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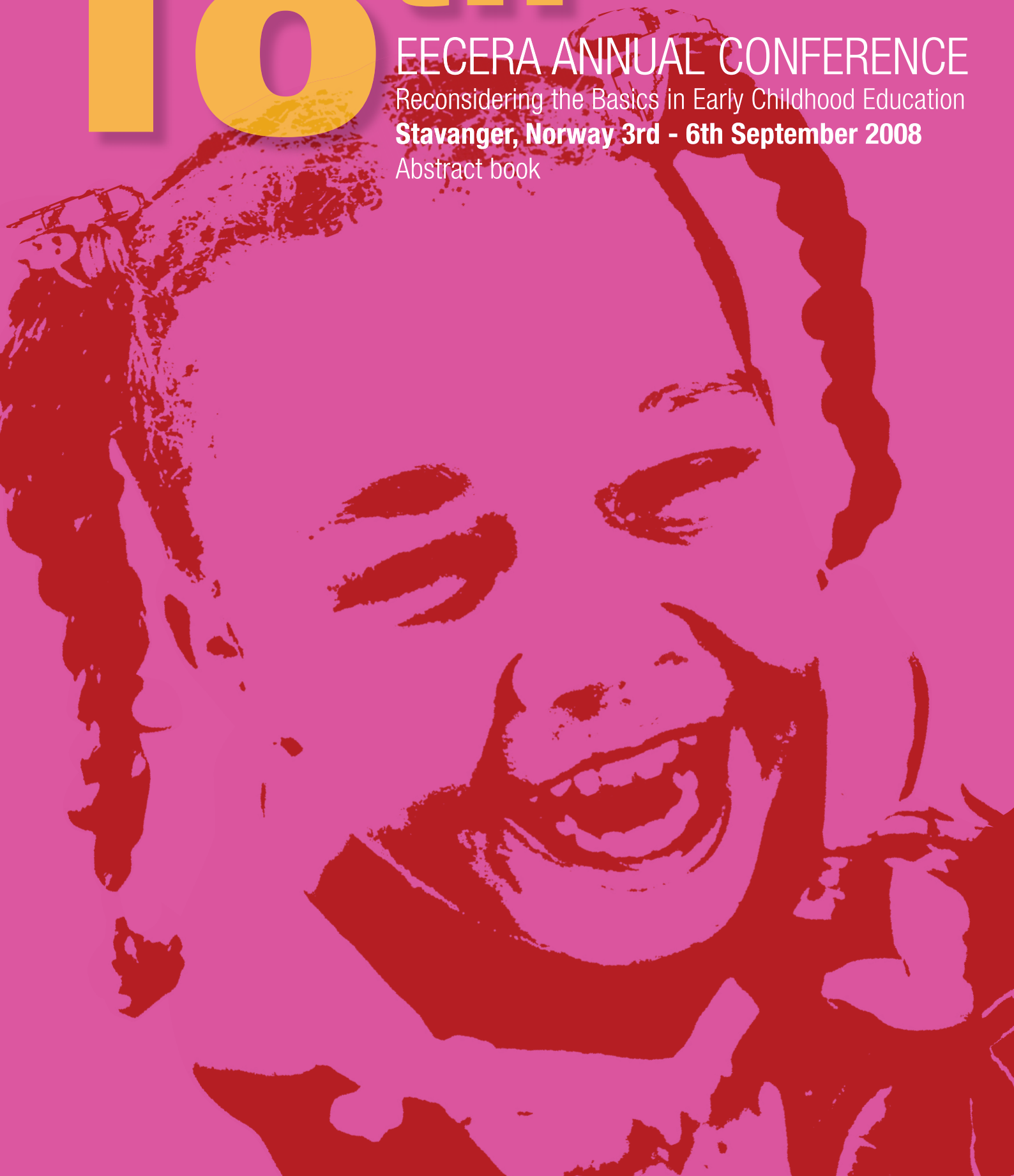
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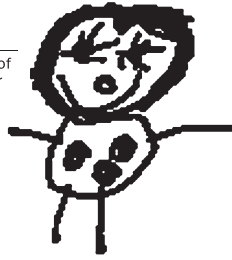
EECERA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Reconsidering the Basics in Early Childhood Education

Stavanger, Norway 3rd - 6th September 2008

Abstract book





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ABSTRACT BOOK



The abstracts of the 2008 EECERA Conference were assembled by the research network *Barnehageliv*, the host of the 2008 EECERA Annual Conference. Organisers leave responsibility for the contents of each abstract to its authors. The Abstract book is edited by the Scientific Committees of the 18TH EECERA Conference.

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THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER

KEYNOTE I

09.30 - 10.15

KEYNOTES

Public Policy and Early Childhood Systems in Europe

JOHN BENNETT

Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD Paris, France

Compared to other OECD countries, public policy for young children in Europe is advanced but fundamental weaknesses still exist, e.g.

-The 'lowest common denominator' approach to early childhood policy at European Union level, leading to the unambitious Barcelona targets, and a reluctance to emulate the standards already achieved by leading European countries (parental leave, child health, child poverty, child: staff ratios, qualified staff ... see the UNICEF results)

- An insufficient view of human development during the early years, leading in particular to the survival of 'child care' as an institution and a narrow concept of early education.

New challenges are also emerging, e.g.

- The place of the market and private provision in public education, including in the early childhood field

- The challenge of social inclusion, reinforced by the changing demographics of Europe. A serious reflection on the role of public policy and of early childhood services in facing this challenge has yet to be initiated in many countries.

- The need for a more adequate concept of education – not least during the early childhood period - to meet the complexities of a globalized economy and the new knowledge society. A discussion on what this might mean in curricular terms will be proposed.

THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER

KEYNOTE II

15.30 - 16.15

KEYNOTES

Children's Right to Participate – Pitfalls and Possibilities

BERIT BAE

Department of Early Childhood Education, Oslo University College, Norway

Children's right to participate comes to the fore both internationally and nationally. Taking Norway as a point of departure, both the Kindergarten Act and the National Curriculum document emphasize children's right to participation. Moreover, children's participation is a prioritized area in a national research program, as well as in a nationwide strategy intended to strengthen early childhood practitioners' competence. The fact that this right is articulated in several national documents is, however, no guarantee that the right will be realised in the everyday lives of children in early childhood institutions.

