment of Cognitive Development in Preschool Children.

## **Ethical considerations**

To testify Kulesza's instrument any cognitive developmental difference between Taiwanese and Polish preschoolers, the result indicated the set can be applied to Taiwanese preschoolers based on psychometric analysis with cultural free.

## **Main finding or discussion**

74.3% of 3 to 6 years preschoolers complete independently (ADZ), of 18.1% need little help (ZPD) and of 7.6% incomplete (DDZ) in a set of 44 tasks of the Dynamic Assessment of Cognitive Development in Preschool Children. For 3, 4, 5 and 6 years preschoolers complete independently with 80.3%, 72.3%, 65.8% and 78.8% respectively, of 14.9%, 19.4%, 19.8% and 18.2% with little help respectively, of 4.8%, 8.3%, 3.0% and 7.5% incomplete respectively.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

In addition, the reliability Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 3, 4, 5 and 6 years Taiwanese preschoolers is .708, .904, .967 and .847 respectively, this dynamic assessment is very reliable, consistent and stable, therefore, the set can be applied to the

population of Taiwanese preschoolers based on psychometric analysis with cultural free.

**Keywords:** preschooler; cognitive development; dynamic assessment; Taiwan; Taiwanese

## **D23 ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

Chair: SARA BARROS ARAÚJO | School of Education of Institute Polytechnic of Porto and Childhood Association, Portugal

### **The Role of Preschool Teachers in Play-Children's Perspectives**

HRÖNN PALMADOTTIR | University of Iceland, Iceland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to explore young children's (1-3years) lived experiences on the role and pedagogy of preschool teachers in play situations in preschool.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is related to and adds to studies that have explored children's reasons of involving preschool teachers during their interplay (Einarsdottir, 2012; Pramling Samuelsson & Johansson, 2009).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on the phenomenological approach of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) that emphasise the human bodily existence in the world.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative methods were used, including video recordings, and field notes. The participants were two groups of children, altogether 46 children in one preschool and eight preschool teachers.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues regarding access, informed consent, trust and power positions between the researcher and the children were taken into consideration.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings indicate that the children involved the preschool teachers into their play situations through emotional and bodily expressions. Three main categories, in which illustrate children's perspectives emerged: (a) support connected to play situations and play material, (b) support connected to children's social interactions, (c) participation in children's play and playful actions. The children also expressed if the preschool teacher's reactions harmonized with their intentions. The preschool teacher's reactions were grouped into two main categories; emotional closeness and emotional distance.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study contributes and adds to existing knowledge concerning bodily communication of young preschool children. It can open up for reflections of young children's play and learning and the pedagogy and the role of preschool teachers in children's play.

**Keywords:** children's perspectives; play; preschool teacher's role; toddlers; social interactions

### **Children's Conceptions About Participation and Educators' Role as Enhancer**

JONNA LEINONEN | University of Tampere, Finland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study are children's conceptions about their participation in everyday activities in day care and about educators as an enhancer of shared and common action together with children.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Children's participation include issues such as become listened and supported to make independent initiatives and decision and feelings of being important as a child in daycare group (Venninen & Leinonen, 2013).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Children's viewpoints are considered only in few research of early childhood education. Sheridan and Pramling-Samuelsson (2006) and Bae (2010) have find out that children can have influence in issues related to play. Adopting

child's perspective is important, when supporting their participation (Emilson & Johansson, 2006).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data were collected with an action telling interviews, where children were asked to describe their actions and initiatives considering research-pictures of daycare situations from 150 children aged 3-7 years in the Helsinki Metropolitan area.

### **Ethical considerations**

Children participated in the research willingly and they had a copy of their answers as a "storybook" when leaving from the research situation. Children were active and motivated participants in the study and their descriptions about their daily choices and chances formed a lively view to their life in day care centers.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results indicate that children are active actors who considered educator's role as observer, but also supporter of child-initiated activities and have conceptions about shared activities and common meaning making.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Children's views and conceptions about their participation should be considered more essential when designing daily pedagogies in early childhood education.

**Keywords:** children's participation; action telling; children's perspective; everyday practices; role of educator

## **Children's Stories About Everyday Life in Finnish Day Care Centres – a Window to Children's Participation**

PIIA ROOS | University of Tampere, Finland

### **Research aims**

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to answer the questions: 1) how do the narratives of children define everyday life in Finnish day care centres and 2) how do these narratives describe childhood in day care centre.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study connects in large scale with the discourses across various child welfare arenas and social research which calls for listening children's perspective and voice.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical and methodological framework in based on childhood research and narrative approach.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Constructivist and narrative conception of knowledge is the background of this study. The research material consists of children's drawings and interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

The imbalance between the adult researcher and children is important to recognize. The research material was produced in interaction and it is vital to be sensitive about the "voices" which are made visible. Are they children's or researcher's or shared?

### **Main finding or discussion**

The main focus in children's stories was friends and playing, but also adults and different rules controlling the possibilities of action were described. The results showed that there is work to be done before children's participation comes true. Children and adults seemed to be located in two separate worlds. Of course these worlds meet each other, but adults aren't in playfull relationship with children. In addition children didn't tell to adults about their wishes or feelings.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The final attempt of this research is to make us adults observe children and their way of living and being more closely as a part of our work in early childhood education.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; children's perspective; narrative; day care centre; Finland

## **D24 WORKING CULTURE**

Chair: EEVA HUJALA | University of Tampere, Finland

## Working Culture in Kindergartens: Does it Matter for Quality?

HEGE EGGEN BØRVE | Nord-Trøndelag University College, Norway

### Research aims

The aim is to explore whether increased proportion of men in kindergartens seem to contribute to achieve gender equality in kindergartens. The paper examines what happens when men are entering a work place dominated by women. How does this affect the construction of working culture and gender? Does it contribute to promote equality in the daily work in the kindergarten?

### Relationship to previous research works

Research on gender and equality in kindergarten are mainly concerned about how the gender of the staff affect equality and gender construction, impact of male workers on children's development and gender construction and the importance of male teachers entry in early childhood work as affecting the equality / balance in staff. Impacts of more men in the kindergarten on the construction of working cultures and gender and how this affect equality are less prevalent.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Symbolic interaction: gender and culture is socially constructed; is regard as something we do, think and construct in the social context. The construction of gender and culture is analyzed as interwoven processes.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Explorative design, based on a qualitative approach. Case study is carried out in two kindergartens, data consist of interviews with 15 employees.

### Ethical considerations

According to Norwegian law of personal protective is the case organization is given a fiktive name

### Main finding or discussion

The discussion shows the kindergarten as a gendered workplace culture. This indicates the importance of taking workplace culture into consideration in studies of equality.

### Implications, practice or policy

It seems important to challenge "taken for granted" understanding, practices and underlying assumptions about gender and practices.

**Keywords:** equality; gender; kindergartens; construction; workplace culture

## Professionalism of Preschool Teachers and Connection with Leadership: a Cross-Cultural Study

TIINA PETERSON | Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Estonia

### Co-authors

MARIKA VEISSON | Tallinn University, Estonia

EEVA HUJALA | University of Tampere, Finland

ULLA HÄRKÖNEN | University of Eastern Finland, Finland

ANETTE SANDBERG | University of Mälardalen, Sweden

INGE JOHANSSON | University of Stockholm, Sweden

ÉVA KOVÁCSNÉ BAKOSI | University of Debrecen, Hungary

### Research aims

To study teachers' and principals' opinions about professionalism and connection with leadership in Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Hungary.

### Relationship to previous research works

Estonian, Finnish, Swedish and Hungarian previous studies of ECEC quality were used.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study is based on contextual approach in bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and critical ecologies theory (Urban, 2010).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The structured questionnaires for the preschool teachers and principals were used. Subscales of the questionnaire where interaction, family involvement, planning of education and evaluation of children development, using teaching strategies, professional development, creating growth environment, development of values. The sample consisted of teachers and principal per country in Estonian (174; 118), Finnish (82; 84), Swedish (117; 96) and Hungarian (111; 99) preschools. Questionnaires were sent by post and by e-mail. Quantitative data analysis using the statistical program SPSS 14.0 was conducted analysis of frequency, ANOVA were used. Focus group interview with 5 preschool principals and 5 teachers per country in Estonian, Finnish and Swedish preschools. Qualitative content analysis method was used.

## **Ethical considerations**

The study based to ethical rules in social science research i.e. demands for confidentiality, consent, information and autonomy.

## **Main finding or discussion**

In the comparison of results there were similarities between Finnish and Swedish teachers/principals and between Estonian and Hungarian teachers/ principals opinions means. Teacher's opinions mean were significantly higher than principal's mean in all categories and different in Estonia and Sweden. Differences between opinions of teachers and principals about professionalism and connection with leadership were significant between the countries and depend of country context.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

According to the research results countries improve the teacher training system.

**Keywords:** preschool teachers; professionalism; preschool principals; leadership; preschool child care institution

## **Work Conditions and Job Satisfaction of Pedagogical Staff in Children's Services in Germany**

INGE SCHREYER | State Institute of Early Childhood Research, Germany

### **Co-authors**

KRAUSE MARTIN | State Institute of Early Childhood Research, Germany

OLIVER NICKO | State Institute of Early Childhood Research, Germany

### **Research aims**

The project AQUA (Arbeitsplatz und Qualität in Kitas – Workplace and quality in children's services) is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (August 2011 to January 2014). Its goals are to describe employment conditions of pedagogical staff in Germany and to analyse correlations between work conditions, job satisfaction and job commitment.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research has found the working conditions of pedagogical staff to be rather poor, although reported job satisfaction is relatively high. A key focus of the study is therefore to investigate whether job commitment is more important than working conditions.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

It is widely known that good working conditions facilitate job satisfaction and higher job motivation. Furthermore, research has indicated that persons who feel committed to their profession work more efficiently.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

10% of all German children's centres (N=5,414) and their providers (N=4,278) were chosen randomly and questioned about their working conditions, their professional commitment and their perceived job satisfaction. Answers could be submitted either online or by paper-and-pencil. Roughly 8,500 questionnaires were completed.

## **Ethical considerations**

Participation was voluntary; all participants were informed that data analysis will be conducted anonymously.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings show that job commitment and appreciation of their work by others are major predictors regarding the job satisfaction of pedagogical staff and are often more important than the level of pay.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings of the study will be used to develop recommendations for service providers on how to

improve staff job satisfaction and thus minimise turnover rates and resignations.

**Keywords:** pedagogical staff; quality; work conditions; job satisfaction; job commitment

## **D25 PARADIGMS, THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES II**

Chair: ZENNA KINGDON | University St Mark and St John, United Kingdom

### **Visual Literacy in Children's Narratives Based on a Picture Book**

TRUDE HOEL | University of Stavanger, Norway

#### **Research aims**

I will explore in what degree the pictures in a wordless picture book provide a basis for multiple readings, and whether or not the establishing of a narrative frame is part of 6-7 years old children's meaning making.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The children's oral narratives are based on the wordless picture book *Frog, where are you?* (Mayers, 1969) which has been used in several studies inspired by the Frog Story research tradition (Slobin & Berman, 1994a; Verhoeven & Strömqvist, 2004).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Speech and language educators use narrative tasks in assessment and intervention (Gorman, Fiestas, Pena, & Clark, 2011). Children's narrative skills are often seen in the context of language development, and research indicate a relationship between early narrative skills and later reading skills (Heilmann, Miller, & Nockerts, 2010).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

I find it essential to use different ways to study and describe children's linguistic and narrative competence. Semiotic analyses are implemented as well as an exploration of culture-specific frames for interpretation.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Parent consent for each of the participants is in line with regulations specified by Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). In order to preserve anonymity for the participants, the narratives have been coded.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The Frog story tradition considers each picture in the book as a sign, and a predetermined reader role is assigned to the text. The Norwegian children's readings displays more numerous signs on each picture. In a Norwegian reading tradition the reader will not seek one but several signs.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

It is important to develop an understanding of how children read pictures.

**Keywords:** children's narratives; visual literacy; social semiotic; reading culture; picture book

### **Children's Voice: Methodologies to Support Children as Knowers and Social Actors**

ZENNA KINGDON | University of St Mark and St John, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This paper sets out the methodological approach that frames my research, which is concerned with, understanding children's experiences of their worlds, specifically with children's experiences of role-play in pack-away settings and how Sustained Shared Thinking is used by practitioners in order to enhance the children's experiences.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper is related to my previous paper, *Playful Pedagogies in the Early Years: Sustained Shared Thinking*.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The recognition of children as beings rather than becomings has led to the development of a recognisable sociology of childhood. This new discipline has meant that it has been necessary to develop appropriate research tools that allow children to actively participate in co-constructed research in meaningful ways.



## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This piece of research can be seen to be situated within a paradigm of critical theory.

## **Ethical considerations**

The ethical concerns of working with young children have been addressed demonstrating that ethical clearance was sought and the principles applied. The UNCRC (1989) has led to an explosion of writing and research concerned with the rights of the child.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Research that recognises these rights is not without tensions and paradoxes with particular reference to power and voice. These concerns have been explored recognising that researchers need to develop the appropriate skills in order to work appropriately with children and gather data in co-constructed ways.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

As approaches to the construction of childhood and society's view of children and their place in society changes, then so too does the nature of children's roles in research, and the tools that we use in order to hear.

**Keywords:** sustained shared thinking; power; voice; methodologies; role-play

# **Whose Knowledge? Reflections on Narratives Co-Constructed in Children's Everyday Life**

ELINA VILJAMAA | University of Oulu, Finland

## **Co-author**

ANNA-MAIJA PUROILA | University of Oulu, Finland

## **Research aims**

The aim of this paper is to explore the ontological and epistemological assumptions involved in narrative research with young children.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Narrative research, having its roots in literary and linguistic research, has traditionally focused on adults' verbal stories. Narrative research with young children, especially in the pre-verbal phase of children's development, has been scarce.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Jerome Bruner (1986) argues, however, that narrating is a way for all human beings to construct knowledge. This view raises the question: How do young children construct knowledge through narrating?

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Our studies focus on children's (0-6) narrating in day care centre and home contexts. Our research material consists of multiform narrative episodes. Instead of limiting the focus on verbal modes of children's narrating we have explored various kinds of actions and communications in children's everyday life settings.

## **Ethical considerations**

Research ethics in our studies is based on relational moral.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The findings of our studies highlight children's narrating as embodied and aesthetic, and involving senses, emotions, imagination, and thinking. Moreover, narrating appears as a co-construction process between children and other interlocutors, and as intertwined with the context of narrating. Therefore, narratives neither represent children's authentic voices nor provide insights into the individual constructions of children's knowledge.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Our studies suggest critically reconsidering whose knowledge is produced in these narrative research processes. Though there is a tendency to conceal the researcher, we argue that the researcher's influence is present throughout the research process.

**Keywords:** narrative knowing; narratives; co-construction; children; adults

# SYMPOSIA SET E

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30  
16.15-17.45

## E1 CO-CREATING SERVICES WITH PARENTS: INNOVATIVE PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND

Self-organised symposium

Chair: DIANNE JACKSON | University of Western Sydney, Australia

This symposium presents research and innovative practices that put parents at the heart of service development and delivery. The first paper describes the parent led establishment of a unique, non-professional early childhood home-visiting program in Australia. The second paper presents the preliminary findings of an Australian research study that is examining parents experiences of participation in a parent-facilitated parenting program. The last paper presents parent's views on professionally facilitated services for children and parents together, based on research conducted in England and Australia. The symposium uses parents views and experiences to highlight guiding principles for practitioners working and co-creating services with parents.

### Parents and Practitioners Co-Creating a New Home Visiting Program

DIANNE JACKSON | University of Western Sydney, Australia

#### Research aims

The aim of this paper is to describe the parent/practitioner co-creation of an unique, non-professional home-visiting program at Connect Child and Family Services in Australia. It outlines how parents instigated a program for other parents and worked alongside practitioners to develop training and support systems to initiate the program's implementation. The program uses non-professional volunteers to provide in-home support that is initiated by parents and focuses on early childhood play and development, and social contact. Formative evaluation to date has focused on parent's experiences of developing the program and on parent users experiences of participation. This data is used to explore guiding principles for working with parents.

#### Relationship to previous research works

The program is underpinned by research that shows that parents are more able to build secure attachments with their children and be more confident in their own abilities to care for children, when they are supported and nurtured themselves (Jackson, 2010, Munford&Sanders,2006).

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The program is based on the following theoretical and conceptual frameworks Participatory practice (Dunst & Trivette 1996) Funds of Knowledge (Gonzalez et.al. 2001) Parent Support and agency (Vandenbroeck et.al. 2009)

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Formative evaluation to date has used data gathered through qualitative surveys, semi-structured interviews and informal parent feedback

#### Ethical considerations

The development, delivery and voluntary participation in the formative evaluation of the program has been within the formal policies and procedures of Connect Child and Family Services.

#### Main finding or discussion

A practice informed discussion on the co-creation and implementation of a program with and for parents.

#### Implications, practice or policy

Exploration of guiding principles for practitioners working and co-creating services with parents.

**Keywords:** parents; co-creating services; participatory practice; agency; practitioners

### Parent to Parent: Transformations in Parenting Education

PAUL PRICHARD | University of Western Sydney, Australia

FRIDAY  
30  
E  
SYMPOSIA

### **Research aims**

This research aims to investigate parent experiences of participating in a parent-centred, peer led EPEC parenting program, developed in England and being piloted in Australia. It examines parent perceptions of the impact of the program personally, and on their social relations. In particular, it seeks to learn about the apprehensions, perceptions, transformations and impact on parenting behaviours and relationships of parents participating in the program. It also assists in developing principles for working with parents.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This qualitative research builds on Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities: A randomised controlled trial of a peer-led parenting programme (Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, 2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is underpinned by the following: Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1982); Person Centred Approaches (Rogers, 1979); Structural Family Therapy (Minuchin, 1998); Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Approach (1979).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Ecological and constructivist theory provide broad perspectives for the study that are useful in the examination of the interrelatedness of relationships and culture, as they relate to parents' experiences of a peer led parenting course.

### **Ethical considerations**

This research is being undertaken as a post-graduate study and has satisfied all criteria of the Ethics Committee of the University of Western Sydney.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings from the data indicate that the program provides opportunities for transformation in participants' perceptions of themselves as parents and on their parenting relationships.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Consideration of the benefit of supervised peer-led interventions. Exploration of parent facilitator - practitioner relationship and opportunities that arise for transformational practice. Guiding principles for working with parents.

**Keywords:** peer-led; parenting course; transformational practice; working with parents; parent perspectives

## **An Exploration of Shared Principles and Purposes in Practitioner Supported Playgroups in Australia and England**

MARTIN NEEDHAM | University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

The research aims to compare case studies of supported playgroups in England and Australia to identify principles for working in partnership with parents.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The builds on previous work by Needham and Jackson (2010) and seeks to show how a Praxeological framework (Formosinho and Formosinho 2012) might enhance relationships with Parents (Whalley et al 2007).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Social cultural research processes were used to explore how stakeholders articulated their participation in supported playgroups.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Both studies draw from qualitative interviews with practitioners and parents to explore their expectations and aspirations in joint activities.

### **Ethical considerations**

The studies in both countries were approved by university ethical procedures and sought to develop respectful co-constructive dialogues with parents and practitioners.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The case studies document the practitioners' growing awareness of the need to offer flexible and responsive support for parents. Parents valued the quality of the opportunities offered by the groups to offer social and creative opportunities for their children and a nurturing social space for themselves.

## Implications, practice or policy

with increasing pressure from policy makers to deliver set programmes the paper argues the value of a praxeological approach in developing flexible and nurturing two way learning spaces.

**Keywords:** parents; practitioners; praxeology; principles; nurturing

## E2 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Self-organised symposium

Chair: WENDY GOFF | Monash University, Australia

This symposium presents findings from three Australian partnerships. Presentation one will introduce a conceptual framework used in developing and maintaining partnerships between families and teachers, including the affordances that this framework has provided in recognising the diversity, knowledge and skills of individuals as they come together to support the learning of children. Presentation two presents findings from a three-year partnership focusing on children's mathematical development. Findings presented will provide insight into the development of a powerful artefact, the Reflective Continua, including the opportunities that the continua provides in relation to prior-to-school and school educators working together on an important conceptual task. Presentation three reports on an important component of partnership: communication. Findings from five cases are presented, demonstrating that preschool-to-school communication is not a simple, linear process. For enhanced communication between preschools and schools, policies must take into account the varying influences within these contexts.

## Mathematics, Diversity and Partnership as Children Start School

WENDY GOFF | Monash University, Australia

### Research aims

To explore the lived experience of partnership as children make the transition to school, To explore the implications of partnership in relation to the mathematical learning of children, To gain an understanding of the processes required in establishing and maintaining partnerships that focus on mathematical learning as children start school.

### Relationship to previous research works

This work builds on previous mathematics education and transition to school research.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The project draws on the conceptual framework of the cultural interface. The cultural interface opens up new ways of thinking by providing a way to work with different knowledge systems, sometimes opposite knowledge systems, in a non-oppositional way (Nakata, 2007).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Design-based research has afforded an opportunity to not only explore how diverse individuals come together to support mathematical learning as children start school, but also an opportunity to draw on a variety of methods as this process has emerged (Barab & Squire, 2004, The Design-Based Research Group, 2003).

### Ethical considerations

Appropriate ethical considerations have been met, including university and departmental ethics approval.

### Main finding or discussion

The presentation discusses the utilisation of the conceptual lens of the cultural interface, including the affordances that it has provided in recognising diversity and the knowledge, skill and expertise of unique individuals (families, pre-school teachers and first year of school teachers) as they come together to support the learning of children.

### Implications, practice or policy

1. Presents a way to work with different knowledge systems, sometimes opposite knowledge systems, in a non-oppositional way.
2. Provides insight into the lived experience of partnership as children start school

**Keywords:** transition; mathematics; diversity; partnership; school

## Early Childhood Educators Reflecting on Their Children's Mathematics

BOB PERRY | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### Co-authors

SUE DOCKETT | Charles Sturt University, Australia

WENDY GOFF | Monash University, Australia

### Research aims

In the context of new national curricula in Australian prior-to-school and school settings, to assist early childhood educators in both prior-to-school and school settings reflect on how they can develop powerful mathematical ideas in their children

### Relationship to previous research works

This work builds on previous mathematics education and transition to school work of the authors and others, as well as work on the importance of educators' pedagogical reflection.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Three theoretical and conceptual frameworks are brought together:

- young children are powerful mathematicians;
- teachers, and particularly their pedagogical reflection are important in fostering these powerful mathematical ideas;
- learning stories can facilitate teacher reflection.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Over a period of three years, early childhood educators and the researchers in South Australia developed Reflective Continua to assist educators reflect on their children's mathematical development. Each continuum considers a mathematical idea across four levels, illustrated by learning stories and other work samples from prior-to-school and school children. Evaluation of the Reflective Continua against the two new national Australian curricula for the early years has been undertaken through practitioner trials.

### Ethical considerations

Appropriate ethical considerations have been met, including university ethics approval, pseudonyms and anonymisation of photographs used.

### Main finding or discussion

The main findings of this research are the Reflective Continua - interactive teacher reflection tools which will be demonstrated during the presentation.

### Implications, practice or policy

- teachers more able to reflect on their children's learning and their own pedagogy in mathematics;
- model for prior-to-school and school educators working together on an important conceptual task;
- plans for the Reflective Continua to be disseminated across Australia by mathematics and early childhood education professional associations are being finalized.

**Keywords:** early childhood educators; mathematics; transition to school; reflection; learning stories

## Influences on Communication Between Preschool and School Educators at the Time of Childrens' Transitions to School

KATHRYN HOPPS | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### Research aims

To investigate communication between preschool and school educators at the time of children's transitions to school.

### Relationship to previous research works

Transition to school literature has suggested that communication between children's preschool and school educators is important in supporting children's transitions to school. Previous communication research has revealed the problematic and complex nature of professional communication.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory underpins this research which is situated in the preschool-school mesosystem. The research also draws upon models of communication including that of Shannon & Weaver.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is an integrated mixed method study. Five cases of preschool-school communication in specific contexts are presented with data from multiple sources, gathered using communication audit data collection techniques.

## **Ethical considerations**

The requirements of university ethics approval have been met in this study. All sites and people are described and named in ways through which they cannot be identified.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The five cases show that communication between preschools and schools is impacted by a multitude of influences including the discourses of marketing schools and children's readiness, and the institutional privileging of particular forms of knowledge about children. These shape the motives, nature and outcomes of communication.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Preschool-school communication is not a simple, linear process of sending and receiving messages between children's educators. For enhanced communication between preschools and schools, policies guiding practice must take into account the vast array of influences on communication that exist in preschool and school contexts.

**Keywords:** transition; communication; educators; ecological systems theory; mixed methods

# **E3 CHILDMINDING PRACTICES, EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: CHRISTINE STEPHEN | University of Stirling, United Kingdom

Childminders offer a distinctive form of ECEC and are responsible for a significant proportion of childcare places in the UK. In some areas a place with a childminder is being offered as part of an early intervention programme. However, we know little about the everyday experiences of children and their childminders and in particular the ways in which this form of provision can support the development of children under three. We bring together three papers to examine what we know about childminding practices and the ways in which childminders' values and beliefs shape their practices and the experiences of parents and children. We begin with a critical review of the existing literature (Paper 1) before presenting the methods we developed to explore the childminding setting and our findings about the everyday practices which frame children's experiences (Paper 2). Paper 3 examines the characteristics of childminding settings that support development.

## **A Critical Review of the Research on Childminding**

LYNN ANG | University of London, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper offers a critical review of the research on childminding and other home-based childcare services. It aims to explore:

1. the issues and debates that characterise research about childminding
2. the skills and competencies that characterise effective childminders
3. the everyday experiences of young children in childminding and similar home-based settings

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research over the past ten years indicates the disparate selection of studies undertaken on childminding and other home-based services that are often limited in scope and focus. This paper reviews previous research to identify gaps and new lines of enquiry.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This paper adopts a sociocultural framework, acknowledging the mediating role of adults and the material environment on the development of children. It explores the potential for childminding settings to serve as specialised forms of care which can positively influence and support children's learning and development.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is an in-depth critical review of published work, beginning from a database of literature published since 1990. Specific criteria were used to identify relevant papers, which were then categorised according to substantive themes.

## **Ethical considerations**

Initial responsibility for ethical practices lies with the authors of the original work but we have been careful to respect their intentions and make our review processes transparent.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings will note the dearth of evidence about the nature of children's experiences in childminding settings and the need for further research on effective childminding practices.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This review points to a gap in research on childminding practices and children's experiences, with implications for evaluating effective practice in home-based childcare settings.

**Keywords:** childminding; home-based childcare; children's experiences; sociocultural; early years

## **The Insiders' Experiences of Childminding**

CHRISTINE STEPHEN | University of Stirling, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

In this study of childminding practices our aim was to explore childminders' everyday practices, their ways of interacting with children and parents and the relationship between their activities and their understandings about their role.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

We draw on our earlier work on the culture of practice and employ methods previously used to explore the perspectives of all stakeholders.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

We draw on socio-cultural theories of learning to consider the mediating role of the adult and the environment and on contextualist theories of development for the analysis of the impact of care-giver practices, values and beliefs.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This was an exploratory study involving ten childminders. Their perspectives on their role were explored through semi-structured interviews. The childminding environment was explored through 'text diaries', systematic observations and established scales.

### **Ethical considerations**

As observations were carried out in the childminders' homes we had to differentiate between public and private spaces, obtain informed consent from childminders and the parents of all children attending and ensure that children always assented to our observations. Data collection and the presentation of findings respected the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings from this study are reported in terms of structural and process features. The relationship between practices and childminder values and beliefs will be described and links between these features and established work on high quality group and maternal care will be explored.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

There are implications for training in the kind of practices associated with high quality ECEC. The study raises issues for policymakers about assuring the quality of childminder provision.

**Keywords:** childminders; perception of role; everyday practices; children's experiences; parents' perspectives

## **Characteristics of Childminding Settings That Promote Development**

LIZ BROOKER | University of London, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper aims to consider how being cared for by a childminder supports the development of children under three years old living in challenging circumstances. It draws on a review of childminding literature (Paper 1) and the perspectives of parents gathered in a study of childminder provision (Paper 2).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This work follows from work reported in EECERA 2011 on childminders' perspectives of their practice

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Socio-cultural theory underpins our conceptualisation of development and contextualist thinking shapes our understanding of the influence of home and family.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper is the product of two complementary approaches:

- a critical appraisal of the relevant literature identified in our review
- semi-structured interviews with 10 parents of children being cared for by childminders under an early intervention programme. To illustrate our discussion we also draw on the systematic observation of practices and interactions between childminders and children reported in paper 2.

## **Ethical considerations**

The processes involved in our review of the literature are transparent and respect the intentions of other authors. The empirical work and dissemination of findings was careful to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the parents and the childminding settings involved.

## **Main finding or discussion**

We will present our analysis of the features of childminder care which promote the positive development of young children and of the relationships and parent and carer perspectives which facilitate or inhibit the success of this provision.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

This paper has implications for the practices of childminders caring for vulnerable children and for the design of early intervention strategies.

**Keywords:** childminding; environment; caregiving; under-3; development

# **E4 THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE NETHERLANDS**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: MARJOLEIN DOBBER | VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands

Since the 1980s, Developmental Education has been developed in close collaboration between practitioners and researchers starting from Vygotskian cultural-historical theory. More than 5% of schools in the Netherlands have engaged in some form of Developmental Education. Central to this approach is play in the context of social-cultural practices. Engaging children in meaningful activities enhances their cognitive, social, motivational and meta-cognitive development. The role of the teacher is complex, as he or she has to take the children's interest, mandatory goals and own personal ambitions into account in creating meaningful learning environments. This symposium focuses on how teachers in Developmental Education can be helped to improve teaching activities and results for young children. The first presentation gives insight into the relationship between talk and mathematics. The second presentation focuses on the results of training teachers on pupils outcomes. The last presentation shows how engaging in inquiry groups can improve teachers' practices.

## **From Talking to Mathematizing**

BERT VAN OERS | VU University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

### **Research aims**

The aim of the research is to clarify the nature of the productive relationship between young children's speech and the formation of mathematical thinking ("mathematising").

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research on the relationship between language and mathematising already has a long tradition (see for example the work of Pimm, Sfard, Davydov). Usually this research focused on learning to apply relevant mathematical words. Our research concentrates on the production of mathematical texts by young children with the help of the teacher (Narrativity).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework of the studies draws from Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, combined with ideas from Freudenthal on mathematising and Realistic Mathematics Education

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research paradigm of the presented studies is based on case-studies in everyday classroom practices. Video-data are qualitatively analysed and described.



## **Ethical considerations**

As the presented studies registered everyday classrooms that belong to the regular responsibility of the teacher, no special measures had to be taken to warrant the observance of basic ethical rules. The teacher gave her consent for filming. In the presentation all personal data are anonymised, or presented with explicit consent of teacher and parents.

## **Main finding or discussion**

One of the main findings of the research project so far is that both the appropriation of mathematical communicative tools (number words, symbols, schemes), and coherent talk (“narrative”) about numbers with young children is a constitutive dimension of emergent mathematical thinking in the early grades.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Early years teachers must spend time in mathematizing and communicating with children ABOUT numbers and relationships, rather than only focus on errorless talk with numbers

**Keywords:** narrativity; mathematising; communication; number; developmental education

# **Improving the Vocabulary of Young Children by Means of Inquiry Groups of Teachers**

TONNY BRUIN | De Activiteit, Netherlands

## **Research aims**

The aim was to improve the vocabulary of young children by means of an inquiry group of teachers in an elementary school in the Netherlands.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

This study builds on previous research on teacher inquiry, for example by Mercer, Wells and Engeström.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework is cultural-historical theory, the focus lies on the link between dialogic inquiry of teachers and the development of vocabulary by young children.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The ‘spiral of knowing’ from Wells was used as an instrument to guide the dialogic inquiry process of a group of teachers at an elementary school. The aim of this process was to increase the vocabulary of the children, the teachers studied this outcome themselves. The researcher interviewed the teachers and studied their inquiry process. An analysis of the research process of the group of teachers and the results on vocabulary of young children is presented.

## **Ethical considerations**

Member checks were used to make sure that the teachers recognized themselves in the analysis of the researcher, and data are presented anonymously.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The teachers of the inquiry group reported that results in terms of vocabulary of the pupils in their classrooms were better than the results of other teachers in the school.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

All teachers in a school should work together as an inquiry group, as own experiences are crucial in changing teachers’ behavior. Also, the data made clear that in an inquiry process of teachers, it is important to give explicit attention to investigating the results of pupils to provoke real, measurable profit for children.

