

SIG Report

Special Interest Group

Rethinking Play

SIG Convenors

Sofia Avgitidou, University of Western Macedonia, Greece Mandy Andrews, University of Plymouth, UK Annerieke Boland, iPabo University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands

Number of SIG members

15

Activities undertaken by the SIG since establishment

2010 -initial discussion by Hännikäinnen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B. For the development of a SIG group in Birmingham

- submitted formal proposal to establish SIG and received approval by the Board of Trustees;

2011 SIG convenors, Hännikäinnen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B

- held inaugural meeting in Geneva;

- collated a list of contact addresses to enable participants to pursue points of discussion raised at that meeting;

2012: SIG convenors, Hännikäinnen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B

initiated a proposal for a special issue

organized the themes of papers and made a call for papers

2013: The SIG has proceeded to the publication of a Special Issue in the EECERJ titled "Promoting Play for a Better Future". Guest editors: Hännikäinnen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B. (2013).

Hännikäinnen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B. (2013).Promoting play for a better future. Editorial to special issue for European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 21(2), 165 - 171.

2014: During the SIG meeting in Crete conference 2014, Elly Singer and Bert van Oers retreated as convenors of the Sig and Maritta Hannikainen proposed Sofia Avgitidou for the post of Sig convenor and all members agreed.

Maritta kept the post of co-convenor.

- Members shared research interests.

- The SIG created a website <https://rethinkingplay.wordpress.com/about/> and asked members to join in.

2015: In the Barcelona conference the SIG had a symposium with academics from Greece, Canada and Netherlands. During the SIG meeting we organized the research themes around play and shared information. The website created in 2014 had few participants, so we decided to keep the e-mail list. We also discussed about a position paper in the inaugural meeting is made based on the current trends in ECE curricula that emphasize structured learning across different subject matter. A committee was formed to make a draft paper.

2016: During Dublin conference a new co-convenor, Mandy Andrews, was elected as Maritta retreated from this post. During the SIG meeting the final structure of the position paper about play was decided. Members had a vivid discussion though e-mails, sending amendments and proposals. The SIG convenors prepared the final paper based on these amendments and proposals and invited comments from all the members. It was published to the SIG webpage and to EECERA webpage, inviting researchers and academics from all over the world to contribute drawing from their studies in different countries and thus enriching the perspectives included in the paper. We also tried to invite play symposia for the conference in Bologna by asking members to share with others their title presentations in order to be grouped into symposia evident in the programme rather than scattered in different paper presentations.

2017: The SIG has proceeded to the preparation of the SIG's information for the EECERA webpage. It has also sent two e-mails to its members reminding them of sending the papers to the convenors to organize different play papers to SIG symposia.

2018-2019 SIG meetings were held during the EECERA conferences and a number of SIG symposia were presented there.

Report on SIG Activities this past year

1. We organized a zoom meeting addressed to SIG members but also open to other researchers working on children's play on 11-9-2020.

Over 25 participants from 13 different countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, UK) attended the meeting.

After welcome from convenor & co-convenors of the SIG group and introductions, presentations from different members and theme-related discussions followed.

Initially, Mandy Andrews (co-convenor, UK) presented recent theoretical and research work about different philosophies of play related to different pedagogies of play. Discussion followed.

Sofia Avgitidou (convenor, Greece) initiated the discussion about play in Covid times by raising issues concerning its effects on time, quality and opportunities for children to play, effects on ECEC teachers and parents. SIG members shared their experience regarding their country showing different approaches to lock down (in some countries ECEC settings remained open, in others some children i.e. vulnerable or of working parents had access to ECEC, while in other countries lock down was chosen). Members also presented "good practices" regarding how teachers confronted the new situation during and after lock down.

A proposal for further research of this issue and report of good practices was well accepted by some of the SIG members.

Annerieke Boland (co-convenor, Netherlands) thanked the members for completing the short research form requested prior to the meeting that led to booklet where information about members' contact details, research interests and their relevant studies on play were included. She also encouraged other members to fill in the form since it can enrich the booklet that may form a source for future collaborations. Annerieke also initiated the discussion of possible collaborations among the members.

All participants agreed that the intention is to plan for other zoom meetings within the year 2020-2021 to help members share ideas, questions and proposals for collaboration. There were also several platforms proposed for document sharing.

A presentation by Margarita Gavrilova, member of the Russian research team of Aleksander Veraksa was then held. Margarita summarised current play research in Russia on a series of different play research topics. Discussion followed.

Last, members agreed to arrange for a 4 hour slot for the SIG meeting in the forthcoming conference with the aim to organize short presentations of our members' conference papers and provide more time for in-depth dialogue. The meeting was held in good spirit and ended with satisfaction from all members.

2. We organized an information sheet with the research interests and publications of the members (as well as non members but former attendees of the EECERA conferences) that was sent out through e-mail. We edited a booklet (pdf) presenting this information to encourage further collaboration among the members.

3. We encouraged members and non members through our e-mail list to participate in the EECERA online festival and planned for a SIG meeting in 2021 focusing on the role of the selected organization and operation of ECEC during the pandemic on play.

Members so far include (to our knowledge)

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There are another at least 30 academics and researchers who are in the SIG's list but are not official members since they are not EECERA members. However, it is important to have a broader list since it can act as a motive for those involved to become EECERA members.

How SIG activities fit with aims and ethos of EECERA

In the context of EECERA, Rethinking Play aims to be thought provoking and reflecting on issues that relate to © EECERA - SIG report - Submission date: 29/04/2020 developments in understanding of play at a philosophical, scientific, social, educational and policy level. It is multidisciplinary and open for theoretical and practice based research; but also sensitive to issues of diversity, and rights experienced within the lived experiences of children. Specifically, the SIG on Rethinking play addresses relevant questions linked to a continually emerging and developing discourse on play and learning, children's voices, play based curricula and power relations in ECE. In both research and practice development, the SIG pays special attention to a critical consideration of play practices in different early childhood education contexts. It aims at creating a space for shared thinking about the concept and for creating synergies between participants from different countries and contexts.

Networking, future plans and links to other institutions

We have initiated the SIG page on facebook and use the zoom platform for meetings in between the conferences to keep up with our research and practice. Future plans include a comparative study of the effects of the pandemic on children's play in ECEC.

- I have read the privacy policy and agree