In the presentation I will explore some critical issues or problems which influence how this right might be understood by practitioners and researchers in the field. Such understandings create premises for what kind of space there is for children to participate as subjects. Issues which will be discussed are views of children and views on democracy along with questions regarding diversity and difference. Other crucial issues are implementation pressures such as, top-down directives regarding methods and/or programs, and thinking emphasizing prescriptive didactics. I will point to how playfulness and humour can be seen as prerequisites for children's participation in early childhood settings. The argument is that the ways these issues are understood and dealt with might lead to pitfalls as well as possibilities regarding the realisation of children's participation in early childhood institutions. In order to be aware of the pitfalls some central tenets regarding early childhood theory and practice have to be reconsidered.

FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

KEYNOTE III

08.45 – 09.30

KEYNOTES

There is Nothing so Practical as Good Theory? - Preliminary Consideration of Historical and Recent "Basics", Exemplified by Environmental Education.

LILIAN FRIED

Adult Education and Early Childhood Education, Institute of Social Pedagogy, Dortmund University, Germany

Currently the great significance of early childhood education for the individual's life and for the further development of society has been internationally acknowledged. Accordingly, there is considerable demand for scientifically generated insights which may be used as guidelines for parents, early childhood professionals, politicians, and the public.

As shown by more recent accounts, there is a lack of scientifically well-reasoned insights to be able to correctly understand the common practice and – if necessary – to reform it effectively. This is due to several reasons. Firstly, seldom existent insights are not connected to each other. Also, relevant insights – according to their respective framing – allow for different interpretations. And finally we are lacking insights on important aspects of early childhood education.

In this situation scientists increasingly look for possibilities to understand existent insights by way of theoretical means in a way which will make the complex constitution of early childhood education clearer, so that in the future it can be researched and taken into consideration for practical work in a more authentically way. First gains of this way of proceeding are becoming obvious. But there is also pointing out to previously neglected possibilities. For example, the question is raised if reaching back to historical "basics" in the form of fundamental scientific concepts will be helpful with this matter. This will be analyzed by the example of the German concept of "Building (education)". The latter may serve as a kind of burning glass, showing the variety of relevant aspects and relations of early childhood education. Starting out from this overall picture, single constituents can be explained by help of current theories and research without the overall context getting lost.

This will be run through by the example of environment education for small children. Starting out from an integrative concept of education, relevant insights from developmental psychology, social psychology, psychology of learning, elementary didactics, pedagogical quality research, research on professions also will be linked to each other and relativized. The resulting overall picture will show scientists where there are insight gaps, and it will provide professionals with hints of in how far the needs of society and the possibilities of children can be made congruent or are conflicting.

FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

KEYNOTE IV

12.00 – 12.45

KEYNOTES

Justice in Early Childhood Education? Justice for Whom and for What?

HILLEVI LENZ TAGUCHI

Centre for Gender and Educational Studies, Stockholm Institute of Education, University of Stockholm, Sweden

The contemporary educational arena is characterized by contradictory movements. On the one hand, increased complexity, multiplicity, and diversity push for increased inclusion of children and families with diverse backgrounds. On the other hand, these circumstances enforce strategies of complexity reduction in the educational system. Policy makers and practitioners understand new developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) as ways to continue the tradition of providing a “good childhood” by treating and evaluating everyone in relation to the same universal, comparable, and centralized standards. In this context we need to think of inclusion and justice in new ways. Inclusion cannot be about bringing children and families from the outside and marginal position of their skin colour, ethnicity, sexuality, (dis)ability, gender or age, to the inside of norm(al) early childhood educational practices. Rather than having them escape and/or surrender their minority subject positions, we need to make use and be inclusive of them, in a listening and negotiable per formative pedagogy. We need to do justice to diverse and multiple ways of being and understanding, and be ready to negotiate and transform our own values and how they are materialized as practices. Moreover, we not only need to do justice to the prevalent inter-active/inter-personal relationships in ECE but we also need to turn our attention to the intra-active processes between what we think and say (the discursive) and to how our bodies relate to environments, materials, things, furnishing, spaces and places (the material) that we occupy, handle and use in our daily practices.

SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER

KEYNOTE V

08.45 – 09.30

KEYNOTES

Promoting Creativity and the Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Programs

COLLETTE TAYLER

Early Childhood Education and Care, University of Melbourne, Australia

In 2008 Australia has opened new conversations about contemporary society and is revealing new stories that attend to social bridging and inclusion in a multi-cultural democracy. Creativity, the arts and innovation in this context open new possibilities for social bridging and community cohesion. In this address I will investigate the place of creativity and the arts in newly developing Australian early educational concepts (e.g. in early learning frameworks). By illustrating some of the initiatives taking place in ECEC programs today I will raise questions about the arts both in early childhood centres and in public spaces. My intention is to consider the way creativity and the arts promote innovative thinking and learning and provide the means to represent ideas and help social bridging. Examples and illustrations of projects with very young children will be used where the children operate as catalysts in communities of learning, use new technologies to access people in and beyond their own locality and pose deep questions about their physical and cultural worlds. The paper highlights the place and future of the arts, design, and technologies in a contemporary society to grow participation. The ingenuity and capacity of young children to engage with and challenge experts in a variety of disciplines and spaces promotes a picture of capable, imaginative children who can make important contributions in a world seeking sustainable development.

SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER

KEYNOTE VI

11.45 – 12.30

KEYNOTES

Transition to School – Liberation or Adjustment

STIG BROSTRÖM

*Department of Curriculum Research, The Danish School of Education,
University of Aarhus, Denmark*

During decades there has been an international interest and focus on children's transition from preschool to school. Research shows problems in children's school start among other things lacking school readiness and too big differences between preschool and school, which has resulted in collaboration in order to achieve wholeness and coherence in children's life. Here a coordination of curricula from the two areas is seen as a central tool, and an explicit learning concept has been added to the preschool concepts care and well-being. Though there is an effort for shaping a unity of care and education, and with that a movement towards to realize the educate concept, there is a risk for a dominating influence from school, which can lead to implementation of effective and quick (subject) learning using methods based on evidence ("what works").

Such an interest for learning in early years is expressed in the Lisboa-strategy from 2001 about reorganization and standardization of education, the two OECD Starting Strong reports, a numbers of EU documents, and many national documents. Based on a post-modern capitalism critique (Hart & Negri) such documents are parts of a modern neo-liberal ideology and tools for supporting the globalizing of the capitalist production.