**Keywords:** developmental education; cultural-historical theory; inquiry of teachers; vocabulary; spiral of knowing

# **Theory and Practice of Developmental Education for Young Children in the Netherlands**

MARJOLEIN DOBBER | VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands

## **Co-author**

LEVINEKE VAN DER MEER | National Centre for Developmental Education, Netherlands

## Research aims

We will give an overview of recent research in the context of Developmental Education in which the results of the Starting Blocks training for teachers on pupils' outcomes are measured. This training is given to groups of teachers over a longer period of time, during the training learning sessions are followed by in-school consultations in which both teacher and pupil development is monitored.

## Relationship to previous research works

We elaborate on previous work in the context of Developmental Education by Van Oers, Wardekker, Janssen-Vos and Pompert.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical framework of this study lies in cultural-historical activity theory.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

We will present a literature review on the influence of the Starting Blocks training on the learning of young children and development of teachers. The focus will be on the effects of Starting Blocks in terms of the language development, narrative competence and mathematical thinking of young children.

## Ethical considerations

In the research that is reviewed, ethical considerations have been taken into account, for example by presenting data anonymously.

## Main finding or discussion

We conclude that Starting Blocks, by its Vygotskian manner of training, has great potential in stimulating the development of both children and teachers.

## Implications, practice or policy

We aim to further develop Developmental Education and the Starting Blocks training and support the schools and teachers that are working with it in practice. It can also be seen as a good practice that might be implemented in schools in other countries.

**Keywords:** developmental education; learning outcomes; cultural-historical theory; review study; play activities

## E5 PROMOTING INTEGRATIVE WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Self-organised symposium

Chair: NINA SAJANIEMI | University of Helsinki, Finland

This symposium highlights the importance of pedagogical sensitivity in promoting integrative well-being and preventing social exclusion in children. New perspectives in defining well-being are discussed and routines to enhance pedagogical sensitivity in teachers are described. Symposium focuses on the importance of stress regulation on children's social orientation and peer relationships. In addition, the interplay of teacher's work-related well-being and quality of early childhood education is presented.

## Supporting Early Social Inclusion Through Enhancing Pedagogical Sensitivity in Day-Care

JUKKA MÄKELÄ | National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland

### Co-authors

NINA SAJANIEMI | University of Helsinki, Finland

EIRA SUHONEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

ALISA ALIJOKI | University of Helsinki, Finland

## Research aims

To promote child well-being and prevent early social exclusion through enhancing pedagogical sensitivity of teachers of under three year olds in day-care. Pedagogical sensitivity in turn enhances play and learning through minimizing child stress.

## Relationship to previous research works

Part of the LASSO-project supported by the Academy of Finland

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The context both of learning and creative play in small children is the relationships to adults and peers. Being an accepted part of the group and getting sensitive support from the adults in charge are crucial elements of child well-being. Well-being is a state of relatively low stress, in which play, prosocial behavior and intent participation in learning are all supported. Pedagogical sensitivity is defined as the capacity of the teacher to recognize and react to the signals a child gives both of his/her intentions and need for support

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

PedaSens is a five-time intervention to increase emotional availability. It uses teaching material supported by video-demonstrations. The material covers dimensions of interpersonal development (individual needs for stress co-regulation, development in relational micro-situations, and centrality of play and intent participation). Children's stress-levels are monitored through salivary cortisol-measurements, and pedagogical sensitivity through video assessments of teachers in normal activities.

## **Ethical considerations**

There is parental involvement, no extra stress for the children and teachers receive strong support

## **Main finding or discussion**

The presentation will cover the theoretical underpinnings of pedagogical sensitivity, demonstrate video-material being used and describe pilot experiences in day-care centers of northern Helsinki.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

When successful, the PedaSens-intervention could be a low-cost method easy to disseminate around Finland and abroad to support positive child development.

**Keywords:** pedagogical sensitivity; stress; interpersonal development; emotional availability; social inclusion

# **Children's Orientation, Stress and Quality of Early Childhood Education**

NINA SAJANIEMI | University of Helsinki, Finland

## **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to find out the relationships between children's stress, social orientation and qualities of learning environment. The study involved 55 children in five day centres in Finland. Baseline saliva samples for measuring cortisol (stress) levels were collected five times during the day. Children were interviewed to measure their orientation in regard to perceived change. The educators of the groups evaluated the learning environment qualities.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

It is known that quality of early childhood education affects on children's ability to regulate stress reactions.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretical framework is integrative and multidisciplinary.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Mixed method are used in evaluating complex relationships between children's social orientation, stress reactivity and environmental qualities.

## **Ethical considerations**

The research plan has been processed and accepted by ethical committee of human studies in Helsinki University.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The high cortisol levels at the wake-up time were correlated with chaotic, hectic and emotionally restricted learning environment qualities. However, in the afternoon, the correlations between cortisol levels and the learning environment had disappeared and were replaced by children's orientation to change. Children with more accommodative views had lower cortisol levels and children with uncertain views had higher cortisol levels. The children's different orientations seem to impact their stress levels and participate in the production of the learning environment stressful qualities.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings implicate the importance of social orientation on stress responses. Understanding the relationship between stress, orientation and environment quality can help to create learning environments that boost development and prevent social exclusion.

**Keywords:** stress; cortisol; early childhood education; learning environment; social orientation

# Educators' Stress and Well-Being and Their Associations to the Quality of Care in Integrated Special Daycare Groups

MARI NISLIN | University of Helsinki, Finland

## Research aims

Aim is to examine educators' stress and well-being and their associations to the quality of learning environment in special daycare groups. Work conditions in special groups are considered demanding, hence, they may negatively effect on educator's well-being and the quality of care. However, the work may also arouse positive emotions that lead to work engagement

## Relationship to previous research works

-

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Positive and negative indicators of educators' work-related well-being are analyzed by using Job-demands and resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006) as a theoretical framework.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The participants are 72 educators from 25 special day care groups in southern Finland. The quality of learning environment was assessed by trained professionals using The Learning Environment Assessment tool (Strain & Joseph 2004). The evaluation focused on classroom arrangement, schedules and transitions, classroom activities, team planning and behavior plans. Day caregivers' physiological stress levels were assessed by measuring salivary cortisol. The saliva samples were collected during one work day and one weekend day. Due to the diurnal fluctuation of cortisol levels in humans, a total of five samples per day were collected from each subject. Further work-related well-being was assessed utilizing self-report questionnaires measuring work engagement (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale: Hakanen, 2009) and burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory: Kalimo, Hakanen & Toppinen-Tanner, 2006).

## Ethical considerations

The study participants have given their written informed consent. Ethical approval has been received from the Ethics Committee on Human Studies of University of Helsinki.

## Main finding or discussion

Analyzing the data is in progress and the results will be published in summer 2013

## Implications, practice or policy

-

**Keywords:** work-related wellbeing; cortisol; job demands and resources; stress; quality of daycare

## E6 AGGRESSION AND BULLYING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Self-organised symposium

Chair: PETER SMITH | University of London, United Kingdom

Although bullying is most commonly studied in later primary and secondary school children, its origins lie in earlier childhood. There are controversies around whether the normal definition of bullying applies at young ages, and there are important cultural differences too. Research in these areas is important for prevention and intervention work. The three papers in this symposium cover observations of the nature of peer victimization in preschool (Monks), a study from the non-western context of South Korea (Lee), and an emphasis on prevention (Repo). Discussion comes from a practical perspective (Stoltzmann-Frankenhaeuser)

## The Group Nature of Peer-Victimisation in Preschool, an Observational Study

CLAIRE MONKS | University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

## Co-author

PETER SMITH | University of London, United Kingdom

## Research aims

To examine the group nature of peer-victimisation among preschool children using an observational method.

### **Relationship to previous research works:**

During middle childhood and adolescence bullying appears to be a group process, involving various members of the peer-group taking different prosocial and antisocial roles in bullying (Sutton et al., 1999, Salmivalli et al., 1996). However, peer-reports with younger children (4-6 years) have failed to identify the roles of Assistant (to the bully) or Reinforcer with any reliability (e.g. Monks & Smith, 2010). It has been suggested that this may either reflect limitations in young children's cognitive capacity to identify these more peripheral roles, or it may indicate that peer-victimisation is a more dyadic process among younger children. This observational study aimed to address this issue.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The development of children's relationships and peer-victimisation.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A time-sampling method was employed to conduct observations of 60 children aged 4 and 5 years in free-play activities at school.

### **Ethical considerations**

The research was approved by the University of Greenwich Research Ethics Committee and followed the guidelines set by the British Psychological Society.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results are examined in relation to the behaviour of children during episodes of peer-victimisation during free-play and the regularity with which children take different roles in peer-victimisation.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings are discussed in relation to furthering our understanding of the development of peer-victimisation among young children. Implications are drawn from this for the development of intervention and prevention work with young children.

**Keywords:** peer-victimisation; preschool; aggression; children; observation

## **Origins of Bullying-Like Behavior in South Korea**

SEUNG-HA LEE | Uiduk University, South Korea

### **Research aims**

This study investigated young children's bullying-like behaviours from multiple perspectives, and relationships between likeability and bullying roles (bully, victim, defender-stop, and defender-tell).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

There were a few studies investigating young children's bullying using multiple methods and no studies about likeability by different types of defending behaviour.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Bullying-like behaviours among young children are differently characterized from those of older children. Depending on informants, the behaviour can be seen differently.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

95 children in South Korean preschools participated. Peer, self, and teacher nominations were used for examining bullying roles in different types of aggression. Bullying roles and likeability were measured twice.

### **Ethical considerations**

If a child did not want to tell anymore about their experiences, s/he was not asked anymore and could stop at anytime.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Children reported themselves as victim and their peers as aggressors, which was very prominent for social exclusion. The aggressor was most stable in peer/teacher reports, but defender-stop was most stable in self reports. Children nominated as defender-tell were less accepted than children who did not.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings suggest needs for differentiated assessment of the defender and design of interventions at this age.

**Keywords:** bullying; aggression; South Korea; early childhood; defender

# Prevention of Bullying in Early Educational Settings: Pedagogical and Organizational Factors Related to Bullying

LAURA REPO | University of Helsinki, Finland

## Research aims

The aim of this research was to study the prevalence of bullying in early educational settings in Finnish kindergartens. The main aim was to find what kind of organizational and pedagogical practices used in kindergartens are related to bullying behavior and the prevention of bullying.

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous studies indicate that bullying is a severe problem in kindergarten environment and more research is needed to develop effective preventive practices. Kindergarten as an arena for bullying has not been investigated before.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The current study was guided by an ecological theoretical perspective of Bronfenbrenner, in which development results from the interactions of individuals and their environmental contexts. Also the theories about school bullying are used to determine bullying as a phenomenon.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire on bullying in early educational settings. The total number of respondents was 771 (58.5 %) in 135 kindergartens and in 366 different day-care groups (including 6910 children).

## Ethical considerations

By exaggerating the phenomenon, we could actually increase its prevalence and stigmatize individual children. It is important to recognize bullying behavior at the very beginning and, at the same time, be aware of the harmful effects of stigmatizing children.

## Main finding or discussion

The main result of the study is that bullying is related to the presence of an increased number of children with special education needs, to strict methods of punishment, and to the lack of expertise in how to intervene in bullying.

## Implications, practice or policy

The culture and the practices in the child group are significant in the terms of bullying.

**Keywords:** bullying; peer relationships; discipline; special education; bullying prevention

## E7 ELICITING VOICE - A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Self-organised symposium

Chair: AVRIL BROCK | Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

This symposium argues that eliciting voice is important to gain perspectives on early childhood education and care provision, practice and professionalism. The presenters have elicited the voices of ECEC professionals, students, children and parents. The empirical studies draw on varied data collection strategies to elicit the voices and thinking of these diverse participants. These data collection strategies comprise interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, video-reflective-dialogues, teacher/parent/child conversations. These multiple strategies underpinned the research approaches as they are key to eliciting holistic and varied perspectives on the participants' thinking.

## How Do Early Years Educators Sustain and Define Their Professionalism? A Methodological Approach to Eliciting Early Years Educators' Thinking

AVRIL BROCK | Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

### Research aims

There have been times during the last thirty-five years that early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals have perceived that their roles have been articulated by governments in ways that have displaced their professionalism. With new policy developments occurring in England it seems that there has never been a more important time for ECEC practitioners to establish their professionalism. This paper presents how longitudinal research elicited the voices and thinking of a sample of ECEC professionals in West Yorkshire, England and established a typology of their professionalism.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

The field of ECEC requires an articulate and highly qualified workforce and the ability to reflect on and evaluate practice is key to professionalism (Moyle, 2001; Hughes and Menmuir, 2002; Brock, 2006, 2013; and Brock and Rankin, 2011).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

'Teacher thinking' is an effective methodology to determine the thinking and knowledge of experienced ECEC professionals working in varied settings.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This empirical research was undertaken to elicit their knowledge through open-ended interviews, questionnaires, personal/professional time-lines, video-reflective-dialogues and focus group interviews. These varied data collection strategies are key to the research as they elicited holistic and varied perspectives on the participants' professionalism.

## **Ethical considerations**

The research acknowledges participants' confidentiality and anonymity.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The research gave the participants a voice and promoted recognition of the complexity of their role. The findings from the research generated a typology of professionalism for ECEC that comprises seven dimensions - knowledge, education, skills, autonomy, values, ethics and reward.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Listening to professionals is important for ECEC policy and practice.

**Keywords:** eliciting voice; professionalism; early childhood education and care; multiple approaches; typology

# **Aspects of the Teaching of Early Reading, Including Systematic Synthetic Phonics, Within the Context of an Initial Teacher Training Course in England**

BEV KEEN | Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

This research develops a critical understanding of the perceptions of final year Early Childhood Education students on the development of their competency and confidence in teaching early reading and systematic synthetic phonics.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

In the UK there is an increasing government focus on developing trainees' understanding of teaching early reading, including decoding using systematic synthetic phonics. Spear-Swerling and Brucker (2005, 333) identified that although trainees may be confident, fluent readers, the specialist knowledge required "is not an automatic consequence of adult literacy," whilst Coltheart and Prior (2007) research found that new teachers lacked confidence in teaching some aspects of phonics.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This empirical research used a multi-method approach. Qualitative data elicited student voice through focus discussion groups in tutorials and seminars, questionnaires before and after final teaching placement. Quantitative data established a detailed picture of the range of experiences on teaching placements.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The students' voices were elicited through a multi-method approach in order to achieve depth of their perspectives.

## **Ethical considerations**

The research acknowledged participants' confidentiality and anonymity.

**Main finding or discussion:** The research revealed there is a complex series of relationships between the trainees developing knowledge of subject specific and wider early years pedagogy. There is a significant gap between the participants' 'internalised' phonic knowledge, which is applied when they are reading, and the subject knowledge they require to teach a child to read and this affects their confidence and competency.

**Implications, practice or policy:** Listening to student voices and eliciting their perceptions promoted a review of the course to include a more explicit focus on developing students' own subject knowledge.

**Keywords:** teaching early reading; systematic synthetic phonics; early years pedagogy; initial teacher training students; eliciting voice

# Young Children as Competent Research Participants: Insights from a Study Exploring Children's Perspectives of Play During Their First Year at School

LIZ CHESWORTH | Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

## Research aims

This paper reports on research for a PhD thesis that used video as a means of listening to young children's perspectives of their play in an English reception class. The study aims to offer insights and approaches to actively involving children as participants in the research process.

## Relationship to previous research works

The dominant narrative of play in English classrooms is informed by the predetermined, outcome-led priorities of the current education system (Goouch, 2008; Rogers, 2010; Wood, 2010). This study aims to present an alternative narrative of play that focuses upon the insights gained from listening to children's perspectives (Mayall, 2000; Pascal and Bertram, 2009; Prout, 2000).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The research is informed by a sociocultural theoretical framework.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research methods respected children as active participants in selecting filmed footage of their play, and in framing the focus and context for subsequent video-stimulated conversations. The research conversations with children took place in school between peers and at home between family members.

## Ethical considerations

The paper will reflect upon some ethical considerations when using video in research with young children, and will discuss how Flewitt's (2005) notion of ongoing, negotiated consent was developed to respect the children's right to privacy.

## Main finding or discussion

Children's identities, relationships and resilience within their social and cultural worlds emerged as key themes in the research.

## Implications, practice or policy

The insights from children's perspectives offer an alternative framework for viewing play that carries implications for practice and policy in the early years classroom.

**Keywords:** play; early childhood education; identity; agency; children's perspectives

## E8 CHILDRENS AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Chair: ULLA HÄRKÖNEN | University of Eastern Finland, Finland

### Children – Active Participants and Members Now and in the Future

ULLA HÄRKÖNEN | University of Eastern Finland, Finland

#### Research aims

One of the modern topics on early childhood education in Finland is the question about how to educate children to be an actor and a participating member in young children's groups now and that for and in the future democratic society.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Studies on historic ideas on activity pedagogy, sociological studies on child-centred views on education, pedagogical studies on early childhood education; all from the point of participation of children. (Alanen 1988; 1998; Aries 1976; Bardy 1996), Dahlberg et.al. 2004; Kiilakoski 2007; Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan 2003; Sandberg & Eriksson 2010; Siljander 2005; Theobald & Kultti 2012; Treseder 1997; Wong et.al. 2010; Virkki 2013.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

General systems theory (Parsons, Rapoport), Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979; Penn 2005), Pedagogical



systems theory by Härkönen (productions 1983-2013), Systemic-constructivist pedagogical theory, Reich (2005)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The paradigm and the methodological approach will be objective hermeneutic (Oevermann et.al., 1979; 1983). The study is a qualitative one because of the textual data with its various meanings, which, however, are generating from the practical reality. The analyses will follow the rules of content analysis method.

### **Ethical considerations**

Normal and commons ethical principles are noticed. There are not any specific problematic ethical issues in this study.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The pedagogical systems theory has seen to act as a holistic theory for analyzing the concepts of participants and participation. The mentioned theory is powerful to show the possibilities and also the weakness of those concepts.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The pedagogical systems theory and the results are useful for educational practice, in teacher education and in whole cultural and societal thinking and policy.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; pedagogical systems theory; objective-hermeneutic approach; content analysis; participation of children

## **A Qualitative Study of Preschool Children's Wonder, Philosophizing and Lifeinterpretation**

HILDE MERETE AMUNDSEN | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **Research aims**

This presentation is based on an ongoing PhD. The aims of the research are to explore children's wonder, philosophizing and lifeinterpretations in Norwegian preschool in order to enhance a pedagogy of wonder based on children's perspectives.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research works indicates that children make strong efforts in interpreting and make meaning of their lives using different "languages" to express their thoughts (Amundsen, 1999, 2013).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework is based upon Hans-Georg Gadamer's perspectives on human life as a hermeneutical project, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology on perception and embodied consciousness and Shaun Gallagher on cognitive science and embodied cognition.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative research project. Ethnographic fieldwork in one preschool in two groups of 20 children each. Data are collected periodically from January to June 2012 using participant observation, video-observation, interviews/dialogues and photography.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study is notified to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) and approved to be carried out as planned. The collection of data in the preschool are approved by all the parents and each of them has given their written consent after being informed about the study. Personal information are depersonalized and are being kept confidential.

### **Main finding or discussion**

A hermeneutical- phenomenological analysis is in progress and because of that it is too early to present main findings, but the study indicates so far that children this age are strongly concerned about philosophical phenomena but that little weight are given by adults to children's thoughts and wonder.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results from the study will contribute to the research field concerning children's rights and participation in preschool.

**Keywords:** wonder; lifeinterpretation; participation; embodiment; mind

# Children's Memory of Their Involvement in a Participatory Project

COLETTE GRAY | Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

## Research aims

Aims to investigate children's memory of their participation in a smallscale research project, of the processes involved and their school preferences.

## Relationship to previous research works

This paper reviews children's participation reported in a paper published as: Gray, C. & Winter, E. (2011)Hearing voices: participatory research with preschool children with and without disabilities. Journal: European Early Childhood Education Research JournalVolume 19, Issue 3, 309-320 Gray & Winter (2011). The Ethics of Participatory Research Involving Young Children with Special Needs. In D. Harcourt, B. Perry

& T. Waller. Researching young children's perspectives: ethics and dilemmas of educational research with children.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) provides the overarching conceptual framework and the social constructivist model the research lens. This theory acknowledges the symbiotic and reciprocal relationship that exists between the child and their environment.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The study adopts an interpretivist ontology in which reality is understood from the perspectives and experiences of the research participants. The design was qualitative and included: focus groups, drawings and artefacts from the child's preschool

## Ethical considerations

Prior to our discussions with the children, permission was sought from a number of stake holder groups including the school principal, class teachers and the participating children. Permission was sought from the children before and during each small group discussion.

## Main finding or discussion

The work is not yet complete. Findings will be reported at the conference.

## Implications, practice or policy

This study offers a unique insight into children's memory of their participation in a smallscale research project. Findings will serve to inform the participatory paradigm.

**Keywords:** participatory research; children's memory; school; preschool; transitions

## E9 CHILDRENS' SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Chair: MARITA NEITOLA | University of Turku, Finland

### Parents' Influence on Children's Social Competence

MARITA NEITOLA | University of Turku, Finland

#### Research aims

This study aims to clarify how parents perceive their children's social ability and how parents try to build up social capacity, as well as to compare possible differences in parents' perceptions and pedagogies. The purpose of this research is to investigate differences in parent influence models among children with peer problems and children with no problems in peer relations. This presentation focus on the parents' teaching and guiding their children's social skills.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Earlier findings tell that parents' direct and indirect influences have a significant effect on quality of social competence (Ladd 2005; Parke 2004.)

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Social competence includes many dimensions, e.g. the social skills (Ladd 2005). Parents' influences can be indirect or direct. Direct influence comprises parents' roles as designers, mediators, supervisors and consultants in developing the child's social competence, e.g., social skills.



### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This research is based on data from questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaire data (N=156) was collected when children were six years old and a statistical method was used to analyze this data. Thematic interviews (N=55) were conducted with parents when the children were at the age of seven. Content analysis was used to produce qualitative data.

### **Ethical considerations**

The parents were interviewed individually by their permission. Their personal details are not revealed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The parents differed from each other in parenting styles and practices. The parents of the children with peer problems are more controlling and utilized shallow teaching and guiding methods.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Parents need more support and tools from practitioners and social services to improve their parenting and teaching methods.

**Keywords:** children; parents; social competence; parenting practices; parenthood

## **Group Size as Structural Quality Indicator in ECEC – Does it Matter? Effects on Children’s Social Competence and Externalizing Behaviour in a Norwegian Context**

THOMAS MOSER | Vestfold University College, Norway

### **Co-authors**

HENRIK DAAE ZACHRISSON | University of Oslo, Norway

AGATHE BACKER-GRØNDAHL | University of Oslo, Norway

TERJE OGDEN | University of Oslo, Norway

ANE NÆRDE | University of Oslo, Norway

### **Research aims**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relation between group size and age group composition and children’s social competence and externalizing behaviour in early childhood institutions in Norway.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

International studies indicate that there is a relationship between group size and behavioural and social problems. Quantitative and longitudinal research on this topic in the Nordic countries is rather rare.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Social-ecological, relational, temperamental, biological and genetic factors influence children’s social development, directly or through continuous interpersonal interactions with significant others.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study builds on selected data (n=770 children) from the longitudinal Behavior Outlook Norwegian Developmental Study (BONDS). Social competence is measured by a Norwegian adaptation of Social Skills Rating System and externalizing behaviour by self-composed items at 24, 36, and 48 months of age. Different statistical models has been applied to investigate how structural quality features such as group size and composition, may influence child outcomes.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participation was based on the parents’ voluntary and written consent. The study has been approved by the Regional Committee for Medical Research Ethics and the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The analysis of the data is pt. still on going. Preliminary findings indicate that children enrolled in smaller groups, and attending age homogenous groups are assessed significantly higher on social competence by staff members than children in larger and heterogeneous groups.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The results of this study may be of significant importance for policy development and the organization of the pedagogical services for the youngest children in Norway.

**Keywords:** social behaviour; externalizing behaviour; group size and composition; longitudinal study; Norwegian

ECEC institutions

## **Development of Social Competence of Early Age Child**

OLGA PLAKHOTNAYA | The Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, Russia

### **Research aims**

The aim of this work is to develop a model of early child education, based on the development of social competence. Objectives: examine approaches to socio-emotional development of the young child, to analyze the characteristics of programs and technologies. Develop a model of a child's learning, based on the development of social competence and test it on the center of the playing contingent child support.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The work will be based on the study of difficulties of establishing interactions between mother and child.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretical and conceptual framework of the study are to communicate the concept of ontogeny M.I.Lisinoy, the activity approach D.B.Elkonin and psychoanalytic theory of Z.Freud, A. Freud, attachment theory J.Bowlby, concept of R.Spitz.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Cultural-historical concept of L.S.Vygotsky. The theory of interaction, J.Bowlby's attachment theory. The study will be used specially organized episodes of mother-child interaction, based on the methods of contact improvisation. In study will be used special tests child-parent interaction.

### **Ethical considerations**

Psychological care for mothers in establishing interaction with the child, using a specially organized sessions which is based on the methods of dance therapy.

### **Main finding or discussion**

At present there is no model of teaching young children, taking into account the complexity of adaptation to the new environment of children and their separation from the mother and the formation of socio-emotional component of development. Therefore, the study will develop a model that helps the child entering into a new social environment of preschool.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The developed model can be used in public and private child development centers due to the partial absence important lines of the proposed in programmes of education for children.

**Keywords:** social development; emotional development; adaptation; separation; social competence of the child



## **E10 LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT**

Chair: KRISTINA NUGIN | Tallinn University, Estonia

### **Language Learning in the Womb: Do Swedish and German Newborns Cry Differently?**

ANNETTE PROCHNOW | University of Wuerzburg, Germany

#### **Co-authors**

SOLY ERLANDSSON | University West, Sweden

KATHLEEN WERMKE | University of Wuerzburg, Germany

#### **Research aims**

Language acquisition is one of the most important developmental processes in early childhood. As "citizens of the world" children can learn any language in the world. The aim of the study was to investigate the acoustical features of Swedish and German newborn cries regarding language-specific features.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The last trimester of pregnancy, fetuses are sensitive for acoustical stimuli, mainly prosodic language features. Beside this perceptual sensitivity, it has been shown that the melody of newborn cries is a precursor for language acquisition. Recent research demonstrated that the cry melody contours of newborns already reflect language-

specific characteristics.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The prosody of the ambient language influences the newborns cry melody, possibly by vocal learning based on biological predispositions. The prosody of Swedish is different from that of German. The prosodic features, perceived by the fetus in the womb, may be reflected in certain features of newborn cries.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Cries from 134 Swedish and German healthy newborns were audio-recorded during spontaneous parent-child interactions. Using signal analysis methods the structural “prosodic” patterns of 4702 cries were categorized based on the melody contours.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study has been performed with the approval of the ethics committees (Regional Ethical Review Boards/ Gothenburg)

### **Main finding or discussion**

Compared to the German newborns, the Swedish newborns produced significantly more complex melody structures . This difference may reflect the prenatal exposure to the native language.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings help to sensitize awareness of practitioners/parents regarding early language development of infants. Furthermore, they build the foundation for the development of methods of early diagnosis for children at risk for speech/language impairments.

**Keywords:** infant cry; newborn; prenatal environmental imprinting; language development; cross-linguistic

## **Assessing the Quality of Teacher-Student Interactions – Theoretical and Empirical Findings in Germany**

ANDREA STUCK | University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

### **Co-authors**

SUSANNA ROUX | University of Education Weingarten, Germany

GISELA KAMMERMEYER | University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

### **Research aims**

The study examined the reliability and validity of the “Classroom Assessment Scoring System” (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008) in a German preschool setting. Another aim is to describe the quality of interactions in the language-support-groups in German preschools.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In the German context there has been no adequate observational tool, which can measure the quality of interactions reliably between teachers and children in assisting-situations. As part of a German study that evaluates language-support in preschools, the CLASS was used to assess the quality of the interaction between language-support-teachers and children in the domains “emotional support”, “classroom organization” and “instructional support”.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theory and research concerning research on classroom quality. Recent studies verify how important an effective teacher-child-interaction is for the children’s outcome (Downer et al., 2012).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The data are drawn from 61 language-support-groups in German preschools. The groups was videotaped, each videotape was rated by a trained observer. The presentation will discuss whether the CLASS is also applicable in a German preschool setting and whether the CLASS consists the methodological requirements.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participation was voluntary and in compliance with data protection rules.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings provide support that the CLASS is a reliable and valid observation tool which can measure the quality of interactions between teachers and children in assisting-situations in German preschool settings. The results also shows that the emotional support is high, and the assisting-situations are well organized, but the instructional support provide by the preschool-teachers are low.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings are discussed in terms of practical implications for preschool-teacher education.

**Keywords:** classroom assessment scoring system; validation; teacher-child-interaction; kindergarten; language-support-groups

## **Multimodal Literacies at Two**

FRAN PAFFARD | University of East London, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This study explores the complex modes of symbolic representation of children between two and three years old. It aims to investigate different modes of representation, the affordances of these modes and the sociocultural context within which they develop.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This builds on Werner and Kaplan's (1978) definitions of symbol use, but incorporates explorations of multimodal symbolic development (Kress 1997, 2003) and of the affordances of different resources (Pahl 1999).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study takes a sociocultural perspective on symbol creation building on Trevarthen (1995) and on Dissanayake's (2000) view of symbols as emotionally meaningful.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

An ethnographic approach is taken, immersing observations within the life of an inner-city Children's Centre and observing clusters of children. The primary source was video observation, supplemented by interviews, photographs, and transcripts.

### **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent was regularly sought from all parents and practitioners and confidentiality for participants ensured. Children's willingness to participate was carefully evaluated.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings suggest that children engage in rich symbolic behaviour in varied social situations. Multimodal learning was evident and translations from one mode to another identified. Different provision did impact on the quality and quantity of symbolic behaviour. Several ingredients emerged as key to providing for rich learning experiences in terms of children's development of meaning.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The current UK focus on narrow views of early literacy, could be modified to provide a broader view of children's symbolic development. Better understanding of the importance of multimodal representation would enable early educators and parents to supporting the rich range of children's meaning making.

**Keywords:** multimodal; symbol; two; representation; affordance

## **E11 DIVERSITY AND INTEGRATION**

Chair: ROS GARRICK | Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

### **Diversity and Integration in ECEC: the Experience of Two Albanian Children in an Italian Nido**

MARIACRISTINA PICCHIO | National Research Council of Italy, Italy

#### **Co-authors**

SUSANNA MAYER | National Research Council of Italy, Italy

PAOLA PETTENATI | University of Parma, Italy

#### **Research aims**

In Italy, although the number of children of migrant parents in ECEC services has been increasing dramatically, studies on their experiences in the services have not been frequent.



### **Relationship to previous research works**

Several authors (Brougère, Guénif-Souillamas & Rayna, 2008; Favaro, Mantovani & Musatti, 2008; Vandembroeck, 2005) claimed that linguistic and cultural diversity of migrant families and their children's plural identity should be taken into account by educational practice in ECEC services.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

When children of migrant parents attend an ECEC service, they are exposed to language within two linguistically and culturally different contexts (at home and at the ECEC service) just in the period in which they are acquiring verbal communication. How do these children cope with the experience in the new educational context?

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We will present the analysis of the experience of two 31 and 34 month-old children of Albanian parents during their day in an Italian nido. The analysis, which is based on 20 hour filmed observations, considers the children's involvement in the nido life, their participation to social processes and play activities and their communicative exchanges with adults and peers.

### **Ethical considerations**

We refer to the ethical considerations presented in Communication from the European Commission on EU Policy Plan on Legal Migration (COM n. 66/2011).

### **Main finding or discussion**

The analysis showed which difficulties these children encountered during their daily life in the nido and which elements of the educational context could support the children's process of integration in the group of peers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Discussion of results provides useful suggestions for improving educational practices in ECEC services.

**Keywords:** early educational centres; children of migrant parents; participation; language; social inclusion

## **Supporting Educational Transitions: Exploring the Needs of Military Children and Their Families**

GEORGINA LOVETT | University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

To explore the experiences of Military families with children with Special Needs(SN) and the difficulties they experienced moving to new locations and schools and in securing continuity of educational provision.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

No other research has been identified as being conducted into this aspect - please see implications below

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study focused on conclusions drawn from a UK Government Inquiry in 2006 examining the experiences of mobility of Service Families with children having SN and the effects on social and emotional wellbeing and educational outcomes

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Online survey using qualitative and quantitative questions were used followed by semi structured interviews that were derived from responses to the only survey. A thematic approach was used for analyses to establish dominant trends

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical guidelines of the University and BERA were adhered to

### **Main finding or discussion**

The main findings identified \* issues with timing and effectiveness of postings and housing. \* Difficulty in gaining places in schools of first choice \* ability for schools to understand the nature of 'Army life', \* the support needed and the impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of children and families emanating from the challenges they faced often on a regular basis.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study has influenced a new Government Inquiry in 2012 and enabled Military agencies to raise their profile and work towards developing strategies to support children with SN in transitions. It also raised an awareness of ensuring teachers were given training and strategies to support Military families to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of families and children. .