Based on such a societal analysis I will reconsider basics concept of ECEC and inspired of the idea of direct democracy, old and new critical theories, the German concept 'Bildung' and reflection on a possible critical content like epoch typical problems (Klafki), I will reconstruct an outline of a critical-constructive ECEC.

THURSDAY 4th SEPTEMBER

SYMPOSIUM SET I

10:45 – 12.15

SYMPOSIUM I/1
VALUES, ETHICS

Individual papers

CHAIR: DEBORAH HARCOURT

Bond University, Australia

Cultural Identity and the Day-care Centre

KIRSTEN LAURITSEN

Nord-Trøndelag University College and The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway

A major focus of this conference is presented as “how fundamental values are defined and how these definitions lead to different policies and practices”. Values like democracy, sustainable development, and inclusion are emphasized.

The aim of this project is to produce new knowledge on processes that create identity and belonging for children of different cultural backgrounds in two day-care centres. Questions of belonging are important for children of both minority and majority backgrounds, for relations between children and staff, between children and between staff and parents. How the day-care centres define themselves - as “Norwegian”, “multi-cultural” or “international” - is essential for whether or not children with a “non-Norwegian” background are perceived of as “difficult and demanding”, or as a self-evident and integral part of the day-care centre.

The focus is on the staff, and on how the day-care centres as organisations construct themselves and their challenges towards a culturally diverse group of children. How does the “cultural view” of the day-care centres interact with the identity constructions of the children? How are identity and belonging negotiated and what space does this give for the children’s identity construction, and for an equality-based participation? Which positions are offered and how are these positions negotiated in interplay between gender, cultural diversity and social capital? The project is “in progress”, and the focus of the presentation will be on theoretical perspectives, methods and preliminary findings.

Keywords: culture, identity, diversity, belonging

Ethic of Care and Research with Children

LUIGINA MORTARI

University of Verona, Italy

Having a good ethic in research with children is an unavoidable condition in order to ensure a right research. To achieve this goal, it is important to have concrete results of ethical codes and guidelines; however, this is not enough. Indeed, doing research with children implies to be in relation with them, and a good research depends on a good relation between researcher and participants. We assume that a good relation is a relation permeated by ethicness. In other words, in the perspective of the naturalistic paradigm, since the primary instrument of inquiry is the researcher, he/she should become an ethical instrument by working on his/her relational dispositions.

This paper aims at discussing the ethical postures of the researcher in the light of the ethic of care (Noddings, 1984; Held, 2006; Mortari, 2007).

SYMPOSIUM
SET I

Keywords: ethic, care, research

How do Pre-school Teachers Experience the Nurturing of Pre-school Children?

AIRI BIGSTEN

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The challenge for pre-school teachers today is how they can nurture and educate the “future” child in a pluralistic world with different competing ethical values. The aim of my thesis is to try to get hold of how teachers handle the practice of moral when nurturing pre-school children. In this paper I will discuss the theoretical foundations which lie as a base for my PhD thesis. My study will be based on the theories of phenomenology and lifeworld. In a pilot study the aim is to find out how teachers explain the word nurture. According to those findings I’m going to videotape teacher – child interactions, when acting in nurturing situations. Afterwards I will talk to/interview the teachers individually. In the conversation the aim is to let them tell about their own actions and their motives for doing as they do. I see pre-school as a practice of moral. In the everyday interaction between children and teachers there are a lot of ethical dilemmas. Research findings / results often suggest how teachers ought to do, how a good teacher should be et cetera. The aim of this study is to let teachers, on their own conditions, describe how they experience the nurturing of pre-school children. Much of the educational value research is about school and not so much about pre-school. Hopefully my contribution will increase new educational value knowledge from this context.

Keywords: lifeworld, ethical dilemmas, nurturing, moral, lived experience.

SYMPOSIUM I/2

CURRICULUM

Individual papers

CHAIR: SUE FAWSON

University of Wolverhampton, England

Project Work: Children’s Perspectives on Educational Gains

JÚLIA OLIVEIRA FORMOSINHO

University of Minho, Portugal

The theoretical foundations of Project Work can be traced back to Dewey (1912) and his close collaborator Kilpatrick (1918), who wrote the essay entitled Project Method. The American progressive movement adopted it as a teaching learning-method for the progressive schools.

In Europe there are various expressions of this pedagogical approach, under various names such project work (Freinet and the modern school movement), project pedagogy (Reggio Emilia) or yet project system or project method.

This approach to pedagogy has been the focus of theoretical debates as well as practical illustrations. There is a need for empirical research that can unravel children’s learning when conducting Project Work.

This presentation summarizes the theoretical foundations of what we conceptualize as project and then describes an empirical study that compares children’s views on their educational gains from project work with their views on gains from a didactic approach centered on work-sheets.

We interviewed two groups of children aged four and five, one group of 40 children, another of 44. The interviews were conducted in groups, following a very flexible interview structure, and were supported by pedagogical documentation of projects children had been involved in. The results highlight children's competence in evaluating learning gains.

Keywords: project work, children's perspectives, educational gains.

Every Child Matters: But what Matters to Children?

CATHERINE MEEHAN

Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom

The Every Child Matters agenda is at the heart of policy and strategy for children's services and education in the United Kingdom (UK). Since its inception, the UK government, children's services and agencies, early years' practitioners and other professionals have implemented policies and practices to achieve the lofty aims. This paper addresses a key question: What matters to children? This paper presents a pilot study in which young children's voices are presented. Children were asked about what mattered to them within the framework of the five aims of the Every Child Matters strategy, that is, for children to be healthy, be safe, to enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. A mosaic approach to data collection and analysis was used with young children in this pilot study.

Keywords: children's voices, policy, practice,

Preparing the Workforce - Overview of Progress on the Development of a National Training Strategy for Early Childhood Care and Education Practitioners in Ireland

MARESA DUIGNAN

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE), Ireland

Since the mid 1990's Ireland has been on a challenging journey towards the development and delivery of quality early childhood care and education services for young children and their families. In 2006, the Irish government recognized the central role played by a qualified workforce in the delivery of quality services and commissioned the development and implementation of a National Training Strategy (NTS), which would identify clearly the processes required to provide such a workforce in Irish early childhood care and education settings in the immediate and long term future. This paper addresses the key demographic, socio-economic and professional drivers behind the NTS initiative; presents a brief overview of the processes involved in its development and discusses the initial findings of a national survey of the qualifications profile of the current workforce in early childhood care and education in Ireland. The paper concludes with an outline of the next steps in the development of the Strategy.

Keywords: Workforce development, profile

**SYMPOSIUM I/3
OUTDOOR PLAY**

Individual papers

CHAIR: ELLEN BEATE H. SANDSETER

Queen Maud's College for Early Childhood Education, Norway

Exploring Sustainable Development in Designed Civic Play Spaces for young Children: Past, Present and Future

WENDY SCHILLER

University of South Australia, Australia

Formally designed playgrounds laid out following architectural, town planning and landscape architecture principles and underpinned by theories of child development are a modern phenomenon. They were established in Australia in distinct waves: 1910s to 1920s, Post World War 2, 1970's Adventure playgrounds (Kritchevsky & Prescott, 1969; Ward, 1979) and beyond (Berry, 2001, 1999). Distinguished by distinctive site layouts and planting schemes, designed playgrounds were characterised by specific purpose-play areas, types of equipment, supervisors' buildings, and age- and gender-oriented spaces. Recently children's playgrounds have been described as bland and unimaginative, and increasingly there are calls for re-engagement with design ideas and the natural world, (Rosenow, 2008).

Focussing on the 20th century, this paper reports on an interdisciplinary study of children's civic playspaces using design and early childhood play theory and practice (Fromberg, 2002; Glover, 1999; Levin, 1996; Van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales & Alward, 2007). The study examines the impetus behind and the objectives of this playground movement, the translation of those objectives into designed outcomes, and assesses the potential application of key historical design ideas, childhood development and play theories in contemporary playground design. This South Australian study adopts a historical-interpretive approach (Groat & Wang, 2002) using archival material, secondary sources and field trips. The project will have a cultural impact by improving understanding of the purpose and design of early 20th century playgrounds, an environmental impact by improving the physical qualities of children's play spaces, and a social impact by improving community and professional attitudes to designed spaces for children.

CO -AUTHORS: SALLY BARNES AND CHRISTINE GARNAUT

Keywords: sustainable development, design, civic play spaces, young children

In Search of the Possible: Learning to Learn in Outdoor Spaces –Constructing Pedagogy in the Early Years.

TIM WALLER

University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

This paper will report on the findings of a long-term project investigating young children's learning and the outdoor curriculum. The project is ongoing and involves children aged 3 to 7 years in two different settings: a nursery school in England and a primary school in Wales. The children are given regular access to extensive wild outdoor environments and are afforded the opportunity to explore and play in the environment with minimal adult direction and intervention. The focus of the enquiry is to investigate how the children interact with the natural surroundings and evolve an outdoor pedagogy with practitioners. The study is designed around a multi-method framework adapted from the well-known 'Mosaic Approach' developed by Clark and Moss (2001, 2005). A range of methods is therefore used, including observations, video film and photographs taken by the children. In addition, the children and adults co-construct 'learning stories' (Carr, 2001) to document and reflect on the shared experiences. This paper will analyse the research findings from a sociocultural perspective (Rogoff, 2003, etc) focussing, in particular, on the co-construction of an evolving pedagogy and the benefits of the participating children and adults in documenting their experiences through 'learning stories'. Critical consideration will be given to models and concepts of co-construction, joint activity (Jordan, 2004) and 'sustained shared thinking' (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004). The implications of these findings for pedagogy in early childhood will be discussed. This paper is related to a number of conference strands including: young children as active participants and children's play and learning.

Keywords: outdoor spaces, pedagogy, co-construction, learning stories

Outdoor Kindergartens – Institutionalization of Outdoor Environments

ELSE CATHRINE MELHUUS

Agder University, Norway

In Norway the use of outdoor environments has become increasingly central as part of the pedagogical/educational practice (in both schools and kindergartens). The outdoor kindergartens in Norway are organized in different ways, the common feature being that the educationers and the children are outdoors the most of the day, every day, in all sorts of weather. The outdoor kindergartens leave traces in natural environments surrounding rural and urban districts that signify educational practice that can seem as opposed to ordinary kindergartens.

This paper is based on a fieldwork in an outdoor kindergarten. Room and place are crucial to people who inhabit them. Gagen(2000) says the following:

Learning environments, then, are often places through which children become aware of, and begin reproducing, social identities that circulate through broader social space.

This paper will discuss how a certain outdoor environment becomes institutionalized, through the activities the adults and children have. It will further discuss how these activities are contextualized as educational practices through the educators and children's activities.

Keywords: place, space, context, artifacts

SYMPOSIUM
SET I

SYMPOSIUM I/4

ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: LINDA MITCHELL

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Sowing the Seeds: Education for Sustainability within the Early Years Curriculum

CYNTHIA MARGARET PRINCE

Eastern Institute of Technology, New Zealand

This paper examines the importance of environmental education in the New Zealand early years curriculum. The central focus addresses the absence of specific reference to either environmental education or education for sustainability in the national curriculum *Te whāriki* (1996). It is argued that in the decade of sustainability (2005-2014) it is important for young children to know about the natural environment and why it is imperative to develop care and respect. The values of sustainable living need to be instilled at an early age through an integrated early years curriculum as children are the decision makers of the future. Learning to use natural resources judiciously and understanding the concepts of recycling can lead to future age-appropriate action for sustainability. This educational process also allows children to act according to their knowledge and understanding in ways that do not harm the environment. Furthermore, through curriculum based learning experiences and modelling by teachers, children can begin to take the first steps on a lifelong journey of sustainability. For these reasons, more explicit emphasis should be placed on education for sustainability and it should be incorporated as a core value within early childhood education. Drawing upon recent case study research in New Zealand, examples will be presented of how education for sustainability can become part of everyday early childhood centre practices.

Keywords: curriculum, environment, sustainability, centre practice

What Preprimary Teacher Students Think about Environmental Education and Nature?

LIISA SUOMELA

University of Helsinki, Finland

There have been discussions in the Western countries about alienation from nature and about the significance and meanings of environmental education or education for sustainable development. In this research, I try to find out how preprimary teacher students define the concept “nature” and what kind of environmental education these student teachers consider as important in daycare centres or preprimary schools. I will also look at how the concepts “nature” and “environment” are defined in theories of environmental education, and in what ways this understanding of these concepts may influence alienation from nature.