**Keywords:** military; inclusion; families; transitions; turbulence

## **Building Resilience: Children from Ethnic Minority Groups Starting School in England**

ROS GARRICK | Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

PUNITA CHOWBEY | Sheffield Hallam University, England

### **Research aims**

To understand how children and parents respond to the cognitive, social and emotional challenges presented by children's transition to school, in the context of ethnic and socioeconomic disadvantages.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Resilience, during children's first year of schooling, is a concept of potential significance for educational outcomes. With current research focused primarily on individual resilience, this research fills a gap around family resilience (NCH, 2008). It incorporates children's views within a wider family perspective on a transition presenting particular challenges for some ethnic minority children.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A starting point for thinking about resilience in early childhood is the notion of "competence despite adversity" (NCH 2008, p8). The study draws on the NCH's (2008) broad concept of resilience as a component of emotional well-being, with recognition of a family role in promoting resilience.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study draws on the Mosaic approach (Clarke and Moss, 2011), with participatory activities undertaken with 12 children, from diverse ethnic minority families, and their parents. Methods include accessing children's perspectives through circle time activities with persona dolls, used to empower young children to communicate perspectives on challenging scenarios e.g. peer-group exclusion. A further method is an indoor/outdoor tour with a doll and each child. Finally, interviews with parents explore family strategies and processes in building resilience.

### **Ethical considerations**

A flexible research plan was negotiated with the class teacher. Researchers gained informed consent from parents, explaining methods to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. They gained consent from children, discussing the research and checking for children's willing participation at each stage.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Study ongoing.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications not yet clear.

**Keywords:** resilience; transition; children; families; ethnicity

## **E12 LIFELONG LEARNING**

Chair: MONICA SELAND | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **The Discourse of Lifelong Learning and Children as "Secret Agents" in a Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care Center**

MONICA SELAND | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **Research aims**

This research project aims to explore how discourses materialize, and how children may respond or oppose to subject positions produced from the Lifelong Learning discourse.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In the Nordic countries the ECEC's has a long tradition for social pedagogy, where play, care and social competence have been the main focus. During the last few years we can see an alteration of discourses, and today Norwegian children are inscribed in discourses of Lifelong Learning which position them as eager to learn and seeking for new knowledge, as "enterprising selves" (Rose 1996, Seland 2009). As a consequence of this change, traditional playing-





rooms are in several ECEC's replaced with workrooms, art studios and laboratories, and more formal learning situations are requested from the policymakers.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

I will draw upon Dorothy Smith's (1990) theory on actors as "secret agents" within a discourse.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in my PhD project (Seland 2009)

### **Ethical considerations**

The research project is carried out as provided by the Norwegian ethical committee.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Playing Princesses and Spiderman, fooling around, rough and tumble play and doing tricks are other ways of being a learning child which there are silence about within the discourse of Lifelong Learning. Governing the ECEC's physical space towards a school-like arena will narrow down children's opportunities to be more than eager to explore and learn specific knowledge and skills.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings may influence the way professionals organize the educational landscape, and recognize children as inscribed in a wide range of different discourses.

**Keywords:** lifelong learning; discourse; "secret agents"; play; physical space

## **Do Young Children Deserve Getting Pocket Money? Their Relationship with an Economic Value Called Money**

SÜHENDAN ER | TED University, Turkey

### **Co-author**

MÜGE ÇELİK ÖRÜCÜ | TED University, Turkey

### **Research aims**

It aims at whether primary school first graders deserve not getting pocket money and the blame of not having the ability of controlling an economic value called money.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Although there are several studies on values education, not many research about economic value education, and no value education emphasized on money.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A semi structured interview was administered to 20 children. A 6 week education programme which was prepared by the researchers deals with what money is, the difference between desires and needs, being a conscious consumer and how to save money was administered. Every week, the researchers sent written information to the parents about what had been done and asked them to talk about the same issues at home. A month after the programme, another semi structured interview involving the same questions in the pre interview was given to the students and their attitudes towards money were obtained.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Random sampling method was conducted for obtaining the participants. The findings were analysed by using non parametric statistics.

### **Ethical considerations**

Formal permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct the research in the primary school was taken. Required written permissions were also taken from the families to conduct the pre and post interviews.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The follow up interview showed that after the education children's management of controlling their money increased.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

In future these children will become conscious controllers of money if they are introduced with money at an early stage, if they understand why money is in their lives, and what it is for.

**Keywords:** economic value; money; first grade students; values education; conscious consumer

# Developing an European Approach for Early Years Education and Care: Which Training for Professionals?

DOMINIQUE MALLEVAL | ESSSE, France

## Research aims

The workshop propose to explore the training curriculum for Early years educators (Bachelor) as proposed in ESSSE ( Lyon, France) in link with policy paper proposed by Children in Europe ( 2008) ; It consider that training must develop certain skills or commun competences : critical thinking, contextualized approach, work with partners... Witch modules, witch approach in trainig to developp this competences and knowledges?

## Relationship to previous research works

We lead researches in different axes : European researchs (training manual, professional competencies and practices) , research-action in France on national level with 8 training centres and on local level (training manuel, movies, as training supports have been presented in Eecera conference in 2009 and 2011).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

We adopt viewpoints from theoretical fields developed by Decet network and new paradigm approach (Dalhberg a, Moss and Pence, 2011; Brougère and Vandenbroeck, 2007)

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Our analyses are based on our training experience in ESSSE, member of DECET from 2000. Illustrations provide from analyses in the frame of educators' training, with the experience of 2 training reforms on national level, with 150 students per years from 10 years around.

## Ethical considerations

Educators have to work with diversity of public, contextes, approach; this is one of main axe to developp a training curriculum .

## Main finding or discussion

How stimulate and contribute to quality in educators'training, developing a European approach for early childhood ?

## Implications, practice or policy

Early years educators training, in France, approve ECTS in 2013 . This is a real opportunity to built mobility , and follow research projects and cooperation with european training centres as yet engaged.

**Keywords:** reflexive thinking; co-constructing; diversity; complexity; praxeology

## E13 HISTORICAL AND NEW APPROACHES

Chair: LYN TRODD | University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

### Learning Stories and Development of Professional and Personal Identity

LYN TRODD | University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

#### Research aims

To evaluate the direct impact of flexible delivery of an undergraduate programme for Early Years practitioners from an area of deprivation To explore how the programme continued to shape participants' identities as learners and professionals

#### Relationship to previous research works

The research relates to the presenter's previous work: Issac, P and Trodd, L. (2008) Sustaining Leadership Learning. EECERA Journal 16. 1 39-52 Doctoral research into Children's Centre leaders' professional learning and identity development

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Social constructivism and Formosinho and Formosinho's (2007) concept of 'pedagogical isomorphism'. The research used an innovative 'learning stories' approach (Carr, 2001) to enable participants to articulate, interpret and make sense of their learning/development to themselves and to others. It used the tools/values of an area of practice to explore it.



## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative data collected through the 'learning stories', personal reflections and focus groups were content analysed (Patton, 2002) to explore the issues set out in the aims.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained through the University of Hertfordshire Ethics Committee. Careful consideration was made of issues of power, anonymity and the principle of 'Do no harm'

## **Main finding or discussion**

Flexible delivery enabled some practitioners (new to academic study) to take part; provided a network of support (peers; programme leaders); and modelled University/Local Authority collaboration. Participants' accounts provided powerful records of personal, and professional development during the programme, illustrating the distance travelled as learners, practitioners and professionals and development of their confidence and 'voices'. Using learning stories as a research tool endorsed the status of participants' expertise

## **Implications, practice or policy**

This approach to learning can be transformative. Learning stories can be used as an isomorphic research method.

**Keywords:** professional identity; learning stories; pedagogical isomorphism; models of collaboration; networks of support

# **19th-Century Education for Young Children: Entanglement and Transfer Between Great Britain and France**

KASPAR BURGER | Kurt Bösch University Institute, Switzerland

## **Research aims**

This study aims to analyze how ideas about early childhood education and the motives and experiences of educators and social reformers spread between Great Britain and France and influenced the historical development of educational facilities for young children within national and transnational contexts.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Although the early evolutions of preschools and preschool pedagogy in Great Britain and France show parallels, scholars have not yet sufficiently analyzed 19th-century cross-Channel connections, nor have they systematically examined the influence of transnational exchange on the spread and character of these institutions. The present study aims to remedy these omissions.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Today, virtually all children aged three to five years attend state-maintained education facilities in Great Britain (nursery schools) and France (écoles maternelles). The roots of this similarity lie in the intertwined but discrete histories of early childhood education in each country.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A combined comparative and transnational historical approach is used. Drawing on archival material, historical statistics, and secondary sources from social science and historical research, major processes and milestones as well as transnational connections in the history of British and French institutions and approaches are explored.

## **Ethical considerations**

The analysis complies with major ethical principles tied to the historical knowledge production: honesty in reporting, objectivity in analysis and interpretation, rigor, and openness to criticism.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The study highlights the movement of educators and reformers as well as pedagogical concepts across national boundaries.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Historization of prevailing pedagogical approaches and practices helps better understand and possibly (re-)adapt (potentially unquestioned) habitual activities and (national and regional) policies if required.

**Keywords:** comparative analysis; transnational analysis; history; early childhood education; France and Great Britain

## **Embodied Experiences – Essential for All Learning**

BILJANA C. FREDRIKSEN | Vestfold University College, Norway

### **Research aims**

The main aim of the PhD-project “Negotiating Grasp” was to develop knowledge about children’s learning/meaning negotiations during their explorative play with three-dimensional materials. The presentation will discuss how the first-hand-experiences with materials relate to children’s “imaginative cognition” (Efland, 2002).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research is interdisciplinary and expands present understanding of learning: The study introduces meaning negotiation as equally dependent on children’s individual capacities (emotions, experiences, imagination etc.), what others bring to the social contexts, and affordances and limitation of the physical environment.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The project builds on the theoretical framework of John Dewey, Elliot Eisner and Arthur Efland.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The methods are inspired by Arts-based educational research and are based on methodological framework of Liora Brelser, Elliot Eisner, Rita Irwin and Robert Stake.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations influenced each step in the research process and demanded researcher’s on-going reflections about respect, rights and responsibilities.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The study suggests how imaginative cognition unfolds: Through imagination children make connections between their earlier and new experiences, negotiate personal meanings and express them through embodied metaphors; Materials’ resistance initiates problem-solving activities and engage creativity; Unique solutions and new meanings emerge in forms of “micro-discoveries”; What is possible to learn is highly dependent on the qualities of inter-subjective relations between the teacher/researcher and the children.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study provides arguments for the importance of children’s embodied experiences and aesthetic forms of learning in early age, hoping to influence educational policy makers to reverse the negative international trends in education where focus on formal learning threatens the quality of life.

**Keywords:** embodiment; imaginative cognition; experience; inter-subjectivity; meaning negotiation

## **E14 PRESCHOOL PROFESSION AND IDENTITY**

Chair: TORHILD ERIKA HOYDALSVIK | Volda University College, Norway

### **The Professional Image of Early Childhood (0-3) Hobby School Teachers’**

MAI SEIN-GARCIA | Tallinn University, Estonia

#### **Research aims**

The presentation focuses on the question how toddlers’ hobby school teachers give a meaning to their work. The goal of this research is to describe teachers’ professional image in the perspective of seven years.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

van Huizen, P.; van Oers, B. & Wubbels, T. (2005). A Vygotskian perspective on teacher education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol 37, No 3, p 267-290

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In the theoretical part I discuss the essence of hobby school for children under 3 years of age and the teachers’ role in developing a creative learning environment, which is based on their pedagogical values and understanding of their role. Professional image is understood as a personally constructed concept of being a teacher (Van Huizen, 2000).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The method used for this is half-structured interviews. I interviewed acclaimed and well-known toddlers’ teachers. Total of 12 interviews were carried out in the spring of 2007 and 2013. The information was analysed using the NVivo7 computer software.

## Ethical considerations

Teachers pedagogical choices are linked with ethical questions and are drawn from his/her professional values, that in turn are based on one's value system.

## Main finding or discussion

Teachers' answers were divided to six larger blocks: conception of oneself as a teacher, the peculiarities of the role of toddlers' teacher, about teachers' work in general, about learning and teaching, about teachers' roles and activities. Data from recurred interviews is being analysed at the moment.

## Implications, practice or policy

This research present examples on how teachers give a meaning to their role and bring out possible connections between the changes in the society.

**Keywords:** professional image; pre-school teachers; hobby school; creative activities; sociocultural system in classroom

## Frames and Roles in Workplace-Based Early Childhood Teacher Education

TORHILD ERIKA HOYDALSVIK | Volda University College, Norway

### Research aims

Norwegian preschools lack sufficiently qualified teachers. Thus in 2009 as part of the Government-initiated recruitment strategy, the work place-based professional educational program was established. It is a four-year part-time program, in which the students participate in various roles: in their current work positions, their student roles, as trainees in a alternative preschool and as innovative trainees in their current positions. This study aims at examining the student's criterion of success. The research question is: 1) how does the student understand her frames and roles in connection with various changes in student positions?

### Relationship to previous research works

The concepts biographic-, program - and transitional coherences (Heggen/ Smeby, 2012) is used to analyze both structural and individual aspects.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical approach is Goffman's perspective, framing (1974/1978)

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The data are drawn from interviews in which 371 students (of a population 405, with 46,4 % response rate) from seven university colleges answered a questionnaire in 2012.

### Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines are followed in data collection and analysis.

### Main finding or discussion

The results show how the student understands and describes her roles as an actor in a partnership. The average age is 40, and the student has been an employee for 18 years on average. By using multivariate statistical methods the results suggest that 80 % of the students in the range do not feel frustrated by their various roles, however, recruitment and execution depend on economic-, cultural- and social support from the employer.

### Implications, practice or policy

This perspective includes adults who combine work and higher education as a part of EU's qualifications framework for Lifelong Learning.

**Keywords:** early childhood teacher education; trainees program; lifelong learning; partnership based education; recruitment strategy

## Professionalism, Routines and Reform Processes in German ECEC. A Multi-Perspective Study

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### Co-authors

ANKE KÖNIG | University of Vechta, Germany

### **Research aims**

The study focusses on daily routines of preschool teachers and heads of preschools. Starting point of the research was, that competences of staff in ECEC are the key to high quality. Aim of the study is to find out which routines hinder and which support high quality pedagogical practices in different ECEC facilities. Thus, the state of reforms in German ECEC shall be identified.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Most quality studies measure quality of ECEC with special focus, e.g. pedagogical quality (NICHHD 2000; EPPE 2004; Tietze et al. 1998). The following study combines different perspectives and notices also daily routines.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research is based on professionalism theories (Bromme 1997; Dippelhofer-Stiem 2012) and educational reform concepts, e.g. curriculum, language support, management strategies.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In a qualitative approach, practitioners were accompanied for one workday (method: structured observation with time-event-sampling). The participants journalized the same workday in self-completion protocols. Thus, comparison of researchers' and practitioners' perspective was enabled. Application of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2010) confirmed an average quality of the participating institutions (Mean=4,6; SD=0,46) and ensures comparability to other ECEC research. Quantitative data collection (n=900) shall lead to representative information on practitioners' routines.

### **Ethical considerations**

Practitioners participated voluntarily. Sensitivity to the right of privacy. Anonymity.

### **Main finding or discussion**

First findings show that daily routines have a similar structure in different facilities. It was shown which reform aspects are already implemented in practice and which routines hinder pedagogical aims.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study gives hints for vocational training to foster practitioners' professionalization.

**Keywords:** professionalism; preschool teachers; quality; daily routines; practices

## **E15 PRAXEOLOGICAL LEARNING NETWORKS**

Chair: MICHAEL REED | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### **Praxeological Learning: Examining Early Childhood Education Teacher Programs**

CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM | The Ohio State University, United States of America

#### **Co-authors**

TERRI TEAL BUCCI | The Ohio State University, United States of America

ALLYSON LEEDY | The Ohio State University, United States of America

#### **Research aims**

This study examines the praxeological learning experiences of early childhood pre-service teachers in education programs in the United States.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

In the last two decades, praxeological learning (service-learning) has gained recognition as an effective pedagogy for involving students of all ages in their communities; strengthening links between the classroom and real-world settings (e.g. Freeman & Swick, 2003; Author, 2009; Taylor & Balengee-Morris, 2004). Service-learning, therefore, reinforces Dewey's (1902) notion that schools should serve as a thoroughly socialized affair in contact at all points with the flow of community life.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Voice and Empowerment are examined, with particular reference to the work of Freire (1970) and Rosenberger (2000).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper examines teacher education programs using a praxeological pedagogical approach. The university student participants are from junior and sophomore years and were located in classrooms across a three county area. A mixed method approach was used to analyze the student experiences as informants answered questions and shared their experiences.

## **Ethical considerations**

Responsibility to the participants, the research profession and to the public are considered (see BERA, 2005). Moreover, consent and assurances of confidentiality were obtained from all participants and any possible risks to anonymity were explored where relevant and appropriate.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Findings examine teacher education programs, giving students and the community voice, teacher expectations, and classroom communication with children and parents.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The research reflects on the changing nature of teacher education programs and how a praxeological approach to teaching and learning can help inform future practice when working with the youngest students in the schools.

**Keywords:** pedagogy; practice based inquiry; praxeological learning; student voice; service-learning

## **Practitioners Engaged in Quality Improvement: Purpose and Action**

MICHAEL REED | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### **Co-author**

ROSIE WALKER | University Worcester, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

The research was conducted at a University in England. It involved practitioner/students who were following a part-time Foundation Degree (FdA), It explored the reasons why a particular area of practice based inquiry was chosen for individual dissertations.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Walker, R and Reed, M. (2012) Early Childhood Practitioners Developing an Academic Voice and Tutors Making Sense of the Research Process NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal Volume 15, 2012, pp. 137 - 149

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Research into quality Early Childhood Education and Care identifies structural and process features which drive quality. The research examines which features were present within the chosen dissertations. It assists in the understanding and development of wider research mechanisms to articulate the voices of those directly involved in practice.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Embedded qualitative research. Methods included content and relational analysis from course materials produced by students alongside phenomenological interviews, group interviews, participant observation and case studies.

### **Ethical considerations**

The project design scrutinised by the University Ethics Committee. Participant permission obtained. Ethical parameters included strategies for participation and withdrawal by respondents.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Dissertation themes were driven by interconnected structural and process features of quality. Ownership and collaborative reflection within the setting was prime motivator for the focus of practitioner/student inquiries. The research design engaged respondents actively in the process and helped in understanding ways to develop wider research mechanisms to articulate the voices of practitioners.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The research sheds light on ways to develop collaborative inquiry with practitioner/students.

**Keywords:** embedded research; quality improvement; collaborative research; relational analysis; practitioner voice

# Together We Can: How an Early Years Professional (EYP) Network Set the Foundations for a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Impacts on Practice in Nurseries Across the UK

CAROLINE WRIGHT | Kidsunlimited Limited, United Kingdom

## Co-author

URSULA KRISTEK-WALTON | Kidsunlimited Limited, United Kingdom

## Research aims

To explore the extent to which an EYP network could drive improvement and support innovative practice.

## Relationship to previous research works

We draw on research around the organisational and network conditions that support innovation in teaching and learning, (James, Black, McCormick, Pedlar & William 2006) to examine the extent to which the kidsunlimited EYP network possesses the characteristics of an effective Professional Learning Community and has the potential to support development.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Research on professional learning communities show that they become effective where:

- Membership is consistent
- The network enables a continuum of learning
- Members are encouraged to reflect, evaluate their role and modify their practice
- Members implement learning in their nurseries and beyond The research examines the extent to which these conditions are met

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Ethnographic research presenting case studies, quantitative and qualitative data using range of methodology to triangulate and test findings: Questionnaires – EYPs, EY managers; Documentary Analysis reflective journals; meeting notes; action plans.

## Ethical considerations

Permission to carry out research was sought from all involved. A collaborative approach was agreed with network members to develop case studies, which illustrate findings.

## Main finding or discussion

Membership is consistent subject to attrition; Reflection and evaluation has improved since the network was launched; Members use learning from network events to varying degrees according to challenges of the role;

## Implications, practice or policy

The Network has provided benefit to the organisation in supporting quality improvement. However, more network activities and collaboration with colleagues in other areas of the business are needed to enable the EYPs to be truly effective in promoting innovation and developing a shared 'knowledge community' through a 'community of practice'.

**Keywords:** knowledge community; network; collaboration; early years professional; case studies

## E16 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Chair: LORNA JOHNSTON | Edinburgh Education Authority, United Kingdom

## Playing Behavior of Autistic Children in the Inclusive Environment

LEE-FENG HUANG | National Pintung University of Education, Taiwan

## Research aims

Playing is a unique phenomenon of early childhood. All children have playing behaviors whether normal children or disabled children. But the disabled children's playing development is slower than normal children. This study aims to explore if the inclusive environment is able to enhance autistic children's playing motivation and skills.

## Relationship to previous research works

Based on DSM-IV and ICD-10 identifies autistic children lack of social playing that requires the use of imagination.





## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Bandura's social learning theory emphasizes observational learning and modeling. The inclusive environment offers disabled children opportunities to imitate their normal peers' playing behaviors.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study conducted qualitative survey. The playing behaviors of two autistic children in the inclusive environment were observed and their teachers were interviewed in order to understand whether two autistic children change their playing behaviors within ten months.

## **Ethical considerations**

The observation and interview were implemented with the consent of the parents and teachers.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The results of this study were: 1. The Playing Behaviors of two autistic children developed from low to high-level gradually. 2. Two autisms showed more willingness to interact with their peers. 3. Tolerance from normal children and randomly scaffolding from teachers were necessary to increase the ability of those two autistic children's social playing skills.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

According to the above-mentioned findings, this study recommends that government should support the policy of full inclusion. Teachers should provide more interacting opportunities for children with and without special needs. Appropriate assistance is also needed in order to enhance the disabled children's playing skills.

**Keywords:** inclusion; autistic children; playing behaviors; social playing; playing skills

# **Developments in the Expressive Language of Young Children with Autism Through Participation in Joint-Play Engagement**

HELEN MARWICK | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

## **Co-author**

LORNA JOHNSTON | Edinburgh Education Authority, United Kingdom

## **Research aims**

To examine the impact of play engagement on expressive language in children with autism, using standardised assessments.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Naturalistic play interventions are reported to develop communicative interactions, but standardised assessments are needed to provide independent, systematic evidence of language developments.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Social communication difficulties in children with autism can be argued to follow from reduced motivation to engage in social interaction and reduced joint attention abilities with co-construction of meanings.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Pre- and post-intervention assessments were carried out on the expressive language of three children with autism, aged 5-7 years, who were participating in weekly intervention sessions using the 'Playboxes' joint play intervention (Marwick, 2006) over a period of 3 months. The Renfrew Action Picture Test (RAPT) (Renfrew, 1997) and the South Tyneside Assessment of Syntactic Structures (STASS) (Armstrong and Ainley, 2007) were used, and number and mean length of utterances was noted.

## **Ethical considerations**

Playboxes is an enjoyable playful intervention, accessible to professionals and families, designed to support social interaction. Informed consent was gained.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Post intervention standardised assessment of the verbal utterances of all three children showed significant increases in frequency, in grammatical complexity and sophistication, and in mean length of utterance.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

This evidence supports the position that expressive language of children with autism can be developed through joint-play engagement designed to increase joint attention experiences and promote shared communicative understanding. Language and communication development is of fundamental importance to educational inclusion

and social well-being, and inclusion of this intervention in practice could be valuable for children with autism.

**Keywords:** autism; joint-play; intervention; development; expressive language

## Implementation of Special Support in Local ECEC Curriculum

SANNA UOTINEN | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

### Co-author

ANJA RANTALA | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

### Research aims

Every municipality in Finland writes down an early childhood educational plan based on the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (ECEC). The aim of this paper is to discuss what is written about the arrangements for providing special support in local ECEC curriculum. Our interest is to explore how and where the support of the child is organized.

### Relationship to previous research works

Child's natural environment, such as home and day care, should provide support and learning opportunities (McWilliam 2012). The support of the child should be provided in the context of general ECEC services as far as possible and child's environment should be adjusted to the child's needs.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The theoretical frame of this study is based on ecocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of child's natural environment in early intervention.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

This qualitative research is based on documented data (early childhood educational plans) collected from municipalities' www-pages year 2011. We have analyzed local educational plans (n=49) by using content analyze method and also by categorizing data quantitatively.

### Ethical considerations

Research ethics guidelines and anonymity of each municipality was maintained.

### Main finding or discussion

We classified the implementation of special support into three categories: 1) different groups, 2) competent staff, 3) adjustments of activities and environment. Most commonly support was organized in a group for typically-developing children with the support of itinerant early childhood special teacher (ECST). Special groups were mentioned in ten plans. Less than half of the plans included adjustments of daily activities.

### Implications, practice or policy

Each child should be provided with equal support in all municipalities.

**Keywords:** early childhood educational plan; special support; natural environment; early childhood special teacher; ECEC

## E17 CHILDRENS' WELLBEING

Chair: PIIA MANNINEN | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

## Socio-Emotional Wellbeing of Children in a Day and Night Care

PIIA MANNINEN | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

### Research aims

In this study we explore young children's experiences of social interactions and factors that potentially impact on their socio-emotional wellbeing in the context of day and night care in a 24/7-economy.

### Relationship to previous research works

The need for day and night care has increased but relevant research is lacking.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Unusual working times appear to have negative effects on children's life. However, practices of early education have traditionally been based on the comprehension, perceptions and views of professionals and parents. There is an

increasing challenge to also hear children's viewpoints, and to take them into account in planning and implementing services. Antonovsky (1979) has presented a concept of sense of coherence (SOC), according to which seeing one's life as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful is crucial for human wellbeing. Our research focus is on children's experiences of safety, belongingness, participation, and feelings of manageability and empowerment.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We developed a method called Story Magician's Play Time (SMPT) in which children aged 4–6 years (N=15) narrated stories relating to their experiences in day and night care centers. The stories were based on vignettes presenting, storytelling, co-playing with materials, dealing with emotions and discussing the story at the end of the SMPT.

### **Ethical considerations**

Children's consent was sought and participation was voluntary.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results indicated that parents and friends are significant for the children and add to their emotional security. The results will be discussed in terms of socio-emotional wellbeing, security and caring in the presentation.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The SMPT method can be used more systematically in various situations with children.

**Keywords:** children's perspective; socio-emotional wellbeing; 24/7-economy; children's participation; narrative method

## **What Makes You Feel Well in the Kindergarten? Asking Children the Meaning of Well-Being**

ANETTE BOYE KOCH | VIA University College, Denmark

### **Research aims**

Danish legislation prescribes well-being of children in all public kindergartens, but there is a lack of consensus concerning how to actually do this. The aim of this study is to investigate how children explicit the meaning of well-being in a kindergarten.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The results are discussed in comparison to earlier studies of childhood well-being from an adult point of view (Koch (2012). *Idealet om det glade og afstemte barn. Pædagogers blik for trivsel i børnehaven*. Nordisk Barnehageforskning, 5(2 (1)), 1-26).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Well-being is conceptualised by a multidisciplinary approach with reference to psychology, anthropology and sociology and childhood well-being defined on the basis of positive psychology. Data is analysed with reference to Corsaro 2009, Willis 1977 and Scandinavian child research.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A two month field study was carried out in a Danish kindergarten using ethnographic participation, field notes and photo interviews with 16 children, five years of age

### **Ethical considerations**

Working for childhood well-being in early childhood services, it is important to recognize the children as active participants, who create their own happiness

### **Main finding or discussion**

The main findings suggest that children are primarily happy in their kindergarten when interacting with peers, establishing identity and experiencing aesthetic elements of the environment. When they have to participate in adult-initiated activities that they are not especially fond of, they create their own 'activities behind the activity'. Children play, create well-being, identity and status participating in the 'underlife' of the kindergarten

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The practitioners are responsible for the practice in the kindergarten, but the children themselves actively create their well-being beneath these frames

**Keywords:** child perspective; well-being; kindergarten; peer culture; adult role

# Centre-Based Care During Non-Standard Hours: Young Children's Experiences Related to their Sense of Belonging

EIJA SALONEN | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

## Co-authors

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## Research aims

There is a growing need for around-the-clock child care in the global 24/7 economy. To meet this need, many day care centres in Finland are open for extended hours, some even 24/7. These novel forms of child care create significant yet mainly unexamined possibilities and challenges. This study investigated the socio-emotional wellbeing of 1- to 3-year-old children attending centre-based care during non-standard hours: evenings, nights and weekends. It aimed at listening to children's voices and understanding their experiences related to their sense of belonging.

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous research (Strazdins et al. 2004; Li et al. 2012) has shown mainly negative associations between parental non-standard work and child wellbeing. However, research on children's experiences in centre-based care during non-standard hours is lacking.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

In this study, children's socio-emotional wellbeing was viewed through the lens of sense of belonging. This concept includes social, cultural and physical dimensions and highlights the meaning of relationships for children's wellbeing.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The study was conducted using an ethnographic framework including multiple qualitative methods: observation, participatory methods with children and interviews of parents and day care personnel.

## Ethical considerations

The participation was voluntary, and the children's wishes were carefully considered. All data was kept confidential.

## Main finding or discussion

The findings suggest that young children have many means to cope with discontinuities characteristic of centre-based care during non-standard hours. They strive for maintaining and building their sense of belonging. Peers, parents and day care personnel have a significant role in this process.

## Implications, practice or policy

These results emphasize young children's agency while addressing well-functioning practices in centre-based care during non-standard hours.

**Keywords:** 1- to 3-year-old children; around-the-clock child care; care during non-standard hours; socio-emotional wellbeing; sense of belonging

## E18 PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION

Chair: LISA SPENCER-WOODLEY | University of St Mark & St John, United Kingdom

### Pedagogical Documentation Within Practitioner Research

LISA SPENCER-WOODLEY | University of st Mark & st John, United Kingdom

#### Research aims

I have used Pedagogical Documentation to collect and analyse data for my Professional Doctorate as a practitioner in HE. I aim to 1. Explore the 'use' of pedagogical documentation as research tool as a practitioner in HE 2. explore the 'use' of pedagogical documentation to develop 'reflective and democratic' (Dahlberg et al, 2007: 145) and ethical research practice.

#### Relationship to previous research works

Using Pedagogical Documentation in this context is innovative, however it builds on Pedagogical Documentation (in particular, but not exclusively, the work of Fleet et al (2006) and Dahlberg et al (2007)) Intra active pedagogy (Lenz-Taguchi (2010)) Critical Reflective Practice (Brookfield (1995)) Action Research (Whitehead & McNiff (2005, 2006))

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Practitioner and Action Research, Educational Research, Critical Theory, Critical Reflective Practice

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper is a documentary and reflective analysis of a method used in Practitioner Research. The paradigm used is critical theory.

## **Ethical considerations**

Issues of power and voice are threaded throughout this exploration, including the power of the researcher as practitioner and the conflict of being a researcher researching my own practice with those I am also 'educating'.

## **Main finding or discussion**

1. that pedagogical documentation is an effective 'method' of research within all education settings from early years, through to HE and adult education. 2. that the focus on process within pedagogical documentation enables a more 'ethical' research process 3. that the 'voices' of research participants are further validated through pedagogical documentation 4. that pedagogical documentation enables a greater reflective practitioner focus within research practice

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Practitioners as reflective researchers Democratic practice in research Reconstruct pedagogical activity (Dahlberg et al, 2007) Challenge taken-for-granted assumptions (Brookfield, 1995)

**Keywords:** pedagogical documentation; practitioner research; critical reflective practice; research in HE; democratic research practice

# **Pedagogical Documentation - an Assessment Tool and an Active Agent in Preschool Children Learning Processes**

LISE-LOTTE BJERVÅS | Linneus University, Sweden

## **Co-author**

GUNILLA ROSENDAHL | Linneus University, Sweden

## **Research aims**

How can pedagogical documentation as an assessment tool at the same time become a tool for the children in their learning processes? How can pedagogical documentation, while supporting children's learning, become a tool for monitoring and develop the preschool practice?

## **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is included in the knowledge field documentation and assessment of learning and development and it follows up the result from a doctoral thesis about pedagogical documentation as a tool for assessment i preschool.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study has a social constructionist point of view and its theoretical frame work includes Bakhtin, Fairclough and Habermas.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Study findings are based on action research in a project work with mathematics conducted by preschool teachers in one Swedish preschool.

## **Ethical considerations**

The presentation is based on documentation made in a preschool practice and includes photos of the children's actions. The parents have agreed to that the photos are displayed in research and education context but not to be distributed further. The documented children have taken part of what has been documented.

## **Main finding or discussion**

For pedagogical documentation to become a tool for children's learning and a tool for development of teaching practice, teachers have to make conscious choices. Teachers' approach and organization of activities is crucial to enable the processes to develop and continue. The tool pedagogical documentation has the potential to trigger processes that could create meaning for children, teachers and parents.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Pedagogical documentation can make the children's learning processes visible without assessing children's knowledge based on standardized criteria. This provides a basis for conducting systematic quality assurance work.

**Keywords:** pedagogical documentation; preschool; learning process; assessment; social constructionist

## **Training of Trainers in the Effective Early Learning Programme: Promoting Processes of Observation, Reflection and Critical Insertion of ECEC Professionals**

SARA BARROS ARAÚJO | School of Education of Institute Polytechnic of Porto and Childhood Association, Portugal

### **Research aims**

The study presented three aims: (1) to develop a process of training of trainers in Effective Early Learning (EEL) Programme; (2) to understand the impact of training in the professional learning of participants; (3) to understand the training strategies that trainees perceived as more critical in professional learning.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The training of trainers emerged in the sequence of a process of contextualization of EEL Programme to Portuguese reality, and answered the need to disseminate EEL Programme nationwide, through trainers that could act at local level.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

EEL Programme departs from a democratic and participatory approach to the assessment and development of quality in ECEC contexts (Pascal & Bertram, 1999). Training strategies stress this ethos, as well as the need for context-based experimentation (Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho, 2012).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The training process involved 12 trainees, integrating hours for specific training (especially, in EEL's observational instruments), experimentation of these instruments in contexts of practice, and reflection (oral and written) about those experiences. Trainees' written reflections and the written notes of the trainer of trainees constituted the data corpus that was subjected to content analysis

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical concerns included the ongoing informed consent of trainees and confidentiality assurance.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings point the importance of training in promoting trainees' professional learning in what concerns observation (context, processes and results), reflection-on-action and critical insertion. Trainees emphasized context-based experimentation and co-participated reflection as critical training strategies.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for practice are quite relevant, considering the strong need to strengthen an assessment culture in Portuguese ECEC contexts that considers centrally democratic and participatory practices.

**Keywords:** effective early learning programme; assessment; training of trainers; context-based experimentation; critical insertion



## **E19 TEACHER-PARENT INTERACTION**

Chair: TUULIKKI VENNINEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

### **Observing Interactions Between Parents, Children and Teachers During the Daily Transitions from Home to an Infant-Toddler Center. Preliminary Findings from a Study in an Italian Center**

SILVIA CESCATO | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

#### **Co-author**

CHIARA BOVE | University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

#### **Research aims**

The research regards the interactions between children, parents (immigrant/Italian) and teachers during the 'transitions' from home to an infant-toddler center. The aims include: observing through a detailed microanalysis 'rituals and cultures of transitions', exploring the values and representations of teachers, involving teachers in experiences of 'unpacking' the details of these interactions through the use of video.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Many ECEC-studies have shown the cultural complexity of the child's entry into childcare and agree on the need to train teachers to observe the dynamics involved in this ritual (Mantovani et al. 2000); few have combined the microanalysis of the process of interaction with the analyses of the 'internal models of interaction' of the teachers involved to stimulate critical thinking, memories and awareness.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study refers to: ecological theory on transitions in the early years (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), studies on parents-teachers relations (Epstein, 1997; Lightfoot, 2004), researches on adult-child interactions in triadic contexts (Fivaz, et.al. 1999), Stern's theory on the 'present-moment' (1995).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A multimethod approach combined data from observations, semi-structured interviews, analyses of videos, video-based interviews. Analyses of data included content analyses of interviews and microanalyses of videotaped behaviors (Trembley et al. 1995, Fivaz et. al. 1999).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethics committee approvals included parents and teachers informed consent for videotaping of children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings include: the impact of the 'moment-to-moment' analyses of behaviors to keep track of the process/sequence in the everyday interactions between adults and children and to reduce teachers' habitual and automatic patterns of interactions.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications include tools and methods for ECEC-teacher's professional development.

**Keywords:** ECEC transition and practices; adult-child interactions; microanalysis; professional development; culture

## **Parent-Teacher Partnership in Metropolitan Area Day-Care Centres in Finland**

TUULIKKI VENNINEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

### **Research aims**

The aim of our research was to find out what changes, improvements, or trials the staffs of the day care centres in Finland have made to support parents' participation. Indeed, what kind of activities are there in which parents' participation is not desirable?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Venninen, T., Leinonen, J., Rautavaara-Hämäläinen, M. & Purola, K.. (2011).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Good interaction between parents and educators provides parents the basis for positive experiences concerning their children and their education (Knopf & Swick, 2007). Increasing parental participation in early childhood education is expected in the Finnish socio-political view; it enhances and improves the quality of early childhood education (Hujala, 1999).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The presentation is based on the qualitative inquiry (2011) about parents' and staff participation in the metropolitan area day care centers in Finland. The participants were 1,588 working teams representing 5,262 employees. The questionnaire was returned by 77.6% of the intended population.

### **Ethical considerations**

Educational partnerships emphasize parents' understanding about their own child and it is based on parents' right to act as primary educators to their children and the ones with responsibility in relation to their child.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The different attitudes of staff concerning parents become apparent and three different groups were identified: the Professional standpoint, Customer standpoint, and Partnership standpoint. Many day care staff teams were focused on improving the interaction with parents in different situations. Confidence is build up in everyday situations.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Early childhood professionals need to develop a variety of flexible and family sensitive models for co-operation.

**Keywords:** parent-teacher partnership; participation; involvement; collaboration; early childhood education

## **E20 CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

Chair: SONJA ARNDT | University of Waikato, New Zealand

### **Delirium and Frustration: Arousing Desires for New States of Knowing**

SONJA ARNDT | University of Waikato, New Zealand

#### **Research aims**

The aim of the presentation is to examine alternative ways of unsettling dominant conceptions or oversights in the discourse of early childhood education through the notions of delirium, exile, dissidence and thought.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This presentation draws on an earlier literature review and discourse analysis of critical multicultural (e.g. May, Kincheloe), feminist (e.g. Todd, Mohanty, Rhedding-Jones) and philosophical (e.g. Kristeva, Foucault, Arendt) orientations to living with and as foreigners.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Julia Kristeva's critical philosophical approaches to exile, delirium and dissidence provides a framework for this exploration.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A feminist philosophical paradigm is applied to reconceptualise an analytic methodology through notions of exile, dissidence and delirium. This methodology relies on meticulous, ceaseless and vigilant analysis and confrontation of dominant conceptions, to inform and develop meaningful new insights.

#### **Ethical considerations**

This conceptual analysis considers the ethical implications of research. It does not involve human participants.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

This presentation explores the frustration of delirium as a necessary state of unease driving the desire to attain new heights of insight and meaning. It argues that only in a certain state of exile can a sufficiently irreverent and ruthless analysis occur, to achieve the state of delirium and desire necessary to develop new insights and meaning.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The presentation argues for the importance of a rigorous conceptual analysis to precede, underpin and inform research intended to bring about individual or collective change in perceptions. It foregrounds this alternative methodological approach in a conceptual analysis intended to contest and disturb dominant understandings of foreignness in the field of early childhood education.

**Keywords:** delirium; foreigners; early childhood education; methodology; Julia Kristeva

## **Quality in Processes of Economization in Early Childhood Education**

MAIJU PAANANEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

#### **Co-authors**

LASSE LIPPONEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

KRISTIINA KUMPULAINEN | University of Helsinki, Finland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this research is to uncover the underlying presuppositions embedded in processes of economization of early childhood education (ECE) and to analyze the construction of the concept of 'quality' within these processes. After uncovering the presuppositions, their influence on economic returns of investment in ECE can be examined.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Since definitions of 'quality' are based on values and beliefs, they should entwine local and multiple perspectives. However, many contemporary conceptualizations of 'quality' presents it as an imperative and thus, fail to acknowledge locality and multiple perspectives of the concept. The study contributes to this discussion about the concept of



'quality'.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The context of the concept of 'quality' is examined through the lens of economization (Çalışkan & Callon, 2009).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Our logic of inquiry draws on the tradition of discourse analysis that holds that presuppositions about politics and economics are expressed in and reproduced by language use either intentionally or unintentionally (Fairclough, 2003, 2012).

### **Ethical considerations**

The study follows the ethical standards of scientific research set forth by the University of Helsinki.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Drawing from documents published by the OECD, the study shows that the concept of 'quality' has room for plurality and locality within the narrative of investment in ECE. Yet, we argue that the fading of the human rights approach within these documents is accompanied by increased opaqueness of the concept.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The consequences of the inconsistent use of the concept of 'quality' will be discussed in light of practice and policy.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; quality; economization; human capital; political discourse analysis

## **E21 LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY**

Chair: GERALDINE DAVIS | Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

### **Dimensions of Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care**

ELINA FONSEN | University of Tampere, Finland

#### **Research aims**

The purpose of the research is to clarify the phenomena and the implementation of pedagogical leadership and investigate how pedagogical leaderships are developed by the directors of child care centres.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is closely related to Sergiovanni's organisational culture and value based leadership and Heikka & Waniganayake's distributed perspective of leadership.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on contextual leadership theory (Nivala). The theory emphasises the importance of the core task of the organisation.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The ontological premise of the research is narrative where knowledge is seen as socially constructed process. The data consists of questionnaires, development plans drawn up during the project by the directors and teachers, and narratives. The narrative analysis elicits the directors' stories about pedagogical leadership. The main story was constructed on the basis of individuals' stories. The main story represents a shared understanding of the phenomena of pedagogical leadership.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The study was conducted with institutional ethics approval. Participants were informed of the content of research and their consent was elicited.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Results imply that the success of pedagogical leadership can be conducted by dimensions of: value, context, organisational culture, director's professionalism and director's pedagogical competence.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The practical applications of the results of this study can be used to develop the education of ECE teachers and directors. The directors need more in-service training on leadership skills. The directors in child care must have proper pedagogical competence. Results indicate that the responsibility area for one director cannot be too wide.

The distributed leadership model seems to be needed.

**Keywords:** pedagogical leadership; ECE; narrative; contextual leadership model; value based leadership

## **Graduate Leader Plus. Making a Difference Beyond Graduation**

GERALDINE DAVIS | Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This study explored whether graduate leaders were making a difference to children

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In 2004 the Effective Provision of Pre School Education (EPPE) Project highlighted the link between an educated workforce and good quality early years provision

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In 2006 the UK government committed £250 million to the development of the early years workforce, creating Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and further funding to support settings to employ graduates with EYPS. This regional three year study determined the impact that EYPS had on outcomes for children, adding a new dimension to existing studies.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using case study design, data were collected in three phases from a purposive sample of graduate leaders and those they worked with. Methods included surveys, interviews, focus groups and documentary analyses. Descriptive statistics were applied to the quantitative data; thematic analysis was used for qualitative data.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study was approved by the University ethics committee and followed the British Educational Research Association guidelines for ethical practice.

### **Main finding or discussion**

EYPS is valued and impacts positively on outcomes for children through work with children, parents and staff. Access to continuing professional development which EYPS provides has lasting impact on practice and hence on positive outcomes for children. Both the content and the networking opportunities provided by this development reinforce confident practice.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Investment in continuing professional development is extremely valuable for individual practitioners, for settings and for children and families and consideration should be given to modelling this development at a national level.

**Keywords:** continuing professional development; professionalisation; leading practice; leadership; graduate leader

## **A Quantitative Look at Preschool Teachers' Retention: a Study on Head Start Teachers**

MICHAEL WELLS | Uppsala University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This research aims to quantitatively explore why teachers leave working for preschools.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research has shown that retaining teachers leads to a higher quality of instruction and less financial cost for the school system, but that 50% of teachers will quit teaching before their fifth year.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The economic labor market theory of supply and demand states that teachers will stay teaching if they see their profession as the most attractive option.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

All newly hired preschool teachers were eligible to participate. Of the 89 eligible preschool teachers, 86 agreed to participate by filling out a 16-item questionnaire each month on their thoughts of working for the preschool agency. Regression analyses were conducted to compare the differences between those who continued working and those who had quit teaching during the 2011-2012 school year.

## **Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Indianapolis.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Regression analyses revealed that preschool teachers were more likely to quit teaching if they had a lower educational background, were under 30 years old, did not see the early childhood field as a profession, if they were stressed, and if they were not happy in their position.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Preschool administrators need to entice preschool teachers to stay in their position by listening to their concerns and developing viable options to solve their working conditions; therefore creating a more attractive working environment. The implications of doing so will yield lower financial costs to the school, while improving the quality of the classrooms and child outcomes.

**Keywords:** preschool; teacher retention; head start; quantitative; young children

## **E22 DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE IN ECE**

Chair: EDITA ROGULJ | Kindergarten Cvrčak, Croatia

## **An Analysis of Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs About Using Ebooks in the Early Childhood Classroom**

WEI-YING HSIAO | University of Alaska Anchorage, United States of America

### **Research aims**

The purpose of this study was to investigate pre-service teachers' beliefs about using eBooks in the Early Childhood classroom. In addition, the study was to discover factors that affect pre-service teachers' beliefs about the implementation of eBooks in the early childhood classroom.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

McKenzie, D. (2009, January/February). Ebooks and 21st-Century learning. Multimedia & Internet @ Schools. Retrieved Feb 20, 2013 from

<http://www.mmischools.com/Articles/Editorial/Features/EBooks-and-21st-Century-Learning--59760.aspx>

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In the digital era, it's important for teachers to integrate technology in the classroom. Providing eBooks in the classroom can enhance students' learning and reading. Many studies have shown that eBooks can help and encourage children learn to read (Passey, Rogers, Machell, & McHugh, 2004; Schrock, 2006) and can engage struggling readers (McKenzie, 2009. ) In addition, eBooks can increase comprehension through animations and illustrations (Doty, Popplewell, & Byers, 2001).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Survey research method. The research instrument was a researcher self-designed questionnaire including two sections: demography and survey questions.

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants agree to share their answers to others.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Participants reported that ETBs are a great tool in teaching reading, especially for the non- native English speakers and students in special needs. Participants reported the major factor that influences their implementation of ETBs in the classroom is the available technology equipment; such as, internet access, projector, and computer in the classrooms.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Early Childhood teachers should provide both trading books and eBooks in the classroom for educating the net generation.

**Keywords:** ebooks; technology in early childhood; technology integration; pre-service teachers' beliefs; using ebooks in the EC classrooms

# Translation of Digital Knowledge in Early Childhood Practices, Searching Actants Involved in Translation Between Secondary Discourses

TOVE LAFTON | Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Norway

## Research aims

The aim of this study is to explore how Early Childhood Practitioners translate knowledge of digital tools and practices from other venues and into Early Childhood Education.

## Relationship to previous research works

Theoretical framework is based on Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005) and digital literacy understood through secondary Discourses (2008).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

In this paper, ANT has two purposes. First ANT is used to establish practice as “more than” actions and talks situated amongst the participants or in the system, and thereby contribute in creating a flexible understanding of the concept practice. Secondly ANT is used to identify actants in translations between secondary Discourses.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The data consists of video and audio-recordings of Early Childhood Practitioners reflective talks. To identify the actants participating in translations of digital content, excerpts regarding how and why the practitioners use digital tools together with the children are analyzed.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations regarding the researcher as a participant in the talks are addressed. The participants have been introduced to preliminary findings during the research period. These introductions have initiated discussion regarding the correlation between the research results and how the practitioners understand their own practices.

## Main finding or discussion

The main findings indicates there are several actants in the translation network, and many are to be found in discourses about the child, childhood and “the good” in Early Childhood Education.

## Implications, practice or policy

The research presented can contribute both to the field of translations of knowledge between secondary Discourses, as well as contributing to the methodological field by operationalizing ANT to Early Childhood Educational practices.

**Keywords:** translation; digital literacy; practitioner development; reflective talks; ant

# Computer in an Interdisciplinary Approach to Children’s Play and Learning

EDITA ROGULJ | Kindergarden Cvrčak, Croatia

## Research aims

Pointing out the importance of computers as a medium with a strong influence on the development of children’s interdisciplinary skills, knowledge, as well as having a big role in the changes that occur in the process of children’s learning and the game it self.

## Relationship to previous research works

Research indicates the impact of computers on the changes that occur in the process of children’s games and acquiring of new knowledge and skills.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child they are guaranteed to every individual. Using ICT those occasions are expanding even more providing a lot more opportunities.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

The study was conducted in Kindergarden using the sample of 103 children.

## Ethical considerations

Defining a methodical approach to the computer in order to avoid its misuse and highlighting the positive aspects of using ICT.



### **Main finding or discussion**

By using computers children can solve different problems, find new innovative solutions that stimulate their creativity, and allow the presentation of new ideas using words, symbols, motion, sound, and images. Computers play an important role in the development of information literacy which is the basis of elementary education for each individual, and it has a strong influence in facilitating the acquisition of skills such as reading, writing, grammar, listening.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The proper use of computers initiates a better learning process, and thus acquiring of new knowledge and skills. Children learn through play, and PC games are amazingly versatile and multi purpose, therefore it is necessary to enable each child to have a computer access.

**Keywords:** children; computers; playing and learning; educators; parents

## **E23 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN ECEC III**

Chair: SISSEL MØRREAUNET | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

### **Forgiveness in the Preschool**

SISSEL MØRREAUNET | Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

#### **Research aims**

“Forgiveness in the preschool” –is a cross cultural study of forgiveness in the preschools in Swaziland, Kenya and Norway. Research questions were 1) how the preschools in Norway, Kenya and Swaziland work with forgiveness in theory and practice. 2) how stories about forgiveness in the preschool can promote a better understanding.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

It is only a few studies about children and forgiveness.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Forgiveness is an action og process which has its end result that the victim ceases to be angry or resentful towards the wrongdoer for a wrong, injury and trnsgression. It is four reasons for our apologies.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is an action research study. Teachers were interviewed before and after a period of storytelling in the preschools, and children were interviewed in groups about their understanding and experience of forgiveness after the storytelling period.ng of the concept.

#### **Ethical considerations**

All data about the involved persons are deleted.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Both children and teachers liked the storytelling approach. In the interview the children gave many examples of experiences of forgiveness showing their interest and level of understanding of the concept. Also teachers reported interesting experiences from the work with forgiveness in the preschool.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The teachers in Preschool find the issue of forgiveness important and interesting to work with. They want to continue working with childres understanding of the consept of forgiveness.

**Keywords:** forgiveness; forgiveness in preschool; forgiveness and childres; sorry; an apology

## **Regulation of Time as a Mediating Artifact in the Daily Activities in a Kindergarten in Norway and in China**

ÅSTA BIRKELAND | Bergen University College, Norway

#### **Research aims**

This presentation will illuminate how activities in kindergarten are structured in time and how kindergarten teachers argue for this structure.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This study is highly influenced by Preschool in Three Cultures (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009; Tobin, Wu, &

Davidson, 1989).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Perspectives and concepts from Cultural Historical Activity Theory have been used to analyze the data (Fleer, Hedegaard, & Tudge, 2009; Kaptelinin, 2005; Leont'ev, 2002). This is in order to focus on the daily practices in kindergarten and to look for what the teachers want to achieve in their practices.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is a cultural study and data has been gathered from interviews and observations in two kindergartens, one in Norway and one in China. The interviews are semi-structured focus group interviews with the kindergarten teachers in both kindergartens using photo- and video-elicitation (Rose, 2012).

### **Ethical considerations**

This project is part of a research project named Kindergarten as an Arena for Cultural Formation focusing on conditions for cultural formation and has the formal consent of the Norwegian ethical committee.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The preliminary findings point to the regulation of time as a disciplinary condition in both kindergartens. The rhythm, however, is quite different in the two kindergartens. Furthermore, teachers have varying degree of control of the time regulations, and the teachers do not argue for children having any influence of the time schedule.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study will contribute with empirical knowledge about how teacher practices are complex mixtures of rules, routines and traditions, conditions, artifacts/tools and explicit goals.

**Keywords:** structuring of time; comparative study; China; Norway; photo-elicitation

## **Co-Design, a Pedagogical Strategy to Promote Children's Participation Rights: Colombian Case Study**

MIGUEL ANGEL RUIZ | University of North, Colombia

### **Co-authors**

ELSA ESCALANTE | University of North, Colombia

LILIANA CASTRO | University of North, Colombia

### **Research aims**

This qualitative study was conducted in order to develop pedagogical strategy labeled EDUCATIONAL TOYS and understand this unique pedagogical innovation in the Colombian context. This strategy promotes learning settings in where researchers, undergraduate students, and children work in collaborative, interdisciplinary, and inter-generational environment to build prototypes based on children's needs.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research Studies about children as co-designer has been conducted in technology design field (Druin, 2002; Druin, 2010; Druin, et al., 2012; Hussain, 2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study is illuminated by the conception of image of the child and children's participation promoted by Reggio Emilia Approach. In addition, principles of interactions between adults and children based on co-design approach addressed this process.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A socio-cultural constructivism perspective helped to explain the developmental process of this strategy as a social practice (Murphy et al. 17). The current participatory action research involves collaboration of researchers with a population of interest to solve a problem or develop educational experiences that fit the needs and resources of the environment (Lofman, Pelkonen, & Pietila, 2004; Nastasi et al., 1998). Surveys, in-depth interviews and observations were used to collect the data from 2010 to 2011 academic year in one university and one school in Barranquilla (Colombia).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations involved negotiation throughout research (children-adults)

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings concludes that co-design experience promotes intergenerational team work and sensitizes adults about the

importance of children's participation rights and their active role in the society.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The pedagogical innovation contributes to the promotion of children's rights and guarantees the Colombian Child's policy, international level in extent.

**Keywords:** children's rights; Reggio Emilia Approach; co-design approach; interdisciplinarity; teacher development

## **E24 EXPERIENCES OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

Chair: ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

### **International Child Development Program - Dialogue in Finnish Kindergartens**

SAIJA TANHUANPÄÄ | University of Turku, Finland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this presentation is to find how three of the main principles of the ICDP, emotional dialogue, comprehension dialogue and regulation dialogue, come true in Kindergartens in the research area.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research is based on the theories of attachment, intersubjectivity and socioculturality.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical background of the dissertation is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to the principles of participation (Hart, Shier, Thomas).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Observations (n=190) were made during the springtime 2012 in 39 Kindergarten groups in schools (19) and day care centers (20). The data were analyzed qualitatively.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The researcher observed children in five minutes periods during the springtime 2012 in 39 Kindergarten groups in schools (19) and daycare centers (20). Observations (n=190) were littered with a code name and both girls and boys were observed in the whole area. The data were analyzed qualitatively.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The preliminary findings in this research show that parents have a high respect for teachers. According to the observations there are still a lot of work to do with confirming, praising and encouraging children.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Teachers need to work more for the "common good". It is important to learn more collective responsibility and encourage each other. It is also important to find ways how to help children express their views and how their views can be made visible in the field and also to the policymakers.

**Keywords:** ICDP; dialogue; interaction; participation; Finnish kindergarten

## **Child Day Care in Germany – Essential but Still on the Move**

GABRIEL SCHOYERER | German Youth Institute, Germany

NINA WEIMANN-SANDIG | German Youth Institute, Germany

#### **Research aims**

In our paper we want to give an overview of the expansion of Child Day Care in Germany. Here we state that quantitative expansion of Child Day Care has to be closely intertwined with an expansion of its reliability - both for child-minders and parents.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Since 2009 the German Youth Institute evaluates the national action program on Child Day Care ("Aktionsprogramm Kindertagespflege")

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework of our paper is set by well-known studies towards the Child Day Care System in Germany

(e.g. Jurchzyk et al. 2004; Sell 2002; Tietze 2000). The theoretical framework deals with theories on local governance (Benz 2007) and relevant educational theories (Thole 2010; Blossfeld 2012)

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

For our paper we use recent data from a multi-methods empirical study of the DJI that focuses on the expansion strategies of 160 model communities.

### **Ethical considerations**

We state that there has to be a discussion about the quality and intensity of those trainings which directly leads to the discussion about the pedagogical quality of this form of childcare and an occupational profile of Child Day Care in Germany.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The quantitative expansion of Child Day Care has to be closely intertwined with an expansion of its reliability both for child-minders and parents. This is closely related to the infrastructural and human resources of local authorities: a good infrastructure is necessary to attract well qualified child-minders and to establish advanced trainings.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

It is necessary to re-think the role of Child Day Care in order to establish high quality child care.

**Keywords:** child day care; quality of child day care; structure of child day care; close-to-family care; family policy

## **School and Family Partnership: Impact of Touchpoints Reflexive Practice in Portuguese Day Care**

MARINA FUERTES | Lisbon School of Education, Portugal

### **Research aims**

In this quasi-experimental study in day care, we intend to investigate the impact of Touchpoints Reflective Practices (TRP) on: parental satisfaction with their relationship with the teacher, family-teacher communication, teachers reflective thinking, and parent-infant interaction. Moreover, we aim to assess

how the contextual factors may affect the effectiveness of the model application (e.g., quality of family life, quality of daycare, teacher experience, families social support).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The few research on Reflective Practices within the Touchpoints Model in Education, indicate that families integrated by these programs, when compared with the control group, describe family relationships of higher quality and report more positives feeling in managing stress.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

TRP aims to foster an open and constructive communication as well as balanced, reciprocal and rewarding parent-professional and parent-child relationship, proposing a comprehensive model of development, strongly supported empirically, and a relational approach of working with families. The study is based on bioecological research approach.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

TRP was applied in three day cares (7-teachers and 120-families). Results were accessed before and after TRP (8 months period). Qualitative (teachers diaries) and quantitative (satisfaction scales, ITERS, demographics, HOME, Growing Skills, Care-index) measures were used.

### **Ethical considerations**

Based on the expectation that TRP are effective, no control group was included.

### **Main finding or discussion**

TRP obtained good results in supporting families' skills, and in managing teacher-family conflict, arising from the changing representations of the teacher and the increase of individual attention to the family. Contextual and education factors are critical in shaping results.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Guidelines will be proposed to enhance day care-family partnership based in Touchpoints approach.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; partnership school-family; day care; reflexive practice; touchpoints model



## **E25 SOCIOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD**

Chair: ISOBEL MACDOUGALL | University of London, United Kingdom

### **Sociological Approach About the Role of Associations Interested in Upgrading Childhood Rights: Their Reality, Tasks and Achievements**

SABAH AYACHI | University of Algiers, Algeria

#### **Research aims**

Using a sociological analysis to recognize the track of some official social associations interested in childhood, assess their achieved results to upgrade child's rights in the Algerian society, and identify the extent of weaknesses which prevent the realization of some tasks in complementarity with community concerns and government's ones.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Noticing the lack of academic studies, this paper addresses a new important topic related with the role of official associations interested in childhood's issues

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

We have invested the theory of symbolic interactionism (H. Blumer and George H. Mead) that analyses the social action and patterns in terms of meanings and symbols focusing on the smaller unit( individuals' behavior and roles) in order to reach the bigger units.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We used qualitative analytic method (case study) focusing on some associations interested in the promotion of childhood status and rights in the family and society.

#### **Ethical considerations**

-Carrying out an objective study with academic and practical benefits to all institutions. -Highlighting the importance of some associations that interact with children issues, identifying their positive actions and correcting their shortcomings in order to promote children's rights.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The tangible activities of the associations show some contradictions between them in their approaches and practices with regard to their interaction with childhood issues and problems. - Identify some obstacles that hamper the achievement of the associations' objectives.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Assessing the kind of obstacles faced by associations, contributing to enhance the cooperation with government institutions, find solutions and bring about the complementarity between them to cover all issues related to Algerian childhood.

**Keywords:** child's promotion; interaction; complementarity; flexibility; symbols

### **Tuning in or Tuned out: Changing Notions of Childhood**

ISOBEL MACDOUGALL | University of London, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This research investigates how young children aged 2 years without English, starting in English-speaking nursery in the UK, negotiate their diverse languages and cultures and form their identities as learners. This includes studying the views and attitudes of childhood held by practitioners and the impact that these views have on their practice.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Engaging BME practitioners in the Foundation Degree in Early Years (2006), on-going research on Bilingual Support Staff (Drury & Robertson: 2013) and the impact of studying discourses of childhood with work-based students (2010).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

As above plus emergent and reconceptualist paradigms of childhood (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence: 2007 & Cannella: 2002) and power relations (Foucault: 1980).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is an ethnographical study using Learning Stories and semi-structured interviews with staff and parents.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical guidelines from BERA (2011) and Goldsmiths College (2005) have been followed, and on-going assent from the children and consent from parents and staff has been obtained.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The dominant discourse of young children in the UK, representing the child as relatively powerless and in need of adult protection, dominates the initial training of practitioners. This discourse holds deficit images of the child but postulates that the child may be redeemed through high quality services. Ethnocentric western discourses based on developmental psychology are devoid of cultural diversification. The main findings suggest that there is a discontinuity of discourses and practice within the workplace.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The presentation will explore the impact of examining emergent and reconceptualist paradigms of childhood that encourage equality, cultural diversity, and cross-cultural dialogue on practice in multicultural-contexts.

**Keywords:** discourses; practitioners; ethnocentric; reconceptualist; dispositions

## **What Do Young Students and Parents Think About the Family?**

ANIKÓ VARGÁNÉ NAGY | University of Debrecen, Hungary

### **Research aims**

This paper is aimed to highlight a group, a group which plays a very important part in our job. The subject of this paper is planning to show the results of a research using by questionnaires. The main goal of this research was to collect information from young children's parents and young students what they think about the family.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

I made a questionnaire with 200 students and children' parents.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

As pedagogues we educate and teach children of different age groups. They all come from families. If you are a kindergarten teacher, you meet them daily. If you are a professor, you teach students who also come from families, moreover they are ready to establish their own families.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Analyses of the statistics data.

### **Ethical considerations**

My goal was to determine how important the educators/teachers/professors to have knowledge about those families who they work together with for the children's education. We can reveal families' role in shaping the children's characteristics, their future.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Teachers must master a repertoire of instructional methods and strategies in their practice to be able to cooperate with the families for the interests of the child. Teachers must come to understand the real lived experience of the families and children they teach. Teachers need to learn about the families and communities of the students so that they can do a better job.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

I work to find and transfer useful information from family pedagogy that can enhance teachers' development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with children and their families.

**Keywords:** family; family pedagogy education; research; questionnaire; building relationship with parents

## **E26 ECEC CONTEXTS**

Chair: KRISTIN KÖÖP | Tallinn University, Estonia

## **Collaboration Between Education and Health in the Management of Communication Difficulties in the Early Years**

JANE MCCORMACK | Charles Sturt University, Australia



## Co-author

CATHERINE EASTON | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### Research aims

This research explored the contexts and practices of Australian early childhood educators (ECEs) and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in the management of preschoolers with communication difficulties. The study investigated the training and experiences of both professional groups, and the strengths and challenges of collaboration.

### Relationship to previous research works

Research has identified the majority of Australian preschoolers with communication difficulties do not receive adequate support due to lack of identification and/or access to SLP services. ECEs are positioned to identify and support these children; however, they report a lack of confidence and training to do so.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Children with communication difficulties are at the interface of education and health. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health both recognise the critical role that context plays in children's development. These models from education and health were the framework for this study.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

This study used a mixed methods approach; a survey was distributed to ECEs and SLPs across Australia, followed by focus groups with both disciplines to further explore professionals' experiences.

### Ethical considerations

Charles Sturt University granted ethical approval for this study. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was maintained throughout.

### Main finding or discussion

The findings highlight principles and practices underlying successful collaborations between ECEs and SLPs, and contribute to the development of a best practice framework for the delivery of services to preschoolers with communication difficulties.

### Implications, practice or policy

This study challenges ECEs and SLPs to consider the strengths and challenges of applying a framework of collaboration to working with children with communication difficulties in their own professional contexts.

**Keywords:** communication development; collaboration; speech-language pathology; contexts of practice; knowledge and training

## Collaborative Learning Environment as a Key to Positive Peer Relationships: Perspectives from India and England

JANBEESHAIK MOPIDEVI | Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

### Research aims

My doctoral research project aims to explore the early childhood educator's roles in fostering peer relations using case studies from England and India.