The data was gathered with a structured questionnaire during the course of environmental and nature studies in preprimary teacher education. All the respondents were female and on average, twenty years old. Most of them thought that “nature” is best described as untouched, consisting wild animals and plants. The respondents had also an opportunity to define “nature” freely and in those answers words such as “peaceful place” or “no human influence” were mentioned. The students were worried about the state of the environment, but according to them, the most important matter is to teach to children that “one should not throw trashes into nature, not disturb animals, always respect nature”. Only a quarter of the respondents thought that nature experiences, playing in nature and observing one’s surroundings, are the most meaningful things in learning about our relationship with the environment.

Keywords: environmental education, education for sustainable development, views of nature, preprimary education

The Childhood Education Curricula – What Do They Highlight? - A Study Regarding Sciences -

MARGARIDA AFONSO

University of Lisbon, Portugal

The paper presents the results of an investigation about an analysis of the content of the science curricula in childhood education in England, France, Portugal and Spain and follows other investigations. In the analysis made we looked for answers to the following issues: (1) What values (such as autonomy and inclusion), are promoted in the science curricula; (2) What knowledge (such as content, concepts) and skills (like observation, recording, carrying out experimental work) are considered relevant in childhood education; (3) What similarities and differences we find in the conceptualisation of what scientific development means in childhood education. The conceptual framework used as a basis for the creation of the instruments and characterisation of the curricula was Bernstein’s theory. In methodological terms, we resorted to the analysis of content and data of quantitative and qualitative nature were integrated. Overall, the results of the investigation revealed that (1) the curricula give more emphasis to the values than to knowledge and skills and that, in comparative terms, it is the Spanish curricula that give more emphasis to the values; (2) the knowledge, skills and values promoted in the different curricula are frequently distinct; (3) there is a distinct view of what scientific development and childhood education means. Lastly, we reflect on the consequences of these different views on childhood education, on pedagogical practices of the childhood teachers, on assessment activities, and the challenges ahead at this level of education.

Keywords: curriculum, science, scientific development, values

SYMPOSIUM I/5 MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCE

Individual papers

CHAIR: ELIZABETH DUNPHY

St. Patrick's college, Ireland

Teachers' Attitudes towards Mathematics in Early Childhood Education

OLIVER THIEL

Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

Over the past few years the nursery school in Germany is increasingly perceived as an educational establishment instead of a child care centre. This can be seen in establishing curricula for young children, including mathematics as a domain of learning skills.

In the past mathematics has not been part of the curriculum for training young children's teachers. Therefore it is not clear, what actually their understanding is concerning mathematics. Van Oers (2004) has proven that teachers would support the mathematical development of the children only on the basis of their mathematical epistemology.

The study reported here investigated teachers' attitudes towards mathematics. The questions risen are:

- Do nursery school teachers feel open or reluctant towards mathematics?
- Is mathematics seen as an abstract system of terms, rules and formulas?
- Or do the teachers see mathematics reflected in the collection and sequencing of experiences and in problem solving?
- And what activities are expected to further the development of the child's mathematical ideas?

A questionnaire has been developed, which included four scales, suggested by Grigutsch, Raatz and Toerner (1998). This form has been filled in by 100 teachers in Germany. For the evaluation of the questionnaires confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used.

The most important result of this survey is that the teachers show an ambivalent behavior towards mathematics, but in general they underline the benefit for the daily living. Concerning the activities of children, only those are seen as mathematical experiences, which include numbers and shapes.

Keywords: early childhood education, mathematics learning, teacher beliefs

Pre-school Teachers' Mathematical Knowledge?

JANNE FAUSKANGER AND REIDAR MOSVOLD

University of Stavanger, Norway

In 2006, Norwegian schools and kindergartens were faced with new curriculum reforms. For the first time in Norway the curriculum for kindergartens has a chapter on mathematics. As these reforms are now being put into action, teachers, schools, kindergartens and local governments are asking for in-service education. Evaluation of the previous curriculum reform in compulsory school indicates that there has been little change in the way teachers teach. Our aim is to investigate and try to identify features of 'the best' in-service education. A natural point of departure for such a project is to analyse teachers' knowledge (MKT; mathematical knowledge for teaching) and beliefs to be able to adjust the in-service education to the participants' needs. Our project is therefore divided into two parts. In the first part, we are researching teachers' knowledge and beliefs, and in the second part we plan on using this knowledge to design a working model for in-service education. This presentation will focus on the research regarding teachers' knowledge, and we would like the discussion to focus on pre-school teachers' knowledge.

The first step in our project will be to participate in the translation, adjustment and use of an American measuring system developed at the University of Michigan. It is important to know more about teachers' knowledge when planning and evaluating in-service education and the measures would allow professional developers to measure teacher learning rather than just teachers' level of satisfaction with professional workshops and in-service mathematics education can be improved. What about pre-school teachers' knowledge?

Keywords: school teachers' knowledge, in-service education

Gender Differences in Mathematical Competencies !?

MARC WANTZ

University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

In the present paper we use theories from research on the structure of cognitive abilities to conceive a comprehensive measurement conception of mathematical competencies. Specifically, our measurement conception allows disentangling specific arithmetical knowledge as well as the analysis of gender differences in these competencies. Data were obtained from 151 children who participated in a longitudinal study spanning the age range from kindergarten (5 years olds) to second grade (8 years olds). Our results revealed that gender differences in the competencies under investigation were not distinct concerning their static aspects as well as their developmental dynamics.
CO-AUTHORS: MARTIN BRUNNER, ROMAIN MARTIN, CHRISTINE SCHILTZ
(UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG)

Keywords: mathematics, gender, longitudinal research

SYMPOSIUM I/6 LEADERSHIP

Individual papers

CHAIR: ANNE SMITH

University of Otago, New Zealand

Can the Effect of Leadership Learning on Early Learning and Development be Evidenced?

ANNIE CLOUSTON AND SUE WEBSTER

University of Warwick, United Kingdom

In 2003, the UK government announced as part of its strategy for reducing child poverty its intention to establish a children's centre in every community – 3,500 in all – by 2010. Each children's centre was conceptualised as a place where multi-disciplinary teams would provide a range of services to meet the educational, care, health and social needs of children and families.

There have been varied estimates of the extent to which leadership has an impact on the performance of children within learning establishments. Previous studies of children's centre leaders on the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) programme have found evidence of enhanced confidence, greater moral purpose and commitment to participative leadership. However, they concluded that improvements in outcomes for children would become identifiable as the leadership learning from the programme was embedded within centres in the years following the achievement of the NPQICL. This paper describes a feasibility study designed to explore whether a relationship can be evidenced between a leadership programme for children's centre leaders and measurable outcomes for the children who attend their centres. Local authorities and children's centre leaders who had completed the pilot NPQICL programme were sent a questionnaire designed to elicit information about a possible correlation between leadership learning and children's learning and development. The questionnaire was followed up by telephone interviews with selected expert witnesses. The paper provides an analysis of findings and makes recommendations about the methodology and usefulness of a larger scale study of impact.

Keywords: leadership, children's centres, outcomes for children, professional development

Leadership for Learning: The Role of Childcare Centre Directors/managers in Achieving Quality Outcomes through Professional Development and Support

MANJULA WANIGANAYAKE

Macquarie University, Australia

A cumulative body of research-based evidence has strengthened the call for the systematic provisioning of continuous professional development and support (PD&S) for early childhood educators. Exploration of connectivities between quality outcomes for children and staff PD&S, provided the focus for a national research study involving childcare centre directors/managers in Australia. The objectives of the study were to describe the range of PD&S measures used by childcare centres, to examine the perceived effectiveness of PD&S in improving or changing centre policy and practice, and to identify potential links between participation in PD&S and quality outcomes for children.

Data was collected in three ways. First, an online survey was used to capture current contexts of PD&S as experienced and perceived by childcare directors/managers. Secondly, PD&S issues were explored in depth through focus groups in each state/territory with

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childcare centre directors/managers. Finally, the research team visited 16 childcare centres located across Australia, to conduct 1:1 interviews on PD&S issues with a range of personnel including centre staff and parents.

One of the key findings of this study is the pivotal role of centre-based leadership and management in creating a workplace culture committed to continuous learning. Establishment of sound policies and practices that facilitated active participation in PD&S were a characteristic of these centres. Discussion of these findings will focus on commonalities and differences across participants' perceptions. We hope that this will generate a lively discussion of challenges that Directors/Managers as well as providers have in accessing, developing or implementing successful PD&S programs for centre-based childcare.

Note: This research study was sponsored by the Professional Support Coordinators Alliance with funding from the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs.

This study was conducted by a research team consisting of the following: Linda Harrison, Sandra Cheeseman, Katey de Gigoia, Fran Press and Carol Burgess. In addition to Manjula, we have not yet finalised other authors attending the conference at this stage.

Keywords: professional development, leadership, australia

Developing the Scottish Standard for Childhood Practice

JOAN MENMUIR, FRANCES SCOTT AND BILL THOMSON

The Scottish Social Services, Scotland, United Kingdom

The theme of the presentation is about developing and recognising the professionalism of the early years and childcare workforce in Scotland. It links to professionalism, values and children's rights at the Conference.

The aim of the work was to develop a national reference point, a Scottish subject benchmark statement for this emerging profession in Scotland. The Standard statement provides a clear definition of the values and personal commitment, knowledge and understanding, and skills and abilities required to lead professional action in the sector. It also provides guidelines for developing the professional programmes of learning required to meet the Standard.

The work was undertaken as a result of key Scottish government proposals in 'Investing in Children's Futures' (2006). It was informed by a number of different theoretical perspectives linked to childhood, childcare and professional learning. The Standard reflects a shared understanding of the need to make new professional connections between these complex concepts.

The development drew together the academic community, awarding bodies, employers, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council. A qualitative, collaborative methodology was adopted and the iterative development of the Standard involved documentary analysis, ongoing critical commentary from members of a national technical expert group, sector focus groups, and a formal written consultation.

The Standard statement allows the development of degree level programmes in 'Childhood Practice' for leaders in the sector and will underpin future qualification development and professional recognition by the Scottish Social Services Council. It was published in 2007 and is available on the SSSC website. It is already having an influence on policy development in Scotland and is set to have a significant impact on practice.

Keywords: professional standards, childhood practice, leadership

SYMPOSIUM I/7 DIALOGUES, NARRATIVES, DISCOURSES

Individual papers

CHAIR: SUE DOCKETT

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Bodily Utterances as Discursive Practices among The Youngest One in Pre-school

NINA ROSSHOLT

Vestfold University College and Norwegian Center for child studies (NOSEB), Norway

In the Norwegian curriculum the child's right to be an active participant in activities and in their own every day life in day care institutions explicitly includes bodily and spoken utterances. The curriculum further underlines the fundamental importance of bodily expressions involving emotions, and the staff's obligations to listen to their bodily language. This aims challenge both the researcher and the staff's way of articulate their way of producing knowledge in research and in practice (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006)

This paper discusses how we may take bodily utterance into consideration doing research among children at the age of one- two looking at play outside. Working from post structural perspectives bodily utterance will be related to what the children constitute as relevant knowledge among each other during play. The concept of socialization and role thinking will be challenged by Foucault's concept of discursive practices (Rossholt, 2007, Foucault and Gordon, 1980, Deleuze, 1995). The concept of discursive practices includes different forms of physical processes as movements, positions and sounds. The research questions are:

How do children up to two years of age position themselves in relations to things they see and feel around them? How do they constitute different relations looking at slow and fast tempo and differences in energies in relations to the other? Taking these further different compositions of relations may be explored using Deleuze's concept of what a body may do in a Spinoza's world (Deleuze, 2005). The children at the age of one- two communicate through their body and using the sand, the wind, the rain and the leaves. By working on the physical level, making stories out of what the children do and how they relate or include/exclude each other bodily, may give the children aged one- two a more complex and diverse position in pre-school and in research.

Keywords: bodily utterances, complexity, relations, discursive practices

'Sustained Shared Thinking' – Some Student Explorations

BRIDGET EGAN

University of Winchester, United Kingdom

Recent developments in early childhood education in the UK and other parts of Europe have emphasised the importance of dialogue between adults and children. In the UK, the EPPE project paid particular attention to the role of extended child-centred conversations ('sustained shared thinking' – Sylva et al.: 2003) as an important element or indicator of high quality in the practice of successful early years settings. On the political front, inspired by the practice of the Reggio Emilia pre-schools among others, Dahlberg & Moss (2005) and Rinaldi (2005) advocate a 'listening pedagogy' which pays attention to the concerns and constructs which young children have, rather than imposing institutionally focused goals. These 21st century insights reflect and relate to the work of Vygotsky (1978), identifying the ways in which knowledge is developed through dialogue. How do young teachers incorporate these practices in a developing teacher identity or 'professionalism' (Moriarty: 2000)? In this paper I analyse 'sustained shared thinking' conversations undertaken by undergraduate teacher trainees in pre-school settings. To what extent can the co-

construction of meaning in these conversations be tracked? The philosophical question of where 'meaning' can be said to exist is at the heart of this exploration. Mercer and Littleton (2007) propose an 'Intermental Development Zone' between the more and less expert person engaged in meaningful educational dialogue. This idea is explored further in relation to the student experience of conducting extended conversations with children in the manner identified by Sylva et al. (2003) as characterising the best practice.