### Relationship to previous research works

Although there is a lot of research on the positive benefits of peer relationships and on the significance of educator's roles, yet their focus is limited to the individual level ignoring the wider social, cultural and policy context.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study adopts the Socio-cultural perspectives as a theoretical construct and as a strategy for data analysis.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research was carried out as a qualitative case study in the Reception class of a local primary school and at a philosophically 'different' school in India. The research took an ethnographic approach using participant observation and semi-structured interviews to understand the educator's roles in fostering peer relations

### Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations formed an integral part of the study at every stage of the study. Cross-cultural nature of data collection illuminated the concept of 'Ecological and Situated Ethics'.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings from both the settings conclude that despite the cultural and contextual variations early childhood educators across the contexts play a caring and mediating role; while his/her role fluctuates at times in the continuum of roles largely influenced by wider cultural ecological context.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study has demonstrated how early childhood practitioners roles are defined and dictated by the wider policy and cultural context and emphasized the need for early childhood centers as spaces of trust rather than accountability, of freedom rather than predictability -which can facilitate creative and collaborative curriculum with implications for positive peer relationships.

**Keywords:** peer relationships; educator's roles; qualitative research; socio-cultural theories; international research

# SYMPOSIA SET F

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

9.30-11.00

## F1 SUSTAINING QUALITY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN ECEC SETTINGS: TWO STUDIES CARRIED OUT IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA REGION

Self-organised symposium

Chair: LUCIA BALDUZZI | University of Bologna, Italy

In recent years the issue of ECEC quality and staff professionalization gained an increasing attention internationally both at academic and policy level. Despite this growing interest little research has been conducted on these topics according to a participatory approach that engage with service stakeholders (practitioners, children and families, local administrators). The symposium presents the findings of two small-scale studies carried out in pre-school settings of two cities in Northern-Central Italy: Bologna and Modena. In these contexts participatory approaches to research in early childhood settings are embedded in local pedagogical traditions nurtured within the experience of municipal institutions and they recently gained new momentum within certain strands of academic research (Bove, 2009; Mortari, 2007). From this standpoint the studies presented share common aims and methodology: furthering a systemic approach to ECEC quality by providing teachers with professional support within a participatory research framework that sustains their collegial reflectivity on everyday practices.

### Researching with Teachers: a Grounded Approach to Continuing Professional Development

LUCIA BALDUZZI | University of Bologna, Italy

#### Research aims

The aim of this presentation is to explore how participatory approaches to research on education and care practices can nurture teachers' professional development.

#### Relationship to previous research works

In the context studied, research on this topic has become a necessity given the changed conditions under which ECEC institutions are operating. The integrated system of ECEC services (state, municipal, private) and the financial constraint to public expenditure in fact call for a re-thinking of research across traditional boundaries and from systemic perspectives.

#### Theoretical and conceptual framework

The case studies presented share a common methodological framework (participatory research) whereas scope and methods differ.

#### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The tool used for collecting and interpreting data in the first case is ethnographic observation of 'children's contexts of experience' (Becchi et al., 1993), whereas in the second case data were collected through video-observations and CLASS observation scale was used for analysing them in the perspective of formative evaluation (Ferrari; Bondioli, 2004).

#### Ethical considerations

Carrying out research with teachers rather than on teachers was assumed as an ethical obligation by the researchers who committed to reciprocity of knowledge exchange with all the actors involved.

#### Main finding or discussion

The case studies meta-analysis highlights that engaging with teachers as co-researchers in the processes of findings discussion and as decision-makers in the processes of educational change enhances their reflectivity and sense of agency thus promoting their professional development.

#### Implications, practice or policy

Practice-based research that originates from local needs and involves teachers as actors of change on equal partnership with researches can offer a concrete contribution to the development of ECEC policies that sustain pedagogical quality from a systemic perspective.



**Keywords:** early childhood education and care; participatory research; continuing professional development; Emilia-Romagna; case studies

## **Promoting Teachers' Professional Development in State Pre-Schools: a Study Carried out in the City of Bologna**

ARIANNA LAZZARI | University of Bologna, Italy

### **Research aims**

The aim of the study is twofold: investigating how teachers' professionalism is played out in everyday practices and identifying strategies that effectively promote their professional growth sustaining the improvement of pedagogical work.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study is rooted in previous research conducted on these topics by the same team (Lazzari, 2012; Manini; Balduzzi, 2013).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study adopts a systemic perspective that draws on and builds upon recent research carried out in Europe (Urban et al., 2012).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In the first phase documentary sources and transcripts of focus groups (involving teachers, school leader, pedagogical coordinator) were analysed. In the second, ethnographic observations of 'children's contexts of experience' were conducted by two researchers in eight classes. In the third, the data analysis carried out by researchers was collectively discussed with all actors involved.

### **Ethical considerations**

By conceiving educational research as an emancipatory endeavour in which both ECEC professionals and academics are engaged on equal partnership, all actors gave consent to be involved in the process of data generation and interpretation.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Preliminary findings highlight that the contexts of experience constructed by teachers to promote children's development vary significantly from one setting to another. Therefore the data reporting meeting focused on supporting teacher's reflectivity at team level with the aim of promoting collegial confrontation on pedagogical practices and negotiation of goals, meanings and values.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

In contexts where pedagogical quality is not homogeneous and institutional support to teachers' professionalism tends to be weak, participatory research can contribute to sustain the qualification of ECEC practices from a systemic perspective.

**Keywords:** ECEC professionalism; continuing professional development; systemic approach; ethnographic research; Italy

## **Supporting Professionalism in Early Childhood Education Through Video Research: a Study Carried out in the Province of Modena**

ANTONELLA PUGNAGHI | University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

### **Research aims**

This study explores multidimensional profiles of observed quality across 20 state, municipal, private pre-schools located in province of Modena and examines teacher, institution and classroom characteristics associated in these profiles.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In Italy this is the first study using the tool CLASS to observe quality of teacher-pupil interactions, whereas internationally there is a growing literature on this topic (Pianta et al., 2008).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study considers the quality of the relationship between teacher and child within preschool educational contexts.

Located within the framework of participatory educational evaluation (Gariboldi, 2007) the use of CLASS aims at enhancing teachers reflectivity on everyday practices.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

An entire school day was videotaped in each setting and subsequently two observers analysed independently the collected material according to the CLASS. By using clustering procedures four teacher-child interaction profiles have been identified and related to pre-schools' structural features.

### **Ethical considerations**

Pedagogical coordinators, school leaders, teachers, parents were notified about the aims of the study and gave their consent for the video recordings. In addition, within each school a meeting with teachers was organised for findings reporting and discussion.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Cluster analysis highlights four distinct profiles which differ both in regard to teacher-child interaction within each educational context and in relation to specific structural features of pre-schools (eg. hours of teachers' daily co-presence, continuing professional development and staff turnover).

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The use of video materials has provided teachers with the opportunity to describe, confront and reconstruct their experiences and this may hold promise for innovative CPD strategies aimed to improve quality of pre-school settings.

**Keywords:** teacher-child relationship; educational evaluation; professional development; early childhood education; Italy

## **F2 MOVEMENT AS A FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: RENATE ZIMMER | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

This symposium discusses the role of movement for children's development, learning and attachment in early childhood. Three studies present movement-based approaches to include all children. Movement as a fundamental dimension of a child's personality development offer body experiences and meaningful learning situations. The child uses movement to express himself and to interact with others. Other developmental areas can benefit from movement as they reciprocally influence each other: One study presents the benefits for children with diverse first languages to acquire a second language, whereas another study provides significant implications for children's social and emotional development. A kinematic study of infants' exploratory behavior in regard to their attachment patterns reveals the expression of attachment styles in movement behavior. It is used as the basis for a more differentiated analysis of socio-emotional and cognitive development of infants as well as child-parent interaction.

## **Promoting Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood Settings Through the Medium of Movement**

CARMEN HUSER | nifbe, Germany

### **Co-authors**

RENATE ZIMMER | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

NADINE MADEIRA FIRMINO | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

### **Research aims**

- promoting second language acquisition for children with migration backgrounds;
- evaluating the effectiveness of movement-based language fostering.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Movement provides playful and meaningful situations in kindergarten (Zimmer 2011) that motivate children. Previous studies with children with German as a first language showed benefits for the language development.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Language skills have been identified as a key skill for children's learning and school success (Fried 2004). Contrarily to programs concentrating on linguistic skills isolated from everyday situations, the concept of „Bewegte Sprache“ benefits from combining diverse expression forms.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In a pre-post design, 35 children with German as a second language were observed using the observation instrument *sismik* (Ulich & Mayr, 2003). The language development was first assessed before the intervention (T1) and then again 15 months later (T2). Educators from four kindergartens continuously received training in order to undertake the „Bewegte Sprache“-intervention. Educators from a fifth setting occasionally participated as a quasi-control group. Educators were interviewed about their experiences, focusing on modifications that were necessary to meet children’s needs. The interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2010).

## **Ethical considerations**

Educators observed the children in their familiar kindergarten setting. Coding the data assured confidentiality. Interview participation was voluntarily.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The results show significant increase in children’s active language use. Children from the intervention groups improved more than the children from the quasi-control group. Educators evaluated the concept around the categories “children’s participation”, “implementation”, “modification”, “observation”, “special challenges” and “family involvement”.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Children benefit from this movement-based language promotion focusing on German-language-independent competences, movement, while respecting their first languages.

**Keywords:** second language; cultural diversity; movement; educators’ perspectives; language promotion

# **Attachment in Motion: a Kinematic Analysis of the Exploratory Behaviour of Infants Relating to Their Attachment Styles**

BIRTHE ASSMANN | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

## **Research aims**

- (1) Investigating the influence of attachment styles of infants to their attachment figures on the quality of their exploratory behaviour.
- (2) Developing a new paradigm to investigate attachment patterns of infants by using the quality of their exploratory behaviour.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

A kinematic study on the spontaneous movement behaviour of neonates preceded the study.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretical basis of the research are the ideas of embodiment and embodied cognition according to Esther Thelen and attachment theory according to John Bowlby.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In a longitudinal study, kinematic data of the exploratory behaviour of 30 infants between 6 and 18 month were analysed. In parallel attachment styles of infants were determined by the Strange Situation according to Mary Ainsworth.

## **Ethical considerations**

The research was confirmed by the ethical committee of Charite Berlin. Participation of subjects was voluntary and informed consent concerning video data was given.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The attachment style of infants could be predicted by the exploratory behaviour in 80% of analysed cases. A factor analysis of movement parameters suggested 5 categories: sensory motor integration, space time orientation, spontaneity versus conformity, autonomy and relation to the attachment figure. Secure infants showed significant differences in these categories compared to insecure infants.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The importance of attachment patterns for exploration, learning and social-emotional and cognitive development is illustrated. The paradigm can be used to identify attachment patterns of infants more differentiated, and offers a basis for the development of new therapeutic approaches. A follow-up study uses the paradigm to investigate the influence of language on the exploratory behaviour of infants.

**Keywords:** attachment; kinematics; exploratory and movement behavior; embodiment; language



# **SECIM: Social-Emotional Competences in Movement- a Longitudinal Study of Promoting Social-Emotional Competences Through the Medium of Movement**

NADINE MADEIRA FIRMINO | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

## **Co-authors**

ELKE HABERER | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

RENATE ZIMMER | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

MAREIKE SANDHAUS | University of Osnabrueck, Germany

BRIGITTE RUPLOH | nifbe, Germany

## **Research aims**

- promoting SEC through the medium of movement
- evaluating the effectiveness of a movement-based SEC programm

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Emotional tension on the inside is worked off through movement by influencing hormonal functions. At the same time the body gives direct feedback while in action (Zimmer et al. 2007). Movement within the first few years is characterized by positivity and

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

An inclusive society is based on everyone's esteem of diversity. This esteem is a central social competence which has to be initiated and experienced in early childhood. Social competences (interpersonal) are based on emotional competences (personal). It is also therefore SEC are outlined as a learning objective in Lower Saxony's ECEC curriculum (2005).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper focuses the quantitative and qualitative research of a movement-based intervention that fosters SEC in German childcare contexts. Theoretically based on the model of social information processing (Crick & Dodge, 1994), the aim is to analyze the effectiveness of a motor-based SEC program in a pre-post design. SEC data of 100 children from different cultures and disparities from 2-6 years was collected through the perspective of kindergarten-teachers, parents and children themselves, e.g. using the SDQ (Goodman, 1997) and the sociomatrix with images - BSB (modified by Strätz, 1982).

## **Ethical considerations**

All observations were made with the agreement of the children.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Findings show that movement is an access for children to experience SEC independently from their capacities, culture and first language.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Children benefit from this movement-based programm focussing the SEC. Movement offers many links to promote SEC in day care.

**Keywords:** social-emotional competences; movement; early childhood; diversity; everyday-based approach

## **F3 NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: NIKLAS PRAMLING | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

One of the defining features of contemporary childhood in many societies is that children grow up in a world where digital technologies are prominent and taken-for-granted. Many children access and experience such technologies from an early age. These technologies are not only a part of many children's life outside educational institutions, but also increasingly within institutions such as preschool and school. Understanding the role and implications of new tools and how they may "or may not" transform early childhood education are important to study. In this symposium, we will give examples from three ongoing empirical studies on the use of new technologies in early childhood education. The examples studied are: music improvisation with a new technology, story-telling with different digital tools, and activities with and around tablet computers (typically an iPad). In addition to reporting on these studies,

some common issues will be raised.

## **Musical Play in 6-Year-Old Children and an Adult Interacting with and Around a New Music Technology**

PERNILLA LAGERLÖF | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This presentation will outline an ongoing study on children and an adult interacting with and around a new music technology. What opportunities and support for learning does this evolving activity entail for the children?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research is a part of an EU project called MIROR (Musical Interaction Relying on Reflection). The study concerns children's engagement and participation in a musical dialogue, with the adult taking the role of a more experienced peer (Rogoff 1990), and frames the activity as a musical play activity (in both senses of the word 'play').

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework for the study consists of sociocultural psychology.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

I will present an analysis of empirical data from a session with 6-year-old children and an adult interacting with and around this new technology in a Swedish preschool setting.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council. This means, among other things, that all participation was voluntary and the parents of the children have signed an informed consent for the children to be involved in the study and to be video-recorded.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results indicate that the communicatively established framing made it possible for the children to participate actively in a joint playful music-making activity. The adult played a vital part in providing musical experiences in introducing mediating tools as a way of discerning musical aspects.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study has significance for an informed discussion of the place and role of new music technologies in early childhood settings.

**Keywords:** music technology; preschool; communicative framing; guided participation; sociocultural perspective

## **Tablet Computers in Swedish Preschool Settings**

MALIN NILSEN | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This paper discusses an ongoing study on the use of tablet computers (typically iPads) in Swedish preschool settings and some preliminary results will be presented. The aim of the study is to examine what kind of activities take place and how they are framed by the teachers. Interactions between children, and between children and teachers, using tablets computers, will be subject for analysis.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

There is a large body of research concerning the usage of digital technology in education (Plowman & Stephen 2007; Linderöth 2012; Selwyn 2009; 2012) but not many that adequately address the issue of tablet computers. Certainly there is a lack of studies regarding tablet computers use in early childhood settings.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework for the study consists of sociocultural theory and as a research tool the concept of mediation is used to create an understanding of how children interact with and around tablet computers.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Video observations have been made of 28 children (ages 18 months to 5 years old) from two separate units in one preschool.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study is conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council.

### **Main finding or discussion**

I argue that there is a noticeable difference in the children's interactions, especially regarding their engagement and motivation, depending on the level of participation that is allowed or restricted by the teachers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study has significance for an informed discussion of the use of tablet computers in early childhood settings, including the role of the teacher.

**Keywords:** tablet computer; iPad; preschool; sociocultural theory; mediation

## **Children's Storytelling Activity with Digital Technology**

EWA SKANTZ ÅBERG | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### **Research aims**

With the current expansion of digital tools, the traditional media used for narration is changing, challenging literacy practices in educational settings. The aim of the study is to scrutinize how a storytelling activity is mediated by the technologies used and the teacher's introduction and interaction.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This presentation will describe an on-going study that explores what kind of activities emerge when 6-year-old children in pairs are writing a story (Klerfelt, 2007) with speech-synthesized feedback computer software (Shilling, 1997).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Taking a sociocultural theoretical framework, this activity is interesting to study since it offers opportunities for learning and interaction.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The empirical data consist of video documentation of children working together. Films have been carefully transcribed and analyzed, according to the principles of Interaction analysis (Jordan & Henderson, 1995). I will discuss the preliminary result from this analysis.

### **Ethical considerations**

The research adheres to the ethical code of the Swedish Research Council. This includes the children and their parents having been informed about the research, and a voluntary participation.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings indicate that a storytelling activity with the digital technologies used offers a rich arena for negotiations, explorations of the written language and possibilities for a successful collaborative learning. The functionalities of the technology, the ability to handle it and knowledge of the conventions of writing have significance for the children's evolving narrative. The teacher's framing and interaction play important roles for how the activity unfolds.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Findings in this study may contribute to an understanding of the implications of new technologies in early childhood pedagogical practices.

**Keywords:** digital technology; storytelling; sociocultural perspective; introduction; interaction

## **F4 FLOURISHING: THE IMPACT OF POLICY CHANGE IN PRACTICE**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: ZENNA KINGDON | University of St Mark & St John, United Kingdom

We approach this symposium with a shared a collective concern about the impact that policy agendas can have on children and families, particularly where policy agenda seems to be working in direct antagonism to those that they were initially intended to support. We discussed what we thought that policy should be enabling children and families to do. We were all agreed that policy should be about supporting practitioners, children and families to flourish. It was as we read further that we engaged with the work of Martin Seligman, an American psychologist. His recent text *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being* (2011) describes flourishing as an approach that is underpinned by PERMA: Personal Enjoyment, Engagement, (Positive) Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman 2011). We feel that we want to consider in detail the ways in which policy agendas and the pedagogy of practitioners enable children to flourish.

# Accountability: Tensions and Challenges

LISA SPENCER-WOODLEY | University of St Mark & St John, United Kingdom

## Research aims

This paper aims to explore the Tensions and Challenges to Flourishing within the current context of accountability and performativity. Possible ways forward through the demands of accountability for Early Years Practitioners are also explored.

## Relationship to previous research works

This paper builds on a variety of critical works within education and education policy. These include (but not exclusively) work by Ball (1990, 2003, 2008); Osgood (2006, 2009); Simpson (2010); Biesta (2006, 2008 and Alban (2012).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

- Flourishing - particularly the work of Seligman (2011) - Professionalisation and the construction of the professional  
- Critical theory

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This is a reflective and documentary analysis from a critical perspective.

## Ethical considerations

The central ethical consideration that this paper highlights is the role of power. The tension in the professionalisation process between the call for professionalisation by the early years sector, the top down imposed policy agenda, and the critique of the professionalisation process is explored. This exploration opens up questions about the power relationship between early years practitioners, academia and policy makers.

## Main finding or discussion

The enormous change in Early Years has led to some concerning developments particularly in the culture of accountability that continues to be imposed, yet we have opportunities now as never before. There will hopefully continue to be increases in the number of practitioners (re)entering further and higher education, alongside a continued growth in academic and practice debates. We must embrace this moment, if we do we will enjoy witnessing a flourishing of a valued early years sector.

## Implications, practice or policy

Understanding of professionalisation Resistance Positioning Reconstruction of professionalism Flourishing for practitioners, settings, children and their families

**Keywords:** flourishing; professionalisation; resistance; positioning; early years policy

# Policy and Practice: the Effects in England of Multiple Changes on Practitioners, Children and Families

MICHAEL GASPER | Starfish Enterprise, United Kingdom

## Research aims

With the coming of New Labour in 1997, inclusivity and partnership were embedded in policy which, from 2000 onwards, was based in principled practice focused on supporting and developing the well-being and confidence of individuals, children, families and communities and especially unemployed adults encouraging flourishing.

## Relationship to previous research works

Since the United Kingdom coalition Government came to power in 2011 Early Years Policy in England has seen significant shifts. The Public Sector, including Local Authorities, Health, Social Care and all services affecting Pre-school and Early Years have had imposed austerity measures with significant budget cuts and enforced re-organisation.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

A significant effect has been pressure on multi-agency, 'joined up working' developed over the previous 12 years returning to a 'silo' mentality as agencies focused on their own structures and organisation.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

This paper is set within a paradigm of critical theory.

## Ethical considerations

The changes have resulted in job losses at all levels and the associated loss of historical knowledge and wisdom.

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There are fewer staff to provide services and critical decisions are being made by people with little or no understanding of Early Years or Children's Centres.

### **Main finding or discussion**

There is a growing emphasis on services that are targeted on the most needy as distinct from services labelled as „universal“ and an increasing top down pressure to provide more formal education earlier.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The net result of the changes is confusion, uncertainty and low morale in the workforce and fewer services, contacts and support for children and families.

**Keywords:** flourishing; early years policy; multi-agency working; parent partnership; well-being

## **Policy and the Change in the Early Years Learning Environment**

ZENNA KINGDON | University of St Mark & St John, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper critically analyses the policy informed developments and changes to the early years learning environment in England, with particular emphasis on play as a pedagogical approach to early learning that supports children in developing and flourishing.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Play and playful pedagogies are critiqued with recognition that whilst play is important and valuable in the lives of young children it is not necessarily the activity from which they gain the most enjoyment (Vygotsky 1978).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Play is the dominant discourse of early childhood education, and as such has in many discussions become idealised. The value of play in children's lives is not diminished however the universal qualities of play are challenged.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper sits within a paradigm of critical theory.

### **Ethical considerations**

This paper draws on existing research that considers theoretical perspectives which contribute to our understanding of child development and the links to policy development in England.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Children who feel included, whose ideas are valued and enacted are likely to sense that they are validated in their setting. The EYFS (2012) focuses on the outdoor environment however, it does not seem to emphasise in any detail the benefits that are demonstrated by research evidence, these benefits are discussed here.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Playful pedagogies provide evidence that not all activities that are provided as play will necessarily be seen as such by the child. What is important is that the intention through a particular pedagogical approach demonstrates that the child is valued and included. Notions of participation and inclusion support the child's ability to flourish.

**Keywords:** flourishing; early years policy; playful pedagogies; outdoor environment; enabling environments

## **F5 THE AISTEAR TUTOR INITIATIVE: TEACHERS LEADING AND SUPPORTING CURRICULUM CHANGE**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: ARLENE FORSTER | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in Dublin, Ireland

The Aistear Tutor Initiative supports teachers in using key ideas in Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) to review and reflect on their classroom practice, and to lead change in teaching and learning in classrooms for children aged four to six years. The Initiative builds local capacity for change within primary schools and informs curriculum and assessment development and implementation at national level. This symposium tells the 'story' of the Aistear Tutor Initiative in Ireland. This includes an overview of the Initiative's purpose, design and methodology as led by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI). The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) shares insights into the emerging impacts of the Initiative on teachers' practice. The symposium also provides opportunities to discuss learning points from the Initiative and the significance of these for supporting change at national level.

# Aistear Tutor Initiative: Leading and Supporting Change in Primary Schools

MARY HOUGH | Sligo Education Centre, Ireland

## Research aims

Aistear (2009) is Ireland's curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. The Aistear Tutor Initiative supports primary school teachers in becoming familiar with the Framework and in using it to develop their classroom practice. Since 2010, the Aistear Tutor Initiative has been building local capacity for curriculum change.

## Relationship to previous research works

"Teacher Education and Development" – Marilyn Cochrane Smith, "Educational Reform" – Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

The Aistear Tutor Initiative is a collaboration between the Association of Teacher Education Centres in Ireland (ATECI) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The Initiative involves teachers supporting teachers. A network of 68 Aistear Tutors in 21 Education Centres, develops and facilitates workshops on Aistear's principles and methodologies. To date, over 6,000 teachers and principals have participated.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Workshop materials include illustrations and samples from practice for which Aistear Tutors, children and their parents give consent. Teachers attend workshops voluntarily. The methodologies they experience respect and encourage self- and group-reflections.

## Ethical considerations

The methodology values teachers' own reflections on their practice. The teachers participate voluntarily and were guaranteed confidentiality

## Main finding or discussion

Teachers are responding enthusiastically to key ideas in Aistear and in particular, to the use of play as a teaching and learning methodology. They recognize the importance of using active learning methodologies and of facilitating more child-led work in their classrooms. Challenges can arise such as persuading parents and colleagues of the value of this work

## Implications, practice or policy

Findings from the Initiative indicate the need for ongoing peer-led professional development for teachers of young children.

**Keywords:** curriculum; play; professional development; change; reflective practice

# Aistear Tutor Initiative - Teachers' Voice

DEIRBHILE NIC CRAITH | Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland

## Co-author

ANNE FAY | Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland

## Research aims

The aim of this research is to explore the extent to which teachers of 4-6 year olds have incorporated the philosophy of Aistear in their teaching.

## Relationship to previous research works

This research supports the work of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation in bringing teachers' voice to the policy table.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Aistear was published ten years after the Primary School Curriculum and reflects the most up-to-date thinking on how young children learn. One of the biggest differences between the Primary School Curriculum and Aistear is the focus on play to support children's learning, particularly in language, literacy and numeracy. Incorporating play is a new experience for many teachers. This research will explore how the professional development workshops have changed teachers' use of play-based learning in classes for 4-6 year olds.



## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation engaged in a process of gathering the views of its members who attended professional development workshops on Aistear to explore the impact on their practice. These teachers were invited to complete a questionnaire. The issues raised through the questionnaire were further explored in a focus group. The research also draws from the writings of teachers who have implemented Aistear.

## **Ethical considerations**

All participants were guaranteed confidentiality and participated voluntarily.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The findings indicate teachers have engaged enthusiastically with the principles of Aistear, particularly where support from their principals was forthcoming. Convincing parents of the benefits of play-based learning emerged as a challenge.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings inform policy regarding the need for high quality professional development to support curriculum change and development at classroom level.

**Keywords:** curriculum; change; play; professional development; teacher role

## **Aistear Tutor Initiative: Stories from the Classroom**

ARLENE FORSTER | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

### **Co-author**

SARAH FITZPATRICK | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

### **Research aims**

Teachers in the Aistear Tutor Initiative share 'stories' of leading and supporting curriculum change informed by key ideas in Aistear.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Teacher Education and Development – Darling-Hammond, Action Research in Education – Carr and Kemmis

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This initiative involves teachers constructing professional knowledge-bases from self-studies of their practice using Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009) in the first two years in primary school. The opportunities for research based professionalism (Whitehead, 1998) support teachers to develop living educational theories as they respond to the question, 'how do I use Aistear to improve my practice?'

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Teachers participate in action research with opportunities to question, analyse and explore their own practice with one-another (McNiff, 2002). This approach recognizes the centrality of the classroom as a site for curriculum improvement and the need for opportunities for self-reflection and action to change practice (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

## **Ethical considerations**

The teachers participate voluntarily and consent to sharing their experiences in web and print publications.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The teachers' stories, drawn from their own experiences and celebrating innovation and inspiration (Hargreaves, 2009), provide rich insights into the curriculum change process. On initial reading, the stories focus on practical changes to the learning environment, routines and interactions. Closer analysis highlights philosophical changes about the essence of being a teacher of, and a curriculum developer with, young children in primary school.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The stories inform the redevelopment of the school curriculum for 4-6 year-olds. They also provide ideas and examples to help other teachers develop their classroom practice and improve children's learning experiences.

**Keywords:** curriculum; change; reflective practice; curriculum development; curriculum improvement

## **F6 CHILDREN AND THEIR TRANSITION TO SCHOOL**

Self-organised symposium

Chair: NIKKI MASTERS | Charles Sturt University, Australia

This symposium focuses on the transition to school from the perspectives of the children starting school, their pre-school educators, and child experts (siblings and buddies). In particular, the perspectives of children are privileged in the papers, thus emphasising the rights of the children to be involved in matters that concern them and their capability in such matters. The three papers in the symposium: Gifted children and their perspective on starting school, Siblings and buddies: Providing expert advice about starting school, Australian Aboriginal children and their families, experiences of transition to school in urban communities, bring together perspectives around starting school based on research from Australia but applicable in many other contexts. The perspectives of children identified as gifted and those of Aboriginal children, in particular, are explored, as are those of older children involved in the transition to school of their younger peers.

### **Gifted Children and Their Perspective on Starting School**

NIKKI MASTERS | Charles Sturt University, Australia

#### **Research aims**

This study explores the transition to primary school of young children identified as gifted in Australia. The aim of the study was to ascertain how what happens in the transition to primary school is different for children who are gifted as opposed to those who are not considered gifted.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

While children identified as gifted have been the subject of a great deal of research, little work has been done to ascertain the differences at the time of transition for young children identified as gifted.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study draws upon the mature form of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, known as the process-person-context-time model.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A naturalistic stance within an interpretivist paradigm, participant's perceptions are central. Reciprocal data collection methods including questionnaires, interviews and online forums are used to gain the perspectives of the major stakeholders in the transitional experience: the gifted child, their parents and their teachers.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Philosophically committed to children's active participation: working with children rather than on children. Informed consent was gained from all participants. Privacy and confidentiality of all participants has been maintained.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Initial findings include the strong concerns held by preschool educators about what will happen to the identified children at school. On the other hand, the identification of the child as gifted doesn't seem to change expectations of parents and teachers.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

Major implications include the need for differentiation in transition activities as well as in the primary curriculum. School readiness concerns of preschool educators imply the need to work on perceived deficits rather than on enhancing strengths.

**Keywords:** transition; gifted; parents; child; teachers

### **Australian Aboriginal Children's and Their Families' Experiences of Transition to School in Urban Communities**

LYSA DEALTRY | Charles Sturt University, Australia

#### **Research aims**

To explore the processes associated with enhancing urban Aboriginal children's and families' sense of self as they make the transition to school.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Research demonstrates high levels of nonattendance at early childhood services for Aboriginal children and disparity between the school educational outcomes of Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal Australian children. The research



presented contributes to an understanding of the barriers and facilitators to Aboriginal participation and achievement in educational settings.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A bioecological model will locate the child's development within the context of their child-environment interactions. Cultural Interface theory will be incorporated to elucidate the sociohistorical forces that create different meanings of interactions.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Predominantly qualitative methods have been employed to gain perspectives of participants on what constitutes, and what realises, a positive sense of self at school for Aboriginal children and families.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations have centred on issues that researchers face when researching outside of their cultural experience. This has been responded to at two levels, (1) researcher positioning in all components of the research process, (2) interpretation and representation of participants' voices and meanings.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The preliminary findings will describe the underlying perceptions, motivations and circumstances that influence the processes that produce positive outcomes for Aboriginal children as they make the transition to school.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Employing Cultural Interface theory has implications for researchers who research outside of their own cultural experience. The Cultural Interface is discussed as a useful lens for reading the intercultural dialogue that takes place between children and adults, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and the researched and the researchers.

**Keywords:** transition to school; aboriginal; children's perspectives; families' perspectives; bioecological

## **Siblings and Buddies: Providing Expert Advice About Starting School**

SUE DOCKETT | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### **Co-authors**

BOB PERRY | Charles Sturt University, Australia

NIKKI MASTERS | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### **Research aims**

The aim of the paper is to explore the role of child experts (siblings and buddies) in providing information to, and supporting, young children as they start school.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper builds on the extensive recent research investigating children's perspectives of the transition to school.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This paper draws on sociocultural theories investigating the role of more experienced others as they support young children's transition to school. It also recognizes the importance of young children entering communities of practice and gaining support from established members of those communities.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Data have been contributed by children about to, or who have recently started school and their older siblings and/or buddies. Data include interview transcripts, drawings and photographs.

### **Ethical considerations**

The research has been conducted using the principles of participatory, rights-based research, which regard children as capable and competent, with rights to be informed about the research and to influence the nature of data generated. Ethical issues encountered in the construction of the data also are addressed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Across a range of research projects, older siblings and buddies provide much practical support and advice for children starting school. However, they do not always regard it as their role to assist younger children, and their advice can be challenging for the children starting school and the adults involved.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

While older children have been involved in transition programs in many ways, the expertise of this group remains under-valued and under-researched. There is great potential to work with older children in generating a positive and

supportive transition to school environment.

**Keywords:** transition to school; children's perspectives; siblings; buddies; communities of practice

## **F7 SOCIAL PLAY**

Chair: PENTTI HAKKARAINEN | Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania

### **Play as a Context for Creating Peer Group Community, We-Ness and Friendship**

MERJA KOIVULA | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to explore children's sense of community (feeling of membership and belonging) in a day care centre. Research questions are: how does sense of community develop, and how children construct their peer group and friendship relations in the context free play.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The sense of community model by Chavis and colleagues (1986), and McMillan & Chavis (1986) was applied in this research

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework is based on socio-cultural theory.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A total of 44 children, aged three to six-year-old from two child groups participated in this case study. The data were collected by ethnographic methods, including video-observations and children's interviews. The data were analyzed by qualitative thematic analysis and discourse analysis.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations, such as anonymity, and children's consent to research, were taken into account throughout the research process.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The results show sense of community manifested itself first between friends and core groups, then in small groups, and finally in the whole group. Sense of community was rooted in the feeling of membership of the group (we-ness), having an influence, fulfillment of needs and having a feeling of shared emotional connection. The development of sense of community was promoted by friendship relations, joint activity during free play, high quality interactions, and togetherness. The results also indicate a connection between the development of sense of community and collaborative learning.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The theoretical and practical implications of this study, including the meaning of the sense of community for children's participation and learning, will be discussed.