Keywords: dialogue, construction of meaning, professional identity

Creating Understandings across Differences: Dialogic Practices and Hermeneutic Inquiry as a Professional Challenge in Early Childhood Education

MATHIAS URBAN

Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

In many countries today, across Europe and beyond, strategies to further develop services and institutions for the education and care of young children are linked to a discourse on professionalism. This paper argues that prevailing conceptualisations of professional actors in the field of early childhood – practitioners as well as researchers – are constructed out of a particular, hierarchical mode of producing and applying expert knowledge which is neither appropriate to professional practice, nor to the practice of research in the field of early childhood education. However, it is highly effective and contributes to forming a particular professional habitus that contradicts the relational core of early childhood practice. Drawing on the theoretical framework of hermeneutics, and qualitative data from two ongoing international research projects on professionalism, the paper explores an alternative paradigm of a relational, systemic professionalism, understood as a dialogic inquiry that embraces openness and uncertainty, and encourages co-construction of professional knowledges and practices. Research, in this frame of thinking, is understood as a dialogic activity of asking critical questions and creating understandings across differences, rather than producing evidence to direct practice.

Keywords: professionalism, hermeneutics, habitus, dialogic inquiry

SYMPOSIUM I/8 TEACHER TRAINING

Individual papers

CHAIR: ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP

University of Strathclyde, Scotland, United Kingdom

Mentoring of Newly Qualified Pre-school Teachers; Adaptation to Their Actual Workplace or Support for Further Competence Building?

LIV TORUNN EIK (1) AND ELIN ØDEGARD (2)

(1) Vestfold University College, Norway

(2) Telemark University College, Norway

In the program "The New Teacher", newly qualified pre-school teachers are being offered mentoring by experienced colleagues during their first working year. They will further participate in group mentoring as well as in specially designed seminars arranged by the university college.

Our presentation is based upon experiences and material from empirical research, whose purpose is to examine and study competence building among newly qualified pre-school teachers during their first professional year.

Informants are newly qualified teachers, their mentors as well as their executives attending the program in the Norwegian counties of Vestfold and Telemark. Our presentation will try to illustrate the content of the mentoring as well as examine the participants' evaluation of the importance of mentoring for the purpose of competence building.

- Which topics and challenges are being discussed during mentoring?
- The experiences of the newly qualified pre-school teachers concerning the importance of mentoring
- How the participants would prefer the mentoring to be organized
- In which way do the mentors signal the significance of mentoring in relationship to further competence building?

Our final discussion will deal with the balance between a unilateral adaptation of the demands of their actual workplace and the possibilities of the teachers for further competence building.

- Which aspects of mentoring can promote adaptation?
- Will the newly qualified pre-school teachers experience professional challenge through the mentoring process?
- In which way can mentoring be organized and performed in order to support the further competence building of the newly qualified pre-school teachers?

Keywords: newly qualified pre-school teachers, mentoring, competence building

A Social-Historical Approach of Professional Training and Development of Early Childhood Educators

MARIA EUGÊNIA CARVALHO DE LA ROCA
University of Aveiro, Portugal

In this paper, our purpose is to reflect on early childhood educators' professional training and development. This work is part of research, conducted under an ongoing PhD at the University of Aveiro, with theme is: *The Training of Early Childhood Educators: a comparative study between Brazil and Portugal*. The political-economical and social-cultural changes that have occurred in the past years are present in the lives of children, families and communities, including early childhood educators and their educational practice - itself, over History, not always well defined in terms of objectives and professional responsibilities. These ideas have encouraged the social-cultural approach in this project, supported by Vygotsky's contributions, who, when speaking of culture is not just referring to overall factors, such as the country where the individual lives, or social-economical level, yet, he brings up the environment in which the individual is placed in, and all the elements surrounding him. The question lies in if Portuguese and Brazilian early childhood educators, who live their professional courses in unique social-historical contexts, reveal different everyday practices. In these countries, although common cultural and linguistic elements can be found, there is a distinctive environment inherent to each individual, instilling in his training and profession a meaning that occurs in his social world. It is important to highlight that the testimonies displayed in this paper are part of an exploratory research, conducted in a public school in Rio de Janeiro. This case-study was considered a preparing moment in order to, later, plan our primary study.

CO-AUTHORS:

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Keywords: early childhood education, training, professional development

Research and Professional Knowledge Construction in Early Childhood Teachers' Education: a Study of Student Teachers' Dissertations in Portugal

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(1) *Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal*
(2) *University of Aveiro, Portugal*
(3) *University of Minho, Portugal*

In a time of change for teachers, the relationship between teacher professionalization and the responsibility over professional knowledge becomes increasingly relevant. The agenda for teacher education has included research both as a formative tool and aim, at international (OECD, 2005), european (European Commission, 2005; 2007) and national level. Our study aims to describe the ways in which professional knowledge production is: a) conceived and implemented in the 20 pre-bologna teacher education programmes in Portugal (university and polytechnic), and b) its relationship with the student teachers' construction of professional knowledge and identity. After identifying the 10 early childhood teacher education programmes which require the students to do research work in their final year (Figueiredo & Roldão, 2007), in this paper we focus on the actual research work done by students. The research reports from 160 students, from two different programmes were analysed in terms of the substantive, conceptual and methodological domains (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985). Both programmes and final seminar courses underline knowledge production as a formative aim. Preliminary analysis of the reports reflects this tendency: the research developed shows a clear pedagogical-didactic focus, centered in answering research questions linked with practice. This is followed by an interest in questions regarding the child, informed by a recent emphasis in research with children (Sarmento, 2004). The predominant methodology is action-research (Elliott, 2000). The ongoing analysis of the data will also question how the five "specificity generator" elements of teachers' professional knowledge analysed by Roldão (2007) are dealt with in the research reported.