**Keywords:** sense of community; play; friendship; participation; belonging

### **How Do Kindergartners Include and Exclude Their Peers in Culturally Diverse Play Settings?**

BILLUR CAKIRER | Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

#### **Co-author**

MARTA FUENTES AGUSTI | Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

#### **Research aims**

This study proposes to analyze how children include and exclude their peers in the play settings in a culturally diverse kindergarten located in greater Barcelona area.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Play contributes to children's learning and to their cognitive, social and emotional development (Vygotsky, 1978; Ortega & Fernandez, 1997; Ashiabi, 2007). In the 1990's, UNESCO's initiative (UNESCO, 2000) and researchers'

contributions (Nutbrown & Clough, 2004; Booth, Ainscow & Kingston, D., 2004) "Inclusion" in early child education became a very important issue. This research follows these two research trends and combines them with today's reality of cultural diversity existing in our community.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Kindergarten level is a good time for an intervention to decrease exclusion in the classroom (Harrist and Bradley, 2003), since it is when children starts to manifest play mate preferences depending on cultural differences (Brown, 1998). Unpopular children tend to lack communicative skills which leads to getting excluded from play interactions (Walker, 2009).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Qualitative research, two-case study design, sociometric interviews with children and recorded observations as data collection instruments.

### **Ethical considerations**

Voluntary participation of children. Consents were given by the parents for children to be recorded. Names are changed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Popular child with a dominant cultural background uses verbal strategies more effectively to include. Unpopular child uses onlooking behavior as the main strategy and waits for to be included by others rather than taking an initiative to engage into play with peers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Learning about children's inclusion and exclusion strategies can help us to design adequate intervention programs to promote inclusion.

**Keywords:** inclusive education; play; cultural diversity; case study; socio-constructivism

## **Exclusion and Identity in Early Childhood Education**

CONCEPCIÓN SÁNCHEZ-BLANCO | University of A Coruña, Spain

### **Research aims**

Action-research which is taking place in a school belonging to the public network of schools in A Coruña (Spain). It will be carried out with a teacher from one of the classrooms of four-years old. We try to explore in this paper how pupils live the poverty and social conflicts at the school.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The teacher expresses great concern that the children are failing to meet established standards that were already worked on the previous years. We explored this topic in a paper last year in Porto.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Teachers and children are in need of reinventing new ways to fight (Freire: 2006) in order to succeed in being heard in her demands for equality (Schostak, 2010). Working in the action-research (Somekh, 2009, Elliott, 2007) with the utopia of liberation and making it credible for teachers, students, as well as the families would be our aims.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Critical paradigm, action research and qualitative research methods.

### **Ethical considerations**

The deliberative project with the teacher aims to help make her practices more reflective and critical. Children have the same right as adults to receive real explanations as regards the researcher's actions when these directly affect or involve them.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Group meetings and democratic ethos: the escape from reality to the commitment to social justice; foreign and enemy: a difficult start; deliberation, awareness and social change in the classroom; and being outside versus being inside; from badness to possibility.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Classroom assembly creates a public space in which critical reflection, conquest and the exercising of shared power.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; social justice; exclusion; poverty; hidden curriculum

## **F8 CHILDREN AND PLAY**

Chair: HELEN MARWICK | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

### **The Effect of Parental Involvement and Encouragement on Preschool Child's Symbolic Play**

LJUBICA MARJANOVIC-UMEK | University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

URSKA FEKONJA-PEKLAJ | University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

#### **Co-authors**

SIMONA KRANJC | University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

ANJA PODLESEK | University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

#### **Research aims**

The purpose of our study was to examine the ways in which parents encourage their children to engage in developmentally more complex forms of play.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Symbolic play represents an important context for child's development and learning during the preschool period. Because of its symbolic nature the symbolic play is established to be related to child's language and cognitive development.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Deriving from the socio-cognitive perspective on child's development, authors (e.g. Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003; Vygotsky, 1967; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) emphasize the importance of encouragement provided by a competent adult, who, in the zone-of-proximal development, leads the child to engage in more complex forms of play.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The sample included 58 children, aged from 2;6 to 6 years, and their parents. The parent-child dyads were videotaped in the home setting during a 30-minute play with standard, both structured and unstructured, toys. The play was analysed using the Scale for observing child and adult during play (Marjanovič-Umek and Fekonja-Peklaj, 2012), which consists of five subscales for assessing adult's play and of four subscales for assessing child's play.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The parents gave a written informative consent for their participation in the study.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The obtained results showed positive correlations between parent's and child's play behaviour. The path analysis results confirmed the presumed structural model, with parental play behaviours as independent variables and children's play behaviours as dependent variables. Parental use of mental transformations had the highest effect on child's play.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings provide important implication possibilities, especially in the sense of scaffolding child's symbolic play.

**Keywords:** family study; child's play; parental involvement; complexity of play; encouraging child's play

### **Developing Symbolic Play for Children with Autism Using a Joint-Play Intervention**

HELEN MARWICK | University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

#### **Co-authors**

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NICOLA QUINN | Edinburgh Education Authority, United Kingdom

HILARY COWIE | NHS Lothian, United Kingdom

LORNA JOHNSTON | Edinburgh Education Authority, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

To examine developments in symbolic play using standardized measures following a joint-play intervention for children with autism

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Standardised measures of developments are needed to provide independent, systematic evidence of intervention effectiveness, and of the amenability of symbolic representational play abilities in autism to environmental support.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Naturalistic play interventions reflect the theoretical position that play difficulties in children with autism follow from reduced motivation to engage in shared playful activities with co-construction of pretence

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Seven children with autism, aged 5 -8 years, participated in weekly intervention sessions using the 'playboxes' joint play intervention (Marwick, 2006) over a period of 3 months. Professionals working with the children incorporated 'playboxes' into everyday support. Pre- and post-intervention abilities were assessed using the Symbolic Play Test (SPT) (Lowe and Costello, 1989) and the Test of Pretend Play (ToPP) (Lewis and Boucher, 1998).

## **Ethical considerations**

Playboxes is an enjoyable playful intervention, accessible to professionals and families, designed to support social interaction. Informed consent was gained.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Pre- and post-intervention scores on the SPT were near the uppermost score, and showed little movement. Every child gained increased age-equivalent ToPP scores (from +8 to +40 months) with three showing increases greater than +30 months.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

This evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of the Playboxes intervention in supporting the development of symbolic play abilities in children with autism, and that these abilities can be supported. Such abilities aid educational inclusion and social well-being, and inclusion of this intervention in practice could be valuable for children with autism.

**Keywords:** autism; joint-play; intervention; development; symbolic representation

## **F9 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION II**

Chair: JACKIE MUSGRAVE | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

## **Peer Interaction for the Youngest Children with Cochlear Implant in the Kindergarten**

SIV HILLESØY | University of Stavanger, Norway

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to explore conditions for participation for children with cochlear implant.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Existing research indicates that children with cochlear implant (hearing device) are facing challenges in peer interaction.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The present study is located in a sociocultural tradition which considers learning as a matter of participation in communities of practices. Children acquire unique social competencies interacting in the community of peers.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Fieldwork was carried out within the units for children aged 1 – 3 year in three Norwegian kindergartens. One child in each group has cochlear implant (the focus child). The data is based on video observations, and 92 episodes of children's peer interaction in free play situations are analyzed.

### **Ethical considerations**

The project is approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, which supervises researchers with issues such as data gathering and research ethics.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Two patterns of interaction were identified: synchronized and desynchronized. The focus children take part in both kinds of interaction, and are thus getting multipurpose experiences from peer interaction. Although the focus child is participating on nearly the same conditions as the other children, the findings also reveal that conditions related

to the hearing loss or cochlear implant may disturb the children's interaction – and that this sometimes leads to a breakdown in the interaction.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Participating in peer interaction is considered to be an important aspect of inclusion. The study will hopefully contribute to improve the existing pedagogical practice concerning children with cochlear implants.

**Keywords:** participation; interaction; peer; cochlear implantation; kindergarten

## **Exploring How Practitioners in Day Care Settings Create Inclusive Environments for Children with Chronic Health Conditions: the Parents' Perspectives**

JACKIE MUSGRAVE | University of Worcester, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This research explores how practitioners working with the English Early Years Foundation Stage Framework adapt the curriculum for children with chronic health conditions (anaphylaxis; asthma; diabetes, eczema and epilepsy) in order to make the curriculum inclusive

### **Relationship to previous research works**

this presentation will focus on data collected from parents of children with chronic health conditions

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is adapted as a framework to illustrate how practitioners work with parents to create an inclusive environment

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is a small-scale case study using mixed methods. 60 settings formed the boundaries of the case. A postal survey produced quantitative data. Practitioners who indicated on the returned questionnaires that they were willing to participate further went on to the next stage of data collection. 4 parents became participants and the presentation reports qualitative narratives of the effect of chronic health conditions on their children and their families.

### **Ethical considerations**

University ethics approval was sought and granted

### **Main finding or discussion**

Parents are health advocates for their children chronic health conditions have significant impact on children and their families parent/practitioner relationships are crucial to creating an inclusive environment

### **Implications, practice or policy**

working with parents is essential for inclusion of children with chronic health conditions in early childhood education. parents described how trust in practitioners' abilities to care for their child and manage the chronic condition is essential to the families' well-being. chronic conditions impact on families' everyday activities, for example parents report that they sleep in shifts, so that one parent can care for their child who has sleep disturbance because of the symptoms of their chronic condition.

**Keywords:** parents; inclusion; day care settings; health; birth to three

## **Compensatory Education of Disadvantaged Children - Significance for Early Childhood Education**

THILO SCHMIDT | University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

### **Co-author**

WILFRIED SMIDT | University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

### **Research aims**

In regard to a growing number of educationally disadvantaged children we ask for the potential of compensatory education for these children.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The presentation refers to international previous research (e.g. Ramey, C.T., & Ramey, S.L., 2010) as well as previous research in Germany (e.g. Roos, J., Polotzek, S. & Schöler, H., 2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In the 1960's and 70's compensatory education was a widely noted approach especially in early childhood education. Accompanied by high expectations, sobering findings and fierce criticism, compensatory education became less popular during the next two decades. Regarding a growing number of children with a migration background and children living in poverty, however, the compensatory approach has gained importance for early childhood education in the present. In order to prevent students being disadvantaged during their later school career, preschool education in particular is highlighted as an opportunity of compensatory education.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This presentation aims to analyse the compensatory approach to explore its relevance for today's early childhood education. It gives a survey of long term effects of compensatory education in early childhood education.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical standards have to be considered especially in quasi-experimental study designs of compensatory education.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Research shows some moderate but significant positive findings of early childhood compensatory education for disadvantaged children. As a consequence the discussion of the compensatory approach should be reconsidered in order to avoid potential biases.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Findings on effects of compensatory education can be a substantial basis for early childhood practitioners and policy makers to prevent students being disadvantaged during their later school career.

**Keywords:** compensatory education; disadvantaged children; research findings; school readiness; early childhood education

## **F10 CHILDREN AND PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES**

Chair: FRAN PAFFARD | University of East London, United Kingdom

### **Narratives as a Way to Promote Dialogue About Children's Learning**

RIKKE WETTENDORFF | The Danish Evaluation Institute, Denmark

#### **Research aims**

Ensuring a daycare provision of high quality is a priority in the Danish municipalities, however an evaluation conducted by the Danish Evaluation Institute in 2009 showed that the evaluation practices adopted by the municipalities often did not yield the desired insights into the quality of the daycare provision at the political level, nor did they appear to be meaningful for the daycare professionals. With this knowledge the Danish Evaluation Institute has, on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Finance, created a new approach to documenting and discussing quality in the day care area.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The tool elaborates on the concept of learning stories (Carr 2001) and draws on Patricia Shaw's dialogue based approach to organizational change (Shaw 2002)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Socio-cultural approach to learning

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Narrative approach.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The narrative approach gives voice not only to the day care professionals, parents and politicians, but also to the children themselves.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The presentation will discuss strengths and challenges in the narrative approach and present examples from Danish municipalities.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The tool takes its starting point in learning stories. Using learning stories the dialogical process begins in a "pedagogical evaluation community" where narratives from different professionals are linked together. In this process

new patterns and understandings of children's learning experiences emerges, and insights are drawn up into a meta-narrative. The narratives are then carried into a dialogue forum, the "municipal evaluation community", where daycare professionals, parents, managers, administrators and politicians discuss quality in the daycare area. Here narratives help preserve the complexity and the whole of children's learning experiences.

**Keywords:** evaluation; learning stories; children's perspective; learning; complexity

## **Preschool Teachers' Conceptualization of Children - an Ongoing Project of Childhoods in Rural Areas in Sweden**

EMMA NILSSON | Karlstad University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aim of this work in progress is to analyze how preschool teachers in rural districts, close to the Norwegian border, in conversations with each other and with the children, establish norms, and to explore what descriptions of the children that are established and normalized in their conversations.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The rural areas in Sweden has for a long time been categorized with structural problems, but recent years some areas close to the Norwegian border has shown growth because of employment opportunities across the border. Changes in a society affect not only the children and the parents in preschool, but also the teacher's possibilities to implement its assignment. Previous research is focusing on rural cultural geography and socio-economic differences, in different institutions and in many universities around Sweden, while research from an educational perspective is seemingly unexplored.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A social constructivist approach will guide this study.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This research project has an ethnographical approach with multiple methods. It is located in a preschool close to the border and start spring 2013. The preschool teachers will be observed in staff meetings as well as in informal conversations in the staff room or other places in preschool. The target group consists of educators and other staff.

### **Ethical considerations**

Swedish ethical guidelines for research on children will be followed.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results will contribute to a greater awareness of children's stay in a rural district and thereby contribute to the quality of early childhood education.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Some preliminary results will be presented at the conference.

**Keywords:** preschool teachers; rural; norm; border; preschool

## **F11 CHILD ABUSE AND PROTECTION**

Chair: SUSAN SOAN | Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom

### **An Exploration of the Knowledge Required by Teachers when Working with Children Who had Experienced Early Life Abuse / Neglect**

SUSAN SOAN | Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom

#### **Research aims**

This research aimed to explore whether teachers in English schools have the knowledge and understanding required to work with 'looked after' children who had experienced early life abuse or neglect.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Unlike other research this study reviewed literature from across multiple domains of study, to inform findings from the longitudinal case studies and to create new knowledge and understanding.



## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Using a design by Cuthbert, Rayns and Stanley (2011) a relevant conceptual framework for this specific research study was developed. This refined conceptual framework added complexity but also greater understanding of the risk and protection markers of early life abuse / neglect to that detailed by Cuthbert et al (2011) and hence to any response strategy.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This study was a pragmatic concurrent mixed method design with a multiple case study approach. It used a variety of quantitative and qualitative method tools to collect data. Findings were analysed using a concurrent mixed method procedure.

## **Ethical Considerations**

University (CCCU) Ethic's Board agreed the process for the research. Children were only asked their permission after all other agencies had agreed.

## **Main finding or discussion**

1. Education professionals need to be given specific training about the impact of early life abuse or neglect on a child's learning. 2. Trans-disciplinary working is essential to provide the breadth of professional expertise. 3. Statutory procedures and policy need to focus on professional expertise rather than on system-based compliance.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

1. Child development knowledge required by teaching professionals.
2. Support through procedures and policy for trans-disciplinary working.
3. Policy and managers to support professional expertise rather than system - based compliance.

Keywords: early life; abuse or neglect; knowledge; trans-disciplinary; training

## **Using a Life Skills Module to Prepare Pre-Service Foundation Phase Students for Teaching in Diverse Cultural Contexts**

MARIETTE KOEN | University of the Free State, South Africa

### **Research aims**

In the context of transformation in education of South Africa, Foundation Phase teacher education is undergoing rapid change. Universities face the dual challenge of equipping students with pedagogical content knowledge while at the same time, exposing them to real-life contexts in which they can contextualise theory. The aim of this paper is to explore how real-world experience, inclusive of engagement with cultural differences, influences the quality of students' learning in a Life Skills module in pre-service Foundation Phase education at the University of the Free State.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Wrenn & Wrenn (2009) emphasise that students in professional programmes must be able to practice what they have learned in the classroom.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The concepts informing the study are real-worldness and difference. It is during the early school years that learners develop the skills that will help them be successful in school and life. Real-worldness can create opportunities for future professionals to understand the characteristics of working with differences in early childhood.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study was conducted with 147 students in the final year of the Bachelor of Education. A case study design was employed to collect qualitative data by means of focus groups, open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical clearance was granted by the Faculty of Education.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings show that real-world experiences afford students' opportunities for personal meaning making. The realities they confronted disrupted their conventional responses and challenged them to think of solutions that were context-bound.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Programme design must take into account learning from real-world experiences and possibilities for engagement

with cultural differences.

**Keywords:** early childhood; foundation phase; cultural differences; real world; authentic learning

## **F12 DIVERSE LITERATE AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES**

Chair: ALIE CLEGHORN | Concordia University, Canada

### **Teachers Connecting with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families in Childcare Settings**

FAY HADLEY | Macquarie University, Australia

#### **Research aims**

Partnerships with families are critical to optimum outcomes for children, yet there is limited research about how partnerships are understood or enacted, especially when there is a mismatch between the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of families and teachers. This study provides understanding of family-centred partnerships. The main aims include examining partnerships in childcare for a) culturally and linguistically diverse families and teachers, and b) identifying barriers and supports to partnerships.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The survey tool used is an adaptation of a tool developed during my doctoral research.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Professional practice theory was utilised in this study. This theory argues that one's professional practice is influenced by 'saying', 'doing' and 'relating'.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Using a phenomenological approach I investigated families' and teachers' perceptions of partnerships in four childcare centres in Sydney, Australia. Methods included: surveys, practitioner project, journaling, artefacts and interviews. Analysis included identification of parents and teachers values of partnerships (saying and relating) and how teachers utilised the Australia's Learning Framework when developing building partnerships (doing).

#### **Ethical considerations**

The potential issues included parent complaints or teachers grievances. Parents and teachers were informed of centre complaint processes and encouraged to raise issues. All data was de-identified before being shared.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings related to connections with diverse families: a) how the learning framework influenced teachers' thoughts/ approaches, and, b) what is contested or not discussed ('sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings), from families' and teachers' perspectives.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

This study builds empirical data on what partnerships means for CALD families in childcare settings. This study informs policy, practice, parents and teachers on effective family-centred partnerships.

**Keywords:** diverse families; partnerships; teachers; learning framework; connections

### **Constraints on Establishing Literacy in Multilingual EC Classrooms: Focus on the Quality, Use and Misuse of Worksheets**

ALIE CLEGHORN | Concordia University, Canada

#### **Co-authors**

LARRY PROCHNER | University of Alberta, Canada

RINELLE EVANS | University of Pretoria, South Africa

#### **Research aims**

Few previous studies have looked closely at the use and misuse of worksheets -- a common feature of Majority and Minority world classrooms. The research highlights problems when neither teachers nor learners are first language speakers of English, the Lol.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The focus on worksheets emerged from qualitative/ethnographic studies carried out between 2004 and 2011 in several African countries (Cleghorn & Prochner, 2010; Evans & Cleghorn, 2012; Peacock & Cleghorn, 2004).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

With an overriding concern for culturally congruent quality issues in ECE, this main theoretical sources were: (1) teacher-learner-text (TLT) interaction as a critical element in the encouragement of literacy (2) 'instructional dissonance' stemming from ignorance or denial of hindrances such as a teacher's limited facility with the LoI.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Visual ethnography and space theory provided the lens to address this broad question: How do visual text and other images that learners are exposed to on a daily basis connect to literacy and language issues? Data gathering methods included repeated classroom observations as well as teacher and student teacher conversation interviews. The presentation will include a selection from 45 analyzed worksheets.

### **Ethical considerations**

Canada's Tri-Council research guidelines were adhered to plus each country's research ethics regulations. Pseudonyms are used for the names of schools, locations and individuals.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Opportunities to teach effectively are missed when worksheets are poorly constructed and culturally / linguistically inappropriate for learners.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications are for change in Early Childhood Teacher Education -- the subject of a forthcoming comparative study directed by Larry Prochner with Ailie Cleghorn as one of three co-investigators.

**Keywords:** literacy; print materials; multilingual; quality issues in ECE; teacher education

## **The Governmentality of Childhood Health – to Be a Good Eater**

CAROLINE LJUNGBERG | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Co-author**

JUTTA BALLDIN | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This conference paper's aim is to discuss and problematize the construction of the healthy child.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

We relate to the work of Foucault (discourse) and Rose (governmentality). Central elements in the discourse of children's health is unhealthy food, eating habits and overweight (see James, Kjørholt & Tingstad, 2009) and "strong families" do the right choices and they have an extended knowledge and awareness when it comes to food, nutrition and health (see Green, Owen, Curtis, Smith, Ward & Fisher, 2009).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

We are using the theoretical frame of governmentality (Foucault 1991).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We aim to highlight the above ruling mentalities through different empirical materials, e.g. filmed food situations in different day-care centers, books and reports concerning children's health, and examples from Swedish newspapers reporting about these issues.

### **Ethical considerations**

We are not interested in individuals, but discourses. All participants are anonymized.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The child's knowledge regarding nutrition and a healthy life is a tool of mentality exceeding in both preschool practice and media. Contradictory concepts of children struggle in the same discourse as immature "sugarlovers" as well as competent ambassadors for sustainable food choice. Children need to be educated to eat well and right, but they also have the right to experience and develop the knowledge of good eating on their own conditions.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The medical experts are often positioned in a white middleclass and their position is intertwined with the discourses, whereas there could be negative consequences for families who are ethnically and culturally positioned outside of

a white middleclass.

**Keywords:** governmentality; childhood health; food choice; ethics; class positions

## **F13 CHILD - ADULT INTERACTION**

Chair: MARITTA HÄNNIKÄINEN | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

### **The Professionalism of Preschool-Teacher**

MAIKE TOURNIER | Johann-Wolfgang Goethe University, Germany

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#### **Research aims**

The reported research by videography investigates the quality of the kindergarten teachers' interactions with children in free play and structured situation. The research investigates if the quality of learning and development of young children is influenced by kindergarten teachers' education.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

Several studies assess the quality of kindergarten (e.g. ECCE 2004, EPPE 1997, REPEY 2002) and provide a basis for the PRIMEL study.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Researches reveal a strong influence of kindergarten teachers' competences on children's social, emotional and intellectual development (EPPE 2004; ECCE 1997). In research and politics they call for an academic education to fulfill these requirements instead of the traditional nonacademic education in Germany. (OECD 2001).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

It is a comparative, cross-sectional research in quantitative paradigm. 90 Participants with three different educations at Germany and Swiss are asked by questionnaire (attitudes, self-concepts, knowledge and the resources of the specific kindergarten). Furthermore, the kindergarten teachers' interactions with children are videographed during free play and structured situations. The videographed free play situations will be analyzed by categories by low inferential coding and high inferential rating.

#### **Ethical considerations**

The professionalism of kindergarten teachers should enable every child to participate on education at kindergarten and ensure the well-being and well-becoming of the children.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Actually we have no findings.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The developed instrument could be used for further researches and could provide first information about the influence of academic education on quality at kindergarten and perhaps give first ideas how to develop kindergarten teachers' education in future.

**Keywords:** professionalization; kindergarten; early education; videography; child development

# Emotional Wellbeing of Toddlers in Day Care Groups: Rhyming, Singing and Making Music Together

MARITTA HÄNNIKÄINEN | University of Jyväskylä, Finland

## Research aims

This small-scale study aimed to illuminate the ways in which some typical joint activities give pleasure and delight to the younger children and contribute to their emotional wellbeing. In particular, what is the teachers' role in these activities?

## Relationship to previous research works

The study is part of a broader research project on younger children in day care centres.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Socio-cultural, relational and revised attachment approaches to children's emotional wellbeing and learning were applied.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Two day care groups participated; one comprising 12 children and three teachers, and the other was a subgroup of eight children and two teachers drawn from a larger mix-age group. Data were collected by ethnographic methods, mainly by observations and analyzed by qualitative thematic analysis.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical principles and guidelines for good scientific practice (e.g., consents, confidentiality, preservation of anonymity, not harming the participants) are followed throughout the project.

## Main finding or discussion

The observations offered clear examples, in relation to the power of rhyming, singing and music, for inclusion in good educational practices. Typically, the atmosphere was cheerful and friendly. The children and the teachers were fully involved and participated in joint activities with enthusiasm. The teachers showed a professional, warm and respectful relationship and a positive attitude to the children.

## Implications, practice or policy

Discussing the findings focus on good educational practices. Thus, the implications for practice can be regarded as direct. From the societal point of view, this study could be utilized in teacher education but also in raising awareness among parents and the general public about young children's everyday life and education in day care centres

**Keywords:** young children; emotional wellbeing; day care centre; socio-cultural approaches; good educational practices

## Improvisation

ANNE LISE NORDBØ | Vestfold University College, Norway

## Research aims

Framing improvisations in interactional group processes with small children based on embodiment and drama. My study is planned as a phd-project. Application for my phd-program-study will be processed spring 2013.

## Relationship to previous research works

My study of interaction between teacher-actors and toddler-participants, called a scenic playground framed as a performative event, is published in this article: Nordbø, A.L. (2012) Mind the gap! Creating community between teacher-actors and toddler-spectators in a performative event. *Education Inquiry*, 3(2).

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

Both theatre theory and philosophical concepts of action is a base for my interpretations and analysis of improvisation in a scenic playground. Flexible frames for teaching creative participation in group process. Schechner, Fisher-Lichte, Govan, Biesta, Sawyer.

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

Arts' relation to everyday life, and aspects of democracy and multiple voices are central to my interest of study. My new study will be conducted with emphasis on embodiment and body movement as improvisational frames.

## Ethical considerations

Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) will ensure that the data will be professionally curated, and will judge all ethical aspects concerning research data on small children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

In my recent study of scenic playground, the majority of the two year old toddlers showed a meta-perspective of the framing, and had a focus of interest in the creation of collective action. I want to investigate further, the teachers' framing in relation to the skills of toddlers.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Research to benefit students and EEC teachers.

**Keywords:** improvisation; teachers' role; scenic playground; embodiment; performative framing

## **F14 MULTICULTURALISM AND VALUES**

Chair: TIIA ÕUN | Tallinn University, Estonia

### **National and Multicultural Tasks in the Swedish Preschool Curriculum**

TÜNDE PUSKÁS | Linköping University, Sweden

#### **Co-author**

SABINE GRUBER | Linköping University, Sweden

#### **Research aims**

The aim is to trace back the contradictory approach to linguistic diversity that we argue is present in the Swedish preschool curriculum. On the one hand the curriculum states that one of the tasks of the preschool is to pass on "a cultural heritage – its values, traditions and history, language and knowledge – from one generation to the next". On the other hand the curriculum stipulates that "the preschool should help to ensure that children with a mother tongue other than Swedish, receive opportunity to develop both their Swedish language and their mother tongue".

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The paper relates to previous research on how cultural and linguistic diversity is managed and at times celebrated in the Swedish preschool context.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Our analysis is based on two theoretical perspectives: theories of nationalism and theories of ethnicity (e.g. Brubaker 2004; Calhoun 2007).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Through policy analysis we will trace back the appearance of the multicultural and the permanency of national discourses in Swedish preschool policies to the late 1960s.

#### **Ethical considerations**

We follow the ethical codes stipulated by the Swedish Research Council.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

We argue that the tasks which concern cultural and linguistic diversity emanate from two contradictory perspectives on societal development one of which emphasises national reproduction while the other a multicultural development in society. The Swedish preschool remains to be a national institution that has been given multicultural tasks. It is this duality that is mirrored in the Curriculum.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The Swedish preschool remains to be a national institution that has been given multicultural tasks.

**Keywords:** national; multicultural; curriculum; ethnic; linguistic diversity

### **Religion, the Stealth Subject in the Danish Curriculum of Early Years**

JØRGEN BOELSKOV | University College South Denmark, Denmark

#### **Research aims**

This study explored the extent of religious activities in the teaching of Culture in early years curriculum in two countries: one with explicit emphasis on religion in the kindergarten curriculum and the training of kindergarten teachers; and the other with no explicit emphasis

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous work (Andersen, 1999; Geels and Wikström, 2001) shows an increasing focus on religion in teacher training in Denmark. This shift is also seen to occur in other Scandinavian countries (Tamminen, 1991).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research questions were based on previous studies of kindergarten teacher students in vocational training Boelskov, Boelskov and Rosenberg (2002). The project was maintained within a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) meta theoretical frame.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Evidence was gathered using a questionnaire sent to all kindergarten principals in North Norway (121 kindergartens) and to kindergarten principals attached to University College in South Denmark (128 kindergartens).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The inquiry maintains full standards for anonymity.

### **Main finding or discussion**

In both Denmark and Norway we found high number of kindergartens including religious activities in their teaching of cultural values. This is remarkable given the absence of religion in the national early years curriculum and in the training of staff in Denmark. This increasing activity corresponds with an increasing level of religious activity in the Danish population.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study suggests actions at four levels: in the curriculum; in kindergarten staff training; in kindergarten publicity and in the cooperation between kindergartens and local religious centres.

**Keywords:** religion in kindergarten; comparative research; children aged 3-6; the teaching of cultural values; E-mail questionnaire

## **F15 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IV**

Chair: EVELYN NEUDORF | Tallinn University, Estonia

### **Aistear in Action: Journeys with the Journey**

CARMEL BRENNAN | Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

ARLENE FORSTER | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

#### **Co-authors**

SARAH FITZPATRICK | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

MARY DALY | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

LUCY CONNOLLY | Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

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#### **Research aims**

'Aistear in Action' (AiA), implemented by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) and practitioners, is an action research project designed to support curriculum development, using Aistear, the national curriculum framework.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The project is informed by implementation strategies internationally, reviewed by OECD (2012)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Aistear is built around 3 core structures: (i) 12 principles embracing a sociocultural perspective (ii) 4 themes describing learning and (iii) 4 sets of guidelines. Its interpretive nature allows responsiveness to values, culture and contexts.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research questions 'How do settings with different philosophies develop their curricula using Aistear?' and 'How do we support them?' led to the action research approach (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Three mentors worked with settings using a reflective cycle of observation, evaluation and action.

## **Ethical considerations**

Practitioners requested parents' permission for children's participation and the use of images for educational purposes.

## **Main finding or discussion**

AiA involved journeys within a journey with learning for participants, mentors, organisations and the framework. The ability to listen, reflect, and document were key factors in practitioners making transformative shifts. Holding on to the interpretive, reflective nature of the framework was challenging in a climate where compliance to regulation is important. This conversation between the framework and practice has generated interesting possibilities and challenges for the sector as we negotiate Aistear in action.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The learning from the project will be shared with practitioners nationally through the Aistear Toolkit on NCCA and ECI websites. The action research strategies will inform further training nationally.

**Keywords:** curriculum; reflection; documentation; transformation; change

# **Changes in the Estonian National Curriculum for Pre-School Child Care Institutions: a Shift to the Child-Centred Approach**

EVELYN NEUDORF | Tallinn University, Estonia

## **Research aims**

The aim of the research is to find an answer to the following questions: which changes have taken place in the national curricula of pre-school education in Estonia? How have the roles of the teacher and the learner changed in these curricula?

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Different studies (Wang et al., 2008; Kwon, 2004) have shown that learning initiated by children, the learning process led by the teacher, and a comprehensive and integrated curriculum are of importance in teachers' opinion.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The curriculum enables to support the potential of the child's comprehensive development in different spheres (Williams, 1992). According to Dewey (1966), the curriculum for teaching young children should meet the requirements that children face as members of a group when living in the modern world. The definitions of curricula for schooling and educating young children are very comprehensive, containing both the care for children and various kinds of philosophical attention to children's education, activities related to playing and the process of children's development (Cannella, 2010, 306).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

As a research method, document analysis will be used.

## **Ethical considerations**

All the analyzed documents are public.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Since the implementation of the framework curriculum in 1999 up until the implementation of the current curriculum (2008) the teacher has more freedom to consider the needs of children, as well the choice of suitable teaching methods. The child as an active and reflective researcher is emphasised, the teachers serves as the creator of the suitable environment for the child.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The results can be used in teacher education and formulation of next curricula.

**Keywords:** curriculum; curriculum development; pre-school education; Estonia; documents

# **Curriculum and Pedagogical Planning in Two Brazilian Pre-Schools: a Case Study**

BEATRIZ ABUCHAIM | Carlos Chagas Foundation, Brazil

## **Research aims**

This research aimed to study how pre-school teachers transpose the curriculum documents into a pedagogical planning and then into everyday practices.



### **Relationship to previous research works**

Many studies have shown that educational practices quality is strongly related to a well-structured curriculum and good pedagogical planning, which responds to curriculum prescriptions and also to children's interests.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The concepts of curriculum, pedagogical planning and everyday life were explored, using Brazilian reserachers (as Kramer and Corsino) and international authors (as Agnes Heller; Elsie Rockwell; Justa Ezpeleta; Gimeno Sacristan).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Two pre-schools were investigated in São Paulo using the case study methodology. Data were collected by means of interviews with teachers, supervisors and directors. Observations were made to describe the everyday life of preschool groups. The following documents were analyzed: municipal curriculum, ECE institution curriculum and pedagogical planning of the classrooms observed.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and followed all its rules.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results indicate that teachers play a crucial role to implement the curriculum in everyday life. In their work, they usually try to compose a practice based on children's interests, standards of the curriculum and their own conceptions about Education.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The activity of planning should be mandatory in pre-schools, once it provides moments for teachers to think over their practices, write about the past, project the future, debate with the team about daily events and do research to support their work.

**Keywords:** pedagogical planning; curriculum; pre-school; evereyday life; Brazil

## **F16 CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY II**

Chair: CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM | The Ohio State University, United States of America

### **Choreographed Childhoods: Patterns of Embodiment in the Lives of Contemporary Children**

EEVA ANTTILA | University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland

#### **Research aims**

This paper highlights the significance of children's embodiment. It will focus on the development and dynamics of embodied interaction and expressive movement. It builds connections between developmental movement patterns and the development of social cognition.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

This paper will draw from research in developmental movement, creative movement and dance education (Bond 2001; Lindqvist 2001), research in children's culture (Kalliala 1999) and early childhood development (Dissanayake 2009; Trevarthen 2010).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This is an interdisciplinary paper, drawing from theories in embodied cognition (Damasio 2010; Johnson 2008; Thompson 2007), social cognition (Hari & Kujala 2009), phenomenology of the body (Maitland 2005), sociology of childhood (Corsaro 1997), child culture and arts education (Efland 2008).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The paper is based on literature review, philosophical contemplations and practice-based research, including author's previous research on children's creative movement/dance (Anttila 2003; Green 2007; Stinson 1998).

#### **Ethical considerations**

This is a literature review and philosophical, contemplative paper. Children's integrity and agency are central in my work.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Children's embodied patterns develop through childhood. They may become increasingly limited by external rules, stereotypes, and models. Every adult interacting with children can be considered a movement educator. Awareness of embodied patterns may help educators be more supportive of children's creative expression and embodied interaction.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This paper shows how important it is for all educators to become aware of embodiment and the cultural/social stereotypes in embodied patterning. This awareness, in connection with the ability to observe and understand children's embodied patterns has considerable implications for professional training and practice within early childhood education.

**Keywords:** embodiment; movement patterns; creative movement; embodied cognition; social cognition

## **Voices of Children: Childhood and Early Education in Singapore**

CHRISTINE CHEN | AECES, Singapore

### **Co-author**

NIRMALA KARUPPIAH | National Institute of Education, Singapore

### **Research aims**

This qualitative study presents the perspective of five to six year old on childhood and early education in Singapore

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research is related to a study by Jamie Koh, 2013 on childhood in Singapore. This study captures the voices of preschool children which were not highlighted.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Using the Ecological Theory as our conceptual framework it explores the five - six year old's world.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is a qualitative study in five day care centres that engages 44 children, 21 boys and 23 girls in focus group discussions. After the discussion, children were asked to draw what they would like to do.

### **Ethical considerations**

Data collection began after all consent forms were returned by the centres and parents.

### **Main finding or discussion**

From the drawings, the main themes which emerged are family activities and playing alone or with friends. The focus group discussions unveiled what life is like being a five-six year old in Singapore; what they do after attending day care and during the weekends; what they like and dislike about day care ; what they will miss when they leave it; their childhood fears and who they will turn to; what makes them happy and what they wish for.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The voices of children remind us that families and teachers are key players in the child's world and that play is the child's work. As we reflect on our personal childhood, we ask ourselves questions like; has childhood changed over the years? What is our role as early childhood teachers and families of young children?

**Keywords:** children's voices; childhood; early education; Singapore; home-life

## **Minority Voices: Are the Voices of Ethnic Minority Children and Parents Being Heard in Early Years Settings?**

CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM | The Ohio State University, United States of America

### **Co-author**

ALLYSON LEEDY | The Ohio State University, United States of America

### **Research aims**

This study examines the experiences of ethnic minority children taught by white female British teachers attending a primary school in the north of England.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous studies (Tomlinson, 1991) have primarily focused on educational attainment in primary schools in England,

rather than the experiences of ethnic minority children and families. It has been argued that some teachers have lower expectations of some of their pupils, more specifically, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Culture and Identity are examined, with particular reference to the work of Adams (1994) and Siraj-Blatchford (1996).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research uses a multi-method case approach including interviews and observations. The student participants were from years 2 and year 3 and were located in two different classrooms in the school. Pattern coding was used to analyze the student and teacher experiences as informants answered questions and shared their experiences.

### **Ethical considerations**

Responsibility to the participants, the research profession and to the public are considered (see BERA, 2005). Particular consideration is given to the issues concerning a white researcher working with participants from ethnic minority families. Moreover, consent and assurances of confidentiality were obtained from all participants and any possible risks to anonymity were explored where relevant and appropriate

### **Main finding or discussion**

Findings examine language proficiency levels, culturally responsive teaching strategies, teacher expectations, classroom communication, and barriers related to language and culture.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The research reflects on those barriers cited by the informants and observed in classrooms while considering recommendations to inform future practice when working with ethnic minority students in the schools.

**Keywords:** pedagogy; practice based inquiry; case study; children's perspectives; parents perspectives

## **F17 LITERATURE PRACTICES II**

Chair: LINDA NEWMAN | The University of Newcastle, Australia

### **Home Literacy Practises: Preschool Children's Parents, Choice of Children's Literature and Popular Culture**

THORDIS THORDARDOTTIR | University of Iceland, Iceland

#### **Research aims**

The aim of this study is to explore how preschool children's parents choose children's literature and popular culture for their children at home.

#### **Relationship to previous research works**

The survey is a part of a research on preschool children's cultural literacy (Thordardottir, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2012a, 2012b).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The framework is based upon Bourdieu's (1977,1990) concepts of cultural field, cultural capital and habitus.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A survey was conducted to 115 parents of 4-5 years old preschool-children in Reykjavik, Iceland. Response rate was 70,4%. The data was analyzed by hierarchical cluster analysis.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Conventional sampling was used and it put some questions-mark to factors like circumstances, ethnicity and education.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

The findings indicate that children's literature, DVDs and computer games were common in the homes, and the parents' choices of these materials appeared to be linked to children's gender. The parents said that their children spent more time watching TV and DVDs than listening to stories read aloud, and that they spent the least amount of time playing computer games. The mother's education did not emerge as a significant factor in the survey The parents' taste in children's literature and popular culture was grouped according to a hierarchical cluster analysis into five clusters. These different clusters could be clues to different family habitus. The role of gender was conspicuous in three of these clusters since parents of boys were more likely to choose cartoons and superheroes-stories while parents of girls tended to choose princess stories.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Increasing awareness of the meaning of family habitus and gender in preschools are important.

**Keywords:** family habitus; preschool children; gender; ethnicity; early literacy

## **Repositioning Families in Young Children's Literacy Learning: Insights from Chilean Families**

LINDA NEWMAN | The University of Newcastle, Australia

### **Co-author**

CHRISTINE WOODROW | University of Western Sydney, Australia

### **Research aims**

Two key questions are addressed: • How do families perceive their contribution to children's literacy learning in the home learning environment? • What impact does pedagogical documentation undertaken by early years educators have on families' engagement with and connection to their children's literacy learning at the centre and at home?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This project draws on 'funds of knowledge' research (Moll, et al, 1992; Zipin, 2009) to challenge deficit discourses about poor families and dominant discourses about literacy learning and teaching for disadvantaged children. It repositions families in poor communities in Chile as key partners in their children's education with 'ample and positive resources' (Moll et al., 1992, p. 18). The research is part of the "Futuro Infantil Hoy" capacity-building program, ongoing since 2008.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research is framed by a social justice world-view that adopts sociocultural theory as a research lens.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research is interpretive and the methodology is designed to value the voices of families as important agents in children's lives. Data has been generated through surveys, focus groups, video-recordings of small group discussions between educators and families in a 'literacy café', and artefacts.

### **Ethical considerations**

The conduct of the research required careful consideration of the cultural context and the power relationships between researchers, educators and families, encouraging a 'more symmetrical relationship' (Moll et al., 1992, p. 139).

### **Main finding or discussion**

Research findings highlight strong family interest in their children's learning and the ways that families resource children's learning. Pedagogical documentation can build partnerships between educators and families that strengthen family pedagogies.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for families and educators are discussed.

**Keywords:** funds of knowledge; family voices; early literacy learning; contextually relevant pedagogies; sociocultural theory

## **F18 LEADERSHIP**

Chair: ANN FARRELL | Queensland University of Technology, Australia

## **Exploring Practice Leadership Among Early Years Professionals: Outcomes from the Longitudinal Study of EYPS**

MARTIN NEEDHAM | University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

This paper summarises the outcomes of the longitudinal study of EYPS undertaken between 2009 and 2012. The longitudinal study investigated the influence of EYPS on Early Years Professionals' (EYPs') ability to carry out their

roles, their leadership and their impact in the settings in which they worked.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) was introduced in 2006 to enhance quality in early years provision, influenced by the findings of the EPPE study (Sylva et al, 2010). EPPE suggested that quality in early years provision was associated with having graduate leaders and high quality interactions in a play-based curriculum.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study drew on established notions of quality in early years provision (Fenech, 2011) and theories of agency, professionalism (Miller & Cable, 2011) and early years leadership (Whalley, 2008).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Largely qualitative, the study was based on case studies of 30 settings in England and a repeated national questionnaire survey of over 25 per cent of all EYPs. The case studies used observations of the learning environment and interactions between adults and children, social network analysis and qualitative interviews with staff, to explore quality leadership.

### **Ethical considerations**

The three year study was regularly monitored by internal and external advisory boards. Participant validation of data and developing case studies was used throughout.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The study highlighted EYPS' positive impact in supporting workforce development in the different case study settings across the early years sector in England.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This suggested that EYPS was creating a cohort of practitioners who were more able to take on a practice leadership role in their settings.

**Keywords:** leadership; quality; change; status; learning environment

## **Building a Globally Competent ECEC Workforce: Empirical Evidence of Preservice ECEC Teachers Engaged in Intercultural Exchange in Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Denmark**

ANN FARRELL | Queensland University of Technology, Australia

### **Co-authors**

INGRID PRAMLING SAMUELSSON | Gothenburg University, Sweden

AVIS RIDGWAY | Monash University, Australia

CAROLYN SILBERFELD | University of East London, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

The research aims to provide an empirical evidence base for building a globally competent workforce in ECEC. It investigates the learning of 54 preservice early childhood teachers and 33 staff engaged in 'Intercultural Dialogue for Global Leadership and Citizenship in Early Childhood' in a six-university consortium in Europe (Gothenburg, University of East London, UCN Denmark) and Australia (QUT, Charles Sturt & Monash).

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The research redresses the under-representation of international research into intercultural learning through international mobility in ECEC teacher education.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The research draws upon the theoretical work of Bourdieu (1986, 2006) to examine the learning of preservice ECEC teachers within the 'sites of production' afforded by their home and host contexts and teacher education programs. It draws also on conceptual work around childhood (Corsaro, 2005) and children's democratic rights to participation (Mayall, 2009).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Preservice teachers' audio-taped focus groups/interviews and/or written reflections (in all six universities) have undergone thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012) to establish the affordances and challenges of intercultural experience for emerging ECEC teachers.

## Ethical considerations

Principles and protocols for informed voluntary consent, anonymity and withdrawal without penalty or comment underpin the ethical conduct of the research.

## Main finding or discussion

Main findings include the importance of preservice teachers' "taken-for-granted" language and cultural practices in ECEC programs. Participants reveal insights into different pedagogical practices used in play-based programs in their home and host contexts.

## Implications, practice or policy

The research provides cross-national evidence of intercultural experience and international mobility in the learning and experience of emerging ECEC teachers who operate in increasingly global contexts.

**Keywords:** early childhood education and care; early years; intercultural competence; international mobility; pedagogical practice

# Strategic Leadership and Management Practices in Order to Improve Collaboration Between Child Welfare and ECECs

TORILL MOE | North-Trondelag University College, Norway

## Research aims

How can leaders in child welfare and managers of ECECs cooperate in order to increase the number of concern messages and utilize their respective knowledge and skills. A focus will be on strategic leadership practice including multiple management perspectives.

## Relationship to previous research works

Previous research has looked at how to increase the number of concern messages from ECECs to the child welfare including taking part in early intervention (Bratterud & Emilsen, 2013). There has been less focus on how the managers of ECECs and the leaders of child welfare can work systematically to increase the number of concern messages and combined with this work actively to leverage the expertise of both services.

## Theoretical and conceptual framework

I will use theories of knowledge management to explain how the expertise of both services can understand concern messages and interactively improve their knowledge utilization in early intervention. Theoretical basis: Bolman & Deal (2009), Busch [et al.] (2007), Krogh, [et al.] (2005), Kvello & Moe 2013 (ed.) Schon (2001).

## Paradigm, methodology and methods

I will conduct three explorative qualitative focusinterviews with pairs of leaders from child welfare combined with managers of ECECs in three municipalities in Norway. The differences between actor and observer perspective will be utilized to explore tacit knowledge and create ideas of improved collaboration.

## Ethical considerations

Confidentiality in relation to client affairs will be secured.

## Main finding or discussion

Ideas of strategic leadership practices in institutional collaboration between two different child care institutions. Develop first categories of collaborative practices relevant for further studies.

## Implications, practice or policy

Improved explicit strategic leadership practices in multiple management practices, relevant for institutional collaboration

**Keywords:** strategic leadership; knowledge management; management perspectives; collaboration; early intervention

# POSTER PRESENTATIONS

## Collaboration Between Early Childhood Centres and Primary Schools in the Transition from Early Childhood Education to Primary School – the Parental Perspective

JOHANNA BACKHAUS | University of Cologne, Germany

### Co-authors

ANDREA BOGATZ | University of Cologne, Germany

PETRA HANKE | University of Cologne, Germany

### Research aims

The aim of ongoing research study WirKt is to examine the (perceived) effects of collaboration between early childhood centres and primary schools on teachers, parents and children and to investigate pedagogical documentation in the transition to school. This poster presents key findings from both areas of study, with particular emphasis on parental views.

### Relationship to previous research works

The study is based on the transition model of Griebel and Niesel (2011) prevalent in Germany, which sees educational transitions as important processes of change for children and their families.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

This model draws on a family developmental psychology approach whose theoretical underpinnings have multiple sources, including the idea of ecological system levels proposed by Bronfenbrenner. The model assumes that not only children but also parents must experience the transition actively. Educational workers, for their part, are seen as educational partners who support children and parents during the transition phase.

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The sample of the study consists of parents from early childhood centres (n=550) and primary schools (n=551) who were surveyed by questionnaire before and after their children began primary school.

### Ethical considerations

The participation was completely voluntary and all data from the parents was kept confidential to protect their privacy.

### Main finding or discussion

The results presented in the poster can provide broader knowledge about the effects of collaboration between primary schools and early childhood centres on parents as well as the role of pedagogical documentation in the transition process.

### Implications, practice or policy

They can also help guide practice in educational partnerships with parents during the transition phase.

**Keywords:** collaboration; transition to school; pedagogical documentation; parent's involvement; professionalism

## Communication Possibilities in the Preschool Yard?

CARINA BERKHUIZEN | Malmö University, Sweden

### Research aims

The study's aim is to examine 1-3 year old preschool children's possibilities to communicate with each other and with pedagogues in the preschool yard. Which possibilities to communicate in interaction can be distinguished at three different preschools and how does interaction varies with the physical environment and with the pedagogues?

### Relationship to previous research works

Outdoor stay is integrated in the Swedish preschool workday and is primarily located to the preschool yard.

The possibilities in this arena are important. Studies have shown that surrounding environment affects how outdoor play tools are used in play. This study, which focus on children's possibilities to communicate as pre-condition for children's ability to develop language skills, will highlight the physical environment and the pedagogues' importance for children's interaction.

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Mainly Ecological psychology, with support from socio cultural perspective concepts.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Wicker's conceptual interpretation of "Behaviour settings" (1987); from Ecological psychology, as socially constructed, enables the combination with analysis tools from the social cultural perspective, i.e. "Sustained shared thinking" (Fleer, 2010). The method is mainly observations with field notes and video camera.

## **Ethical considerations**

Good research practice is practiced (Swedish Research council, 2011)

## **Main finding or discussion**

The learning environment consists of both physical environment and pedagogues; which influence the context for 1-3 year old children's communication and interaction.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

In extension, a contribution to the subject didactics is possible in which children's communication and language development are included. Communication is construed as part of an extended language concept. The concept includes verbal words, body language and other signals used to create meaning and understanding.

**Keywords:** children; preschool yard; communication; interaction; behaviour settings

# **Development of Self-Regulation in Play**

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## **Research aims**

Project is targeted to create a tool promoting advanced forms of children's play and facilitate development of self-regulation abilities. An alternative agentic model is developed to replace rule-focused self-regulation.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Similar research has been done by Manuylenko, 1948; Bodrova and Leong, 2007; Diamond, 2009.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The project develops further cultural-historical play theory (Vygotsky, El'konin, Korotkova) and especially tries to reveal its developmental potential. In this connection two theoretical concepts are central: 1) The general genetic law of cultural development and 2) The ZPD in play. We are interested in two developmental mechanisms behind them – how pretend play supports the creation of sense and motivation

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The project is carried out at the Research Laboratory of Play, LEU in Vilnius with EU research financing.

The project proceeds in three stages: 1) Survey of play (Vilnius, Moscow) and self-regulation approaches in ECEC, 2) Elaboration of a new model and approach to self-regulation in play, and 3) Transfer of models on educational field. The core of the approach will be adult intervention strategy, which elaborates further self-regulation in imagined play situations and role relations.

## **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent of participating adults and children is obtained.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Results from the first survey stage are presented in our symposium session. Detailed models and tools for developing genuine self-regulation will be presented in EECERA conferences of next years.



### **Implications, practice or policy**

On the basis of findings a tool developing self-regulation in children together with the self-regulation developmental (SRD) guidelines for psychologists, educators and parents will be created.

**Keywords:** self-regulation; self-development; make-believe play; sense making; ZPD

## **Othring in Early Childhood**

STEFFEN BROCKMANN | Fliedner University of Applied Science, Germany

### **Research aims**

The research questions focus on how preschool children and adults socially construct differences. Moreover, they explore the impact these constructions have on daily kindergarten life and how educators deal with these social constructions in their educational practice.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Up to date, little research on othering of children aged 3-6 has been done in Germany. Some articles on this topic: Diehm and Kuhn 2006; Beelmann and Rabe 2011.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical foundation of this research paper is the Anti-Bias Approach in Early Childhood (Derman-Sparks, Ramsey 2006) and the Concept of Intersectionality (Degele, Winker 2009).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Research based on problem-centered interviews in a kindergarten with parents and educators, and informal conversations involving guided tours of the classroom with children. Additionally, data was collected by participatory observation.

### **Ethical considerations**

Special attention was paid to conducting interviews which the children liked participating in and which did not contain any offensive or exposing questions.

### **Main finding or discussion**

In their daily kindergarten life, children actively constructed social and cultural differences and exchanged views on them. In some situations, socially constructed differences were used to include or exclude peers from games and activities. Furthermore, some of the exclusions which occurred among the children were based on social class. The way preschool children construct and use classism amongst each other in Germany has only been investigated to a very small degree.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings allow to deduce important implications regarding the professionalization of educators. This especially applies to improving the educators' perception of discrimination as well as their knowledge about the didactics of anti-discrimination.

**Keywords:** othering; diversity; inclusion; social construction of differences; problem-centered interviews

## **Stereotyping of Family Roles in Terms of Gender**

ANNA BUJNOWSKA | Maria Curie - Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland

### **Co-author**

AGNIESZKA LASOTA | Pedagogical University in Krakow, Poland

### **Research aims**

The aim of the research is to find answers to the questions: What do children learn from adults? Is there a difference between particular family members regarding transmission of specific values or attitudes to the youngest generation? How are the family roles perceived in terms of gender?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The presented fragment of research is a part of the study conducted in Poland, concerning the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, values and patterns of behaviour among grandparents, parents and children. The research corresponds with the studies conducted previously abroad (V.C.Downs, 1989; A.Williams, J.F.Nussbaum, 2001) and in Poland (K.Maciejak, 2010; B.Szmigielska, M.Tomaszek, 2009).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework is grounded in social psychology. The concept of gender roles stereotyping, whose author is a Polish psychologist B.Wojciszke (2002), was used in the study.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The analysis covered the results of 90 surveyed respondents, classified into three age groups (kindergarten period, school period and adolescence). The diagnostic-poll method was used, interview techniques and the enquiry form were applied (a questionnaire designed by the authors).

## **Ethical considerations**

We obtained institutional consent of the head of kindergarten and school; we afforded the well-being of the participants.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The outcomes of the research demonstrate that children associate different values, attitudes and knowledge with particular family members, depending on their social function, family role and gender. Differences in quantity and quality of characteristics assigned to adults were observed among children of various ages.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The outcomes of the research will facilitate better understanding of the stereotyping problem. This will surely contribute to skilful design of educational programmes.

**Keywords:** stereotype; values; roles; transmission; gender

# **Musical Behaviours in 0-to-3-Year-Old Children. Construction, Analysis and Validation of an Observational Pattern**

REINA CAPDEVILA SOLÀ | University Ramon Llull, Spain

## **Co-author**

MARIONA DALMAU MONTALÀ | University Ramon Llull, Spain

## **Research aims**

- To go deeply into musical behaviours in children.
- To elaborate and validate an observational pattern.
- To estimate changes produced in educators after using this observational pattern, their analysis and assessment

## **Relationship to previous research works**

- socioconstructivism driven by Loris Malaguzzi.
- musical behaviors by Françoise Delalande

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In the theoretical framework our perspective is that of a rich and powerful child. We analyzed the principles of musical behaviour, and factors that intervene in imagination and creativity; our proposal is within a social-constructivist framework; and we also studied the role of observation in educational practice in detail. We also approached the teacher figure with a clear option for the teacher-researcher from the model of action-research

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Our research proposes an analysis of observations carried out in different early childhood education schools (1st cycle, 0-to-3-year-old children); interviews and evolutionary questionnaires carried out by participating educators. Data were quantitatively and qualitatively processed.

## **Ethical considerations**

The participants were advised that their data are treated with total confidence and always we used a respectful language

## **Main finding or discussion**

From our results, we reached the conclusions that showed the validity of the constructed instrument and how a change of vision in front of children's musical behaviours can enrich both their lives and those of adults. Different research lines have started from all the collected information.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

In this research, an observational tool was constructed and validated to help educators of 0-3-year-old children to notice, get to know, and to assess their reactions and behaviours in front of sound and musical experience.

**Keywords:** discovery of sound; children 0-3; observation; teachers' role; musical behaviors

## **The Educational Practice of Pre-School in Interaction**

SARA DALGREN | Linköping University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The content of the poster will focus on an ongoing study in which an interest for the everyday activities of educational practice in pre-school is displayed. More specific, the study has the interaction between the pre-school teacher and the child/ren as its focus. In the study, educational practice in pre-school is understood as something that is being "done" in interaction between adults and children and the overarching question is: - how is educational practice being done in the interaction between adult and child/ren in pre-school?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study will relate to previous research works in the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis where there is an interest to elucidate the "unspoken, which is being taken for granted" in educational practice.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

As theoretical and methodological framework, Ethnomethodology and Conversation analysis is being used. Ethnomethodology can, put simply, be understood as the study of humans methods in social interaction and a conversation analytic perspective focus on "activities as interactional achievements" (Melander & Sahlström, 2010:13).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study is a video-based study.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study has been approved by the Central Ethical Review Board.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Since the analysis of the empirical data is not completed, the study's main findings as well as implications for pre-school practice or policy is yet to be found.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The ongoing study presented in the content of the poster may leave a contribution to the discussion about education in preschool, and more precise about the educational practice that is being done in the interaction between adult and children in pre-school.

**Keywords:** educational practice in pre-school; early childhood education; ethnomethodology; conversation analysis; interaction

## **The Stavanger Project - the Learning Child. Has There Been a Change in the Kindergartens Professional Competence from Before to After the Project Was Completed?**

BJØRG DANIELSEN JØLBO | University of Stavanger, Norway

### **Research aims**

The goal of this ongoing study is to investigate the change in the kindergarten as an organization, as well as in management and staff, as a result of their participation in a large research project on children's development in kindergarten age.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

We live in a socio-cultural world where outside influences interact with our previous experience and knowledge and create something new (Vygotsky L.S.1978) The theoretical framework will be based on theories of change and the leader's role (Senge, P. 1999, Wadel, C .2004).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Research shows that work in the kindergarten affect the people there. We achieve new experience and knowledge through professional courses, the methods we use, and the children we are responsible for.

The manager of the kindergarten has a great influence on the changes in the organization . The manager's role and contribution to the change will be the focus point of this study.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

As a method, five of the leaders in the project's kindergartens have been interviewed. These were picked out based on a short survey among the managers of the participating kindergartens. The interviews were made with managers who have worked in the same kindergarten throughout the whole project period. The content of the interviews will be presented as narratives.

### **Ethical considerations**

I will treat the interviewees with respect.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The hypothesis is that knowledge, practices, and collaboration requirements have changed in the kindergarten during the research project. This study will reveal areas that have changed and to what extent.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The practice will focus on management in The Kinderkarden

**Keywords:** change; kindergarten; management; contribution; competence

## **Out of Classrooms and Learning from Nature**

LEE-FENG HUANG | National Pintung University of Education, Taiwan

### **Research aims**

The green space becomes scarce because of urbanization in Taiwan. Preschoolers have less chance to explore the natural environment. Their knowledge on nature usually comes from reading books or watching television. This study aims to investigate how preschoolers benefit from the natural environment.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Wilson (1995, 2008) indicated that experiences in a natural environment foster children's development in all domains, including adaptive, cognitive, socioemotional and communicative competence.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Based on Kolb's experiential learning theory (1975) children learn from real experience, sharing and cooperation; the nature environment provides all these for preschoolers.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The research participants were 11 5-6-year-old children and their teacher. Children entered a forest park near the kindergarten once a week in 4 months. No activity was premeditated by the teacher and children explored the environment freely. This study used observation and interview to collect research data.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study was conducted under the parental consent.

### **Main finding or discussion**

After analyzing the data, this study found that the preschoolers' learning behaviors in comparison with theirs in the classroom were as follows:

1. They are more willing to share findings with their peers.
2. They behave more cooperatively.
3. They show stronger motivation to explore.
4. They participate more actively in group discussion.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Based on these findings this study recommends that teachers should allow young children to explore the natural environment frequently. Teachers should provide appropriate scaffoldings and support only when necessary.

**Keywords:** preschoolers; natural environment; learning behavior; outdoor learning; experiential learning

## **To Investigate Six Autistic Children's Cognitive Development**

CHIU-HSIA HUANG | National Pingtung University of Education, Taiwan

### **Co-author**

HSIANG-MIN LO | National Pingtung University of Education, Taiwan

### **Research aims**

This aim is to investigate 6 autistic children in their levels of ADZ, ZPD and DDZ by Dynamic Assessment of Cognitive Development in Preschool Children with 44 tasks developed by Kulesza, E. M.(2004). By using the task-support procedure, test-training-test; the instructional identification implements two types of children learning by observation and imitation.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

A model to be imitated is the teacher and the problem solving strategy is demonstrated based on Bandura's model of social learning, Piaget, Case and Vygotsky's cognitive theories that appears to be determined by the intelligence development from dynamic intelligence to declarative knowledge– hypothetical-deductive reasoning.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

To identify six autistic children in their levels of ADZ, ZPD and DDZ. All data are analyzed by percentile with observational descriptions if necessary.

### **Ethical considerations**

This investigator claims that this cognitive dynamic assessment emphasizes in performing, therefore, it is with cultural free.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results indicate that 50% of 3 years old autistic children complete independently (ADZ), of 8.33% need little help(ZPD) and of 41.67% incomplete (DDZ) respectively. For 4 years old autistic children complete independently with 56.92% respectively, of 20% with little help respectively, of 23.08% incomplete respectively.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The reliability Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 3 and 4 years old Taiwanese preschoolers is .708 and .904 respectively, this dynamic assessment is very reliable, consistent and stable, therefore, the set can be applied to Taiwanese preschoolers based on psychometric analysis.

**Keywords:** cognitive; development; dynamic assessment; autistic; Taiwan

## **Activities for Children, Who Are Not Enrolled in ECEC Services, and for Their Families: the Case of Slovenia**

JERNEJA JAGER | Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

### **Research aims**

The aim was to evaluate a 2-year process of developing and implementing activities for children, who are not enrolled in ECEC services, and for their parents/families.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research is in connection with previous research work of the presenting author in the frame of ensuring an equal access to ECEC services for disadvantaged children and their families, and in the frame of developing quality ECEC programs for Romani children in Slovenia.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

In Slovenia, the right for ECEC is not taken by all children. From several research we found out that high quality ECEC brings long term benefits for an individual and for the society. For disadvantaged children, a high quality ECEC can make a significant contribution in providing learning experiences necessary for child's development and learning.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A focus group was conducted with practitioners from 4 ECEC institutions at the end of first year of implementation, and questionnaires were distributed at the end of second year.

### **Ethical considerations**

All participants were informed in advance that their data will be retained in accordance with the Law on personal data protection.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Families with children, who are not enrolled in ECEC services, gained trust in ECEC practitioners and institutions. For more in-depth work with children and their families, more time and other resources would be needed.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

This kind of programs are of a high importance for children, and for their parents. Local politics and government should ensure funding for those programs to ensure that every child (and his family) has equal access to ECEC services.

**Keywords:** children, not enrolled in ECEC; rights of the child; an equal access to ECEC services; disadvantaged children; children and families

## **To Investigate How Disagreeing Children, in Child-Directed Activities, Negotiate About Entrances and Participation**

ULLA JIVEGÅRD | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### **Research aims**

To investigate how disagreeing children, in child-directed activities, negotiate about entrances and participation.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Within this group followed there are 12 different mother tongues since many children in Swedish preschool speak other mother tongues. In Scandinavia children are encouraged to negotiate opinions at home, argues Sommer (2011), and participating in a group of children includes developing the abilities of negotiating different meanings. This study indicates that it is important to communicate in appropriate communicative genres and not only, which Corsaro (2010) argues, is it particularly crucial is to be able to contribute with ideas sensibly adjusted to suit the concerns of several peers.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Negotiating competence refers to how children learn strategies, i.e. in order to participate more actively in common activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study takes a Neo-Vygotskian perspective, particularly building on the theoretical work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1984, 2010). Transcribed dialogue analysis of video filmed observations was conducted.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study follows the ethical guidelines of the Swedish research council for social science research including requirements of confidentiality, consent, information and autonomy and that participation in the study was voluntary.

### **Main finding or discussion**

It is essential for the child to learn to express him-or herself in several different communicative genres and often to rapidly switch between them.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The importance of observing if children in friend groups expressing themselves sensibly in different genres, or just in one. Also to recognize children skilled in these expressions but still not attaining central participation and control in play activities.

**Keywords:** communicative genres; disagreements; friend groups; negotiation skills; participation

## **Research and Development of Class Design Matrix as a Tool to Design Art Appreciation Class in Kindergarten and Elementary School: of an Class**

MIDORI KANAZAWA | Hiroshima University, Japan

### **Co-author**

TOSHIAKI MORI | Hiroshima University, Japan

### **Research aims**

The purpose of this study was to develop Class Design Matrix as a tool to design art appreciation class in kindergarten elementary school.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

We investigated how to bridge the gap between kindergarten education and elementary school education in Japan.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study is based on the zone of proximal development theory of Vygotsky

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The teacher conducted art appreciation classes twice employing two different paintings, one of which is representational and the other is abstract. In the first class the teacher was not provided with the matrix, although provided with in the second class. Verbatim records of classroom discourse were recorded by using PC recorders.

## **Ethical considerations**

Participated in this study on condition of anonymity

## **Main finding or discussion**

Major findings of this study were as follows: (1) Elaboration as well as autonomy rose to higher level on the second class. (2) Percentage of supportive questionings in the second class was higher than that in the first class for all phases of the class.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

These results were interpreted as clear evidence that Class Design Matrix is a useful tool to design elaborative and supportive art appreciation classes.