Keywords: teacher education, professional knowledge, research education, knowledge production, Portugal

SYMPOSIUM I/9 IMMIGRANT CHILDREN - LANGUAGE

Individual papers

CHAIR: SONJA KIBSGAARD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Cognitive Extended Discourse During Circle Time as a Bridge Builder Between everyday Language and School Language. A Qualitative Survey on Language use in Multicultural Kindergartens.

CHAMILLA STRÆDET KRISTOFFERSEN

Hedmark University College, Norway

Research indicates that there are great differences concerning the learning benefits between minority language and majority language children at school level. This has led to an increased focus on kindergarten's role as a cultural and linguistic learning arena.

The purpose of my project is to gain insight into how circle time can promote communication which is characterised as *cognitive extended*. The focus is on linguistic interaction between kindergarten teachers and language minority children at two kindergartens. I will conduct video observation of 10–20 circle times where there is used some form of narrative as a starting point for a conversation.

Research questions:

1. What characterises the kindergarten teacher's framing of the circle time, in cases where the conversation is about themes which are not about "here and now"?

2. Does this interaction contribute to building bridges between a BICS and a CALP competency?

3. How is the first language used as a support in working with bilingual children?

The project has a socio-cultural approach with a specific focus on Vygotsky's theory of the relationship between learning and development. Further, Cummins' theory of the distinction between BICS and CALP has a central place. When linguistic interaction is central in this survey, it is the functional analysis in a pedagogical perspective I aim at, not a language analysis.

Keywords: cultural and linguistic learning, minority children, kindergarten

What Does It Mean to "Empower" Immigrant Children?

MARTHA LEA

University of Stavanger, Norway

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is acknowledged by almost all the countries in the world. That means they are obliged to the aims of the Convention, among others, the article 29.

Part 1 a) in the article, points at the obligation to develop the child's personality "to the fullest potential".

Part 1 c) nuances the obligation like this:

---education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values--, for the national values of the country in which the child is living; the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.

All countries have immigrant children. The children never asked to move to another country, but the country has an important obligation to give them possibilities to develop.

Jim Cummins wrote an article already in 1986, in Harvard Educational Review, reprinted in 2001, about empowering minority students. He wanted to give the immigrant children the same future possibilities as the national children and we can see the parallel to the Convention's formulation "to the fullest potential" which is the aim for all children. It is interesting to see what he meant about developing "respect to language", "respect to values and cultural identity" and "respect to parents". For us it is important to reflect around the question:

What does this mean today for our kindergartens and schools?

Keywords: migrant children and equal possibilities, education for migrant children, integration of migrant children

A Day in the Life of a Bilingual Practitioner: Ways of Mediating Knowledge

ROSE DRURY, CARRIE CABLE AND LEENA ROBERTSON

The Open University, United Kingdom

Today in the UK bilingual teaching assistants (BTAs) play a key role in supporting bilingual children's learning in schools and early years settings. BTAs (otherwise known as Bilingual Classroom Assistants) are paid hourly to support bilingual children at an early stage in their learning of English by using the child's home language to assist their learning. Bilingual assistants also have an important role in helping mediate a continuity between the cultural and linguistic expectations of home and school. A research project 'A day in the life of a bilingual practitioner: ways of mediating knowledge', aims to further our understanding of what is distinctive about the roles of bilingual adults in children's learning and their contributions to processes and practices in schools to support inclusion. The project uses

video methodologies, drawing on the work of Gillen et al (2007), to obtain fine grain data of bilingual practice in action.

By drawing on early data from the project, the paper aims to begin to explore the roles and professional practice of a Bilingual Teaching Assistant working with children in one early years setting in England. By drawing on neo-Vygotskian theories of learning (for example Moll, 1992 and Rogoff, 2003) the paper explores the ways in which bilingual assistants act as cultural and linguistic mediators of bilingual children's learning. The paper seeks to identify how bilingual practitioners draw on the knowledge, understanding and bilingual skills in supporting children's learning.

Keywords: ethnic identity, conflict, peace education, majority minority relations

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SYMPOSIUM I/10 INCLUSION IN EARLY YEARS

Individual papers

CHAIR: SUE WALKER

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Towards Early Inclusive Education

HANNA-SOFIA POUSSU-OLLI

University of Turku, Finland

The study deals with the children with special needs, the different learning environments, the used methods of assessment and the ethical starting points when organizing the education. The study is directed at early childhood and preschool children. In research it is investigating the differences between children with special needs and children who have no problems in their development. The sub-areas of the study are: the development of the motoric sub-domain, independent initiative, cognitive, social and emotional skills. The theory consists of documents of Children's Rights, National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (Stakes 2005).

The results are considering in different day nursery and preschool environments. In all there are 96 children and half of them are children with special needs. Multi-faced educational inclusion provides that we must find out the children's individual achievements profiles on the basis of which it is possible to plan the therapy and teaching interventions. According to the results there 20-25 % children who need special individual guidance and support.

In educational inclusion we must take into consideration where we are living, our differences, abilities and of course social context democracy and economical situation.

The statistical methods used for various analyses were distribution data, t-tests, Pearsons's coefficient correlations, graphic figure and reliability of the measure was analyzed through the Cronbach alpha-coefficient.

Keywords: individual learning, children's rights, early years, inclusive education

How Develop Inclusive Kindergartens? And How can Ideas and Results from the Project "Inclusive Kindergartens" be a Part of Early Childhood Education?

KRISTIN PEDERSEN

Oslo University College, Norway

This project is about how to make kindergartens inclusive for all children no matter colour, ethnic minority, disability or special need. The perspective of inclusion is part of the educational policy in Norway and an important value in the Norwegian kindergarten and school system. An inclusive perspective is also an important part of the issue of lifelong learning. The intention with the project has been to develop an "inclusive" pedagogy in three kindergartens in the northern part of Oslo. The ideal is that elements of the project will have effects in other kindergartens and in organising and planning the Early Childhood Education, both in matter and form. Another challenge is how to anchor the project in our education courses, first among colleagues and next among our students. In this paper I will discuss different views and perspectives of inclusion and describe different challenges in implementing inclusive pedagogy in kindergartens. The focus is "The inclusive kindergarten", both as a phenomena and connected to the cases in the kindergartens. How to implement these experiences and inclusive perspectives in our Early