**Keywords:** class design matrix; art appreciation class; zone of proximal development; discourse analysis; supportive questionings

## **Ready to School? Parental Perspectives of Transition to School in Poland**

ANNA KIENIG | University of Bialystok, Poland

### **Research aims**

In the years 2009-2014 in Poland there is the change of the age of school entry: from 7;0 to 6;0. The aim of this study was to analyse parents' opinions on transition competences of 6- and 7-year old children.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The study was informed by transition research (Fabian & Dunlop 2005, Griebel & Niesel 2007, Kienig 2011, 2012).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Theoretical framework for this research is the bioecological model of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Bronfenbrenner & Morris 2006) and ecological transition as key element of this model.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Research findings comprise data collected during transition to school. The sample included 80 children aged 6;0 from two groups: class "0" and 1st grade and their parents and teachers. The data included results of children's behaviours observations, interviews with parents and school teachers.

### **Ethical considerations**

We've got permission from all of the parents of children to conduct research involving them. Observations and interviews were done under the condition of anonymity.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Successful transition to school in parents' opinions depends on many external factors (family, preschool and school context).

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The children's successful school entry may be facilitated by developing children's transitions competencies before school entry and parents-teachers cooperation

**Keywords:** transition; transition competencies; primary education; school readiness; parental perspectives

## **Ideas and Discourses of Children's Communication and Participation within the Discussions of Pedagogical Documentation**

THERESE LARSSON | Malmö University, Sweden

## **Research aims**

The aim of the study is to investigate discourses about children's communication and participation in teachers' reflective discussions based on pedagogical documentations. A condition for a documentation to become pedagogical is that it is used for reflections. Pedagogical documentation is a tool developed within the Reggio Emilia philosophy, a tool that has gained increasing recognition in Swedish preschool practice and policy documents.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Swedish research on pedagogical documentation focuses for instance perspectives on children, evaluation and practical use.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theory and method is based on critical discourse analysis with inspiration from Fairclough.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The empirical data will include teachers' discussions of documentations from one preschool department. I will follow a group of teachers during their planning and reflection meetings in which I will take the role as a partially participating observer. The discussions are analyzed with inspiration from Fairclough's analytical model.

## **Ethical considerations**

The ethical principles of the Swedish Research Council have been considered.

## **Main finding or discussion**

In teachers' reflective discussions, conceptions are articulated about perspectives and understanding of children's communication. The emerging discourses can be considered to be governing the possibilities and conditions for communication and the possible communicative spaces that are made available in the preschool practice.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

Pedagogical documentation can be used as a tool when reflecting on pedagogical praxis and as a means for democratic influence of children in the day to day pedagogical work.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis; early childhood education; pedagogical documentation; communication; preschool

# **Institutionalisation of Children's Preschool Activities**

DOROTA LEMBRÉR | Malmö University, Sweden

## **Research aims**

In recent years, sociological studies of childhood and notions of being and becoming have changed and been problematized. The aim of this study is to investigate how research and subject-focused learning has an impact on young children's being and becoming in Swedish preschool.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

The perspective, that teacher and children interactively construct meaningful activities with shared values that inspire children to explore their surrounding world, can be a starting point for initiating social interaction in play and promoting construction of subject knowledge. Institutions form educational discourses which reflect conditions of childhood in today's society. Childhood includes many arenas, these often have different social constructions that affect children becoming socialized and being individuals with responsibilities and opportunities that they can influence.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The sociological dichotomies by James, Jenks and Prout (1998) addressing children and childhood, both implicitly and explicitly in terms of four new approaches. These provide different views of childhood, rather of analytical than developmental character.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This paper investigates the Swedish preschool curriculum using James, Jenks and Prout's new sociology of childhood to identify the tensions in children's being and becoming.

## **Ethical considerations**

Early childhood research should consider children as competent participants with own rights to get their voices heard.

## **Main finding or discussion**

When applying the perspective of children being social agents, it must be recognised that an institution has an important role as children's lives are almost always determined and or constrained in large measure by adults.



### **Implications, practice or policy**

Children becoming organized by institutions' norms and roles , these have profound effects on their being and becoming.

**Keywords:** children's rights; being; becoming; institution; preschool

## **Attachment Recognition by Educators**

MONTSERRAT MARGENAT | Ramon Llull University, Spain

### **Co-author**

MARIONA DALMAU MONTALÀ I | Ramon Llull University, Spain

### **Research aims**

To analyse child-educator interactions in socio-educational contexts. o To identify and understand emotional variables that appear in this interaction (child-educator) and have an influence on the quality of the adjustment process in socio-educational contexts.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Parent-child interactive quality Margenat, M; Dalmau, M.; Vendrell,R.; Ibarz,L -Assessing gender equality in educational practice at the early child Hood school in Catalonia Vendrell,R.; Dalmau, M; Margenat, M.; Baqués ,M.; Capdevila, M.;Geis,A.; Ciller,L.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Those studies on attachment that Bowlby introduced and López (1999) and Fonagy (2001) continued have represented a theoretical basis to understand human behaviour. If educators know the origin, meaning and consequences of individual differences depending on the different attachment styles established with main carers, this can help them understand the different behaviours and modify the quality of their responses. This change in educators can be seen in more receptiveness for school tasks in children (H. Geddes, 2006).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Methodological approach from a qualitative analysis of micro-systems (educational-context). This is a longitudinal case study.

### **Ethical considerations**

Interviews with educators and family will be carried out after informed consent is granted by both parties.

### **Main finding or discussion**

To reemphasise the educators' promoting action for the child's integral development It is essential that educators have some experience in the value of attachment in order to develop their educational tasks properly.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Training seminars related to: attachment quality-development quality

**Keywords:** socio-emotional relationship; professionalization; emotional development; childhood; personal history

## **Child-Rearing Support Services for Mothers with Difficulties in Collaboration with Facilities and Human Resources in Local Community**

MIHO MUKAI-KIMURA | Jumonji University, Japan

### **Co-authors**

MIWAKO HOSHI-WATANABE | Nagoya University of Arts, Japan

NOBUKO KAMIGAICHI | Jumonji University, Japan

MIHO SHIOZAKI | Shokei University, Japan

### **Research aims**

We investigate such services that organize support actions for mothers/children in difficulties.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Meeting place is much spread in Japan as a support service for child rearing. It has a preventive aim, but the reality is that it is not always easy of access for mothers who have difficulties. Therefore, it is important for a service to have means to find and support these people who are hidden in local community.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

analysis based on mother/child relationship

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We interviewed main staff members at 4 support services about; aim of support, content of actions, staff's belief, partnership with other facilities and habitants, etc.

## **Ethical considerations**

agreement is received from interviewees.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Support actions of these 4 cases are as follows; (1)A meeting place of a daycare center. They organize activities in open air in collaboration with community welfare volunteers of its local community. (2)A meeting place of a welfare association. It has a small house which accepts only a few users at a time. Users can rest there quietly with a staff. (3)A support service of a children's home. They organize home visit programs in collaboration with child welfare volunteers of its local community. (4)A public meeting place. Collaborating with the public health center of its area, a staff accompanies nurses of the center when they visit newborns' homes.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

These different actions are based on the history and background of each facility. But what is common to all 4 is that they realize these actions in collaboration with other facilities and volunteers in their local community.

**Keywords:** child-rearing; support service; mothers/children in difficulties; local community; partnership with other facilities

# **Trust Between Mothers and Teachers, its Correlation with Teaching Practices**

AIRI NILO | University of Tartu, Estonia

## **Research aims**

The aim of this research was to study how mothers and kindergarten teachers assess mutual trust and to determine if estimated trust correlates with teachers' teaching practices in kindergarten.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

In Estonia there are only a few researches done in kindergarten and school about correlations between trust and teaching practices.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

This study is based on work of Adams and Christenson (2000), who studied trust between parents and teachers in first and second grade, and Stipek ja Byler (2004), who studied teaching practices with classroom observation measure.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The study was conducted in 22 groups of mothers and teachers, using questionnaires and surveys to obtain estimates of the confidence of early childhood classroom observation measure (ECCOM) to identify teaching practices used by teachers.

## **Ethical considerations**

All parties of the study were aware of data anonymity and the study was conducted in accordance with the ethical requirements.

## **Main finding or discussion**

Teachers trusted mothers more than mothers trusted teachers. Mother's education did not affect the mother's trust in teachers, but the mother's education influenced the teacher's trust in the mother. The teacher's teaching practice did not affect trust between mothers and teachers at the group level. At children's level, teachers who used child-dominated teaching practices often trusted mothers more than those teachers who used child-dominated teaching practices moderately or rarely.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

The results of this thesis can be used to raise awareness of the importance of confidence to achieve cooperation between teachers and mothers as it affects the child's academic progress and adjustment of an educational institution.

**Keywords:** trust; teaching practices; ECCOM; kindergarten; Estonia

## **Need for Early Childhood Care Quality Improvement in Miyagi, Japan**

TAKAKO NOGUCHI | Jumonji University, Japan

### **Co-author**

KIMIKO SAI | Watari Nursery Centre, Japan

### **Research aims**

The purpose of this study was to reveal the effects of the use of a Japanese version of SICS on ECEC institutions in Miyagi, and to research needs for quality improvement.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The quality of ECEC is an issue in Japan. This study discusses the evaluation and improvement of the quality of ECEC. We modified SICS for the Japanese context and developed an original booklet and DVD (Akita, Ashida, Suzuki, Kadota, Noguchi, Minowa, Yodogawa, & Oda, 2010) to assist in its use.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

We conducted two meetings using the Japanese version of SICS in Miyagi, and employed a questionnaire to ask teachers about their concerns about children and their program needs.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

1) Meetings were held in Miyagi in October and December of 2012. We distributed our booklet and DVD, which involved 70 nursery centres, and then asked participants to answer questionnaires. Thirty-two completed questionnaires were collected.

2) Case study: Meetings were held with infant class teachers in one nursery centre.

### **Ethical considerations**

This is particularly the case in the greater part of the Miyagi area, which was affected by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, and where needs in child care settings are a priority.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The SICS focus on wellbeing and involvement was impressive to teachers, and most were interested in its ideas and wanted to use the booklet in their facilities.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Their feedback showed us that their needs were diverse, depending on the degree of damages to their basic environments, the costs involved, and children's behaviours.

**Keywords:** the Japanese version of SICS; questionnaire study; case study; quality improvement; needs in child care settings

## **Ota Koppi! - a Program for Language, Participation and Learning Improvement**

NINA ONUFRIEW | City of Helsinki, Finland

### **Co-author**

KEIJO RÄIKKÖNEN | City of Helsinki, Finland

### **Research aims**

The aim of the project is to improve language skills, participation and learning of children from intercultural backgrounds. Important part of the program is to co-operate with child health clinics and to help parents to understand the importance of children's own home-spoken language. The Early education and preschool have co-operate with teacher's and Health nurses.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The program is based on various European researches which discuss about bilingualism, children's ability to learn languages and intercultural competence of professionals. Related previous studies are for instance Baker, C. 2006, Naremore, R. C., Densmore, R. C. & Harman, D. R. 1995, Parke, T. 2000. Paavola, Jokikokko, Papadopoulos. The program is also related to early childhood education developments which are made in Finland and especially in Helsinki region within several education development programs.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The main theoretical frame is Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Multicultural children and families in Helsinki will rise by more than 25 per cent over the coming years. There is a need to develop new ways of working so that children and families are not excluded because of language problems. Intercultural competence of Teacher's and Pedagogy's

## **Ethical considerations**

All Children have the same rights and conditions for participation and learning.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The program will be utilized in early childhood education, in school teaching and in child health care clinics in Helsinki. So far the results have been encouraging and it seems that intercultural knowledge and children's bilingual abilities have improved.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

During this year we are training and will initiate Pedagogues and Health nurses about the project.

**Keywords:** children's right to learn; participation; multicultural; multilingual; intercultural competence

## **Children's Social Identity Development: a Northern Ireland Perspective**

LOUISE QUINN | Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

### **Research aims**

The aims of the research were to investigate the age children's social identity, in Northern Ireland, becomes salient.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Cairns (1982) stated that children in Northern Ireland are not able to categorise on the basis of cultural cues until ten years of age, however, Connolly, Smith and Kelly (2002) claimed that prejudice is a major facet of children's lives by the age of seven years. This research builds on the work of Cairns, (1982) and Connolly et al. (2002) and considers at what age children show prejudiced attitudes.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982) is a dynamic theory in which relationships between diverse groups are seen as fluid, and is a useful starting point to try and explain what has happened in Northern Ireland, in terms of inter-group, rather than interpersonal, processes (Cairns, 1982).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

201 children, aged 7 to 11 years, from diverse educational backgrounds in Northern Ireland participated. A series of eight counterbalanced booklets, each containing ten drawings, was produced. The artists were described in terms of culturally specific clues related to Northern Ireland. The children then rated each drawing on a five point scale.

### **Ethical considerations**

The BPS ethical guidelines were adhered to and assent was obtained from the children (UNCRC, 1989).

### **Main finding or discussion**

In comparison to Catholic children, Protestant children rated more highly, the pictures perceived to be drawn by a child from the in-group. Protestant children also rated the out-group higher than the Catholic children.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Implications for practice centre on the age children should be introduced to a range of diverse topics.

**Keywords:** social identity; salience; diverse education; culture; Northern Ireland context

## **Children in Groups - Preschool Teacher Perspectives on Group Sizes in Preschool**

ANNIKA ROSENQVIST | University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### **Research aims**

In Sweden, group size in preschools has become an important issue among preschool teachers, media and parents. The aim of this study is to gain knowledge about preschool teachers' perspectives on the impact of group size on children's learning opportunities and their own working conditions in preschool. The research questions are; what do

preschool teachers describe that they can do in a large or a small group of children? When do preschool teachers express that the group sizes becomes or an opportunity or an obstacle in relation to children's learning?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Seland, Monica (2009) Vassenden, Anders, Janne Thygesemb Stian Brosvik Bayer, Marit Alvestad & Gerd Abrahamsen (2012) Coram, Thomas (Red). (2002) De Schipper, Elles, Riksen-Walraven, Marianne, & Geurts Sabine (2006)

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study takes an interactionistic perspective based on Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems as point of departure.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Method used is a national survey in which two open-ended questions are analysed from a critical discourse perspective (CDA).

### **Ethical considerations**

The study follows the Swedish research council guidelines and ethical rules in social science research. Ethical aspects were taken into consideration, including requirements for confidentiality, consent, information and autonomy and that participation in the study was voluntary.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The results show that physical environment, time aspects, opportunities to see and meet the needs of children are recurrent concepts in their descriptions.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The study is expected to generate knowledge about preschool teachers' perspectives on the impact of group size on learning opportunities and have implications for both practise and policy.

**Keywords:** preschool teachers; group size; children; learning conditions; staff-child ratio

## **Pre-School Teacher Discern Mathematic in Thematically Work**

JOSEFINE ROSTEDT | Linköping University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

This study is created within the Swedish National Research school - FoBaSM. The aim of this specific study is to describe what pre-school teachers in Swedish preschool identify as mathematical aspects in children's activities in thematically work. My study will follow the pre-school teacher's inner work as repeated institutional talks.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Previous research focus mostly upon the relationship between mathematics and children.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The framework of the study that is being used is the sociocultural perspective.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The methodology that I use is an ethnographic inspired case study. The institutional talk is audio recorded and later on transcribed in to text.

### **Ethical considerations**

The pre-school teachers are informed of and have agreed to the Swedish Research Councils ethical codex.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The analysis of the empirical data will allow me to discuss how pre-school teacher develop their work with mathematics and how they do to proceed with their pedagogical work. One aspect of the discussion is whether mathematical knowledge is the focus or is mathematic instead a method to develop interplay between children? If so, what will be possible for the children to learn?

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The research contribution is to shed light on the work of the enacted mission of the curriculum concerning teaching in mathematics.

**Keywords:** pre school; teaching; mathematics; institutional talk; case study

## Who Says it's a Man's World?

JANINE RYAN | University Centre Doncaster, United Kingdom

### Research aims

The focus of the research was men in early years education. Such a study was important in relation to the historical perceptions of early childhood education and care being women's work. It was important to determine the motivation for working with young children particularly as the status and pay are poor.

### Relationship to previous research works

Reach was adapted for a Masters programme

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

Frameworks of professionalism, and gender studies were explored

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

The research approach adopted was based on semi structured interviews carried out on a sample of men who work within the private and voluntary sector as well as those employed within the maintained (school) sector.

### Ethical considerations

It was important to gain consent for each participant and to authorise. Children's and parents names remained anonymous throughout using pseudonyms to protect their identity.

### Main finding or discussion

The findings suggested that they may want to work with children to make a positive difference to their lives. Their career paths are varied, many enter early years as a serendipitous second carer option. They held great regard for their role as a stable male role model. They challenged gendered stereotypical behaviour through demonstrating their caring and nurturing qualities, they also displayed typical hegemonic masculinity

### Implications, practice or policy

The implications on practice are clear, women should embrace the presence of a male early years educator in their settings. National policy in Britain continues to strive for a qualified graduate workforce; one that is gender balanced to provide children with balanced view of teachers and carers both men and women, adopting a non stereotypical view

**Keywords:** gender; male; professionalism; barriers; stable male

## Our Classroom, My World. It's My Life and I'll Tell What I Want

ELS SCHELLEKENS | Inholland University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands

### Research aims

Our Classroom, My World (OCMW) is a methodology to integrate social competence education with functional language education and the use of ICT for young pupils (age 4 – 8). The research includes monitoring and evaluation by observation of the processes in the classroom and interviews with the teachers (Action research).

### Relationship to previous research works

The OCMW-methodology is inspired by the social-cultural tradition of Vygotski. Developers and teachers analyzed social-developmental needs and designed lessons in close cooperation. The activities were evaluated and successful practices are published (in Dutch) at: [www.onzeklasmijnwereld.nl](http://www.onzeklasmijnwereld.nl).

### Theoretical and conceptual framework

We approach social competence as a multidimensional concept relating to Identity (sense of self, self-confidence), Social Relations (mutual respect) and Group Membership (responsibility for the group).

### Paradigm, methodology and methods

Digital media facilitate teachers to bring real life into the classroom. By publishing their own pictures, narratives and slide-shows on the internet, children become 'digital citizens' in a natural way. They think twice before they share personal information and keep their password secret.

### Ethical considerations

We ask parents for permission to video tape their children and to publish their pictures on our website.

### Main finding or discussion

The 15 participating teachers evaluate OCMW as a strong tool for innovation, especially in the use of ICT and the development of digital citizenship. Children are highly motivated to work with computers and digital cameras.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The modern media urgently demand an educational innovation in Dutch (pre) schools towards participation, cooperation and skills in processing information. Classroom-weblogs stimulate parental involvement: at home children can share their school-products; parents help to choose and photograph what children want to bring to school.

**Keywords:** innovation through ICT; digital citizenship; social competence; meaningful language education; modern media in education

## **Early Childhood Teachers as Partners in Children's Educational Processes – Professionalism in the Spirit of Co-Construction**

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### **Research aims**

The ongoing process of altering the professional self-concept was taken up by the project "Kita und Schule im Dialog" ("day-care centre and school in dialogue") and incorporated in the educational contexts of mathematics and science. In on-the-job trainings the pedagogues experienced how learning situations can be arranged in a way that enables children to experience phenomena self-directedly. However, how can this understanding be transferred into the daily interaction with children?

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The on-the-job-trainings based on the projects "Natur-Wissen schaffen", "PikAs" and "Haus der kleinen Forscher"

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

According to the paradigm shift in early-childhood-education, pedagogues are to modify their professional self-concept, as they are expected not to view themselves as broadcaster of knowledge but rather as partners of the children who support children in exploring their environment actively and competently.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

We conducted problem-centered interviews with kindergarten teachers and observed their professional behavior. The analysis was realized by using qualitative content analysis.

### **Ethical considerations**

Aspired aim was to enhance a pedagogue's attitude in the spirit of co-construction which identifies by a perception of children as autonomous subjects and individuals possessing own rights.

### **Main finding or discussion**

As a major result an affinity to the co-constructive approach can be outlined in the conceptual knowledge, but on the other hand the daily practice is basically characterized by a self-concept of the kindergarten teacher as broadcaster of knowledge.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

These findings suggest the need for change regarding job-specific further trainings of pedagogues: trainings should not simply aim at processing knowledge, but should be designed as continuous self-reflective processes concerning own practices.

**Keywords:** early-childhood-education; co-construction; mathematics and science; teacher-child-interaction; teacher's professional role

## **Observational Study of a Life Environmental Studies Class for 1st Graders**

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### **Research aims**

The purpose of this study is to investigate what the teacher conduct learning activities so as to help children basic habits and skills essential for 1st graders of elementary school, and to discuss how to develop consistent curriculum focused on encouragement of children's learning.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In Japan, according to 'course of study for kindergarten', the curriculum in kindergarten-elementary school cooperation is described.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study is based on the developmental theory of Jean Piaget.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In this study, 25 elementary students (ages 6-7 years) and their class teacher were observed in the class of "life environmental studies" by using a video camera and a digital camera. And two observers wrote down dialogues between children and class teacher in the class.

### **Ethical considerations**

In the episode writing notes, we express participants' names by using symbol marks. Therefore, specific name of individuals cannot be identified.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Results of class observations, together with class teachers' notice of their 1st graders' behaviors, indicated that children felt various kinds of "anxiety" or "questions", even when teachers had already taken proper actions for it. However, since some problems linger after the 1st term, it remained uncertain why some problems are hard for children to overcome and other problems are solvable with the passage of time. Therefore, follow-up observation of their classes in the next term seems necessary to explore whether the children will be able to overcome the problems.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

These results were discussed in terms of consistent curriculum for smooth conjunction of Kindergarten education with elementary school education.

**Keywords:** classroom discourse; kindergarten-elementary school; life environmental studies; curriculum; class observation

POSTERS

## **Outdoor Preschool - the Solution to Everything? A Contemporary Historical Policy Analysis**

MAGDALENA SJÖSTRAND ÖHRFELT | Malmö University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

My research focuses on outdoor education and outdoor preschool activity, and the historical roots that can be derived from the problems that Swedish outdoor preschool claims to be able to solve.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In Sweden, as in most Nordic countries, the outdoor preschool approach is rarely problematized, meaning that its positive connections to learning are widely accepted. With learning in focus, interest in this type of preschool has increased, even on teacher education.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The method and the theoretical framework is discourse analysis.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This learning focus is mostly about mathematics, science and technology. Mathematics is now a subject that is considered particularly suitable to learn outdoors. How can it be understood, and why mathematics?

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are taken into account.



## **Main finding or discussion**

What is it that makes outdoor mathematic practices to seem rational, legitimate and normal at a certain moment in time (and almost taken for granted)? How do historical national discourses live alongside political and economic goals and how does it result in the belief in certain methods and learning styles, such as outdoor education?

## **Implications, practice or policy**

An explicit “shift” can be identified at the very beginning of the 2000s, when an increased focus on learning in preschool also altered policy on outdoor education, particularly regarding the young children

**Keywords:** outdoor education; outdoor preschool activity; discourse; mathematics; learning methods

## **Different Thoughts and Different Approaches: How Japanese Kindergarten and Elementary-School Teachers View Children’s Development in School Environments**

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### **Research aims**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how kindergarten and elementary-school teachers differ in their views on children’s development and their practices.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

While previous research seemed to distinguish pedagogical thoughts between early childhood educators and elementary school teachers, we tried to find out in-group differences as well as common features across the groups.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

We used video clips to draw out teachers’ responses regarding their beliefs about children’s development. Using unconventional statistical method, we tried to figure out underlying pedagogical thoughts of teachers.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

(1) 117 Japanese teachers (57 kindergarten and 60 elementary-school teachers) viewed 6 video clips from each settings, and responded questionnaire survey on four aspects of children’s development. (2) The data was analyzed by Monotonic Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), and it lead to the two dimensions. (3) Then, the participants’ responses were analyzed qualitatively.

### **Ethical considerations**

We explained the purpose of this research to all participants and gained agreement. Participants understood that this research is entirely voluntary.

### **Main finding or discussion**

Japanese kindergarten teachers tend to focus on children’s willingness to participate in activities, while elementary-school teachers tend to focus on skills attained by individuals. Both teachers are concerned

about group activities in their educational practices, but there are two different approaches. Japanese early childhood education had been characterized as emphasizing social development of children, but it suggested that there are different thoughts on children’s social development.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Such findings lead us to consider the different approaches to transition studies, shedding the light on how teachers develop their practices based on their views on children’s development.

**Keywords:** transition; Japan; kindergarten teachers; elementary school teachers; video-evoked study

POSTERS

## **Time for Transition – Children Doing Transition from Preschool Class to First Grade**

LINA SÖDERMAN LAGO | ISV/Linköping University, Sweden

### **Research aims**

The aim is to understand the meaning making process of children doing the transition from preschool class to first grade and activities and concepts used to mark and talk about it.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

The point of departure is to study how children act and shape their own and each other's everyday life rather than seeing children's life as shaped only by adults (James, Jenks & Prout 1998).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The transition is analysed using theoretical perspectives on time (Hockey & James 1993, Adam 1995) together with concepts such as rites of passage (van Gennep 1960) and socialization (Gaskins, Miller & Corsaro 1992).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

The method used is ethnography. The material consists of participant observation and interviews from a case study of a group of children doing the transition.

### **Ethical considerations**

With this come ethical considerations due to the closeness of the method and research with children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The analysis shows how time is important for the meaning given to the transition from preschool class to first grade. Different aspects of time (past, present and future) are used to do and make sense of the transition. Understood as set in time, makes it possible to understand this transition in terms of passage. In order to make sense of transition, a movement forward, preschool class and first grade are also talked about in terms of similarity and difference.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The time around children's entrance to school is of recurring political interest in Sweden. Studies of children's everyday life and understanding in relation to the transition at hand are therefore of importance.

**Keywords:** transition; starting school; preschool class; time; socialization

## **Young Children's Expressions About School**

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### **Research aims**

School is one of the environments children are engaged in from an early age, and it is important to understand how this environments affects children's activities, learning and development. How do children view the educational situation in their classrooms? In this presentation we focus on the content of their expressions on this subject.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In previous publications (and on conferences) we presented our valid and reliable coding system, which is the foundation of the analysis and interpretation of young children's expressions.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Our research is based on social cultural activity theory. Children can't be excluded from context; they are determined by it and influence the context as well. Children, important others and this context are all parts of our conceptual framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

In a so called multiple case study with a qualitative-interpretative approach in a flexible design, we used multiple sources of evidence. Pattern analysis and matching are used to describe the individual and inter-relational elements of children's expressions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Being aware of the relationship of power between researchers and children, we created conditions to involve children in research in their own cultural-educational context, paying special attention to their involvement with their outspoken consent in every possible way.

### **Main finding or discussion**

We identified outspoken elements of voices of our target children in their own context on school activities, school organization and teacher's roles.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

In order to realize for and with children an appropriate developmental educational context, we have to retrieve what young children consider to be the meaning of school and how they value education.

**Keywords:** expressions; young children; educational context; case studies; meaning

## **Using Multiple Methods to Provide a Comprehensive Representation of Current Practice and Curriculum Provisions for Movement Experiences in Early Childhood Services**

KELLY TRIBOLET | Charles Sturt University, Australia

### **Research aims**

This poster aims to illustrate an alternative research design for investigating early childhood physical activity and movement curriculum.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

In Australia, research exploring physical activity in early childhood services has primarily been directed at quantifying the level and proficiency of children's physical activity. Research that has examined educator practice for providing movement opportunities in the curriculum has either highlighted reported practices through educator interviews or actual practice through systematic observation of target children.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Drawing on Goodson's theory (1990) of negotiated curriculum, this study investigated educator beliefs, enacted practices and children's participation in movement experiences provided to present a more comprehensive representation of current practice and curriculum provisions than in previous studies.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

An extensive and diverse range of data were collected in five case study sites including: photographs, field notes and environmental mapping; anecdotal records; collection of artefacts; semi-structured interviews; educator-generated video clips and focus group discussions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations included voluntary participation from educators and parental consent for the collection and use of photographs and videos of their children.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The data provided a rich and substantive picture of curriculum planning and implementation, including: the nature of movement experiences provided for and experienced by preschool children in early childhood settings; the perceived and actual role of the educator within these experiences; and a range of factors influencing curriculum decisions.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

As the data collection was embedded in practice, these methods have the potential to inform future studies investigating physical activity and movement curriculum and to influence professional practice within the field.

**Keywords:** research design; multiple methods; physical activity; curriculum studies; early childhood

## **The Differences in "Experience Drawing" Lesson Plans Produced by Kindergarten Teacher and College Student in Early Childhood Education Course**

IKUYO WAKAYAMA | University of Toyama, Japan

POSTERS

## **Research aims**

The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in “experience drawing” lesson plans produced by a kindergarten teacher and a college student in early childhood education course. The “experience drawing lesson” is that kindergarten children draw their experience (ex. a picnic, a sport day, etc).

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Wakayama (2012) found that the relationship between college students’ implicit theory of teaching and their verbal supports in drawing lesson plan. In the previous study, however, the differences in “experience drawing” lesson plans produced by kindergarten teacher and student were not examined. In this study, therefore, a content analysis of “experience drawing” lesson plans was made.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

College student’s career development as kindergarten teacher.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

A kindergarten teacher and a college student who enroll in early childhood education course made a lesson plan for “experience drawing”, and were interviewed about the reason for giving support in the drawing lesson. Free descriptions written by the teacher and student were used for data analysis.

## **Ethical considerations**

A researcher obtained informed consent from the teacher and student, and promised to treat all experimental data confidentially.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The major findings and discussion were as follows: (1) the kindergarten teacher described various children states (children’s behaviors, children’s drawing behavior, and children’s developmental traits) and definitive objects more frequently than the student. (2) The student described procedure how to make lesson plan.

## **Implications, practice or policy**

These results suggested that adequate teacher training for making drawing lesson plan based on these differences is necessary for students to design efficient art lesson that facilitate children’s artistic development.

**Keywords:** differences; experience drawing; lesson plan; kindergarten teacher; college student in ECE course

# **Proximal and Distal Influences on Children’s Outdoor Play**

SHIRLEY WYVER | Macquarie University, Australia

## **Research aims**

The main aim of this research was to examine the relative contributions of a set of proximal and distal factors to children’s participation in outdoor play.

## **Relationship to previous research works**

The present study relates to international multidisciplinary research on outdoor play, parenting and urban environments.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Results will be interpreted in the context of findings from an earlier study from the Netherlands and demographic trends in Australia.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Participants completed an online survey which involved two main measures:

- 1) A questionnaire on outdoor play developed in the Netherlands and
- 2) the Tolerance of Risk in Play Scale (TRiPS).

## **Ethical considerations**

It was important to ensure parents did not end the questionnaire with feelings of concern about their parenting skills. Parents were provided with information to extend their understanding of outdoor play and were also able to make contact for further information about play and parenting.

## **Main finding or discussion**

The data are currently being analysed. It is intended that findings will be considered in the context of declining levels of outdoor activity, including activity normally associated with outdoor play. This will be further considered in the context of many Australian children not meeting the level of moderate-vigorous physical activity known to promote good health and prevent disease.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Interventions to promote physical activity are generally not effective, especially in the longer term, and are often not based on children's interests or contexts. The present study will contribute to evidence for better targeting of interventions.

**Keywords:** play; outdoors; physical activity; risk-taking; online research

## **Values and Value Education in Preschool Institutions**

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### **Research aims**

The research endeavors to ascertain the value judgments of teachers, principals and parents of preschool institutions for children in Estonia and provide an overview of how values education currently functions in preschool institutions.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

Veisson, Marika. (2009). Values of Estonian students, teachers and parents. *US-China Education Review*, 5, 67 - 75.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The theoretical foundation for the research draws upon the theory of basic human values developed by Professor Emeritus Shalom H. Schwartz of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

As research methodology, a questionnaire containing an authorized Estonian translation of Shalom H. Schwartz's survey "Personal Value Questionnaire" (PVQ-R3) is applied. In addition, the authors compiled a Likert-type questionnaire, applying a 6-point scale, involving questions concerning values education, values education related development activities, cooperation and kindergarten culture in preschool institutions for children as well as a list of values that are considered as important to be taught to children.

### **Ethical considerations**

200 principals, 400 teachers and 400 parents of preschool institutions for children across Estonia will fill out the questionnaire survey. The questionnaires are completed anonymously, the information gained is analyzed and results are generalized.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The study will be carried out and results analyzed in 2013.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The research is based on the national program "Value Development in Estonian Society 2009–2013". The objective of the said program is to establish conditions for the implementation of a systematic, deliberate and consistent value education in Estonian schools and kindergartens.

**Keywords:** values; value education; preschool institution; teachers; parents

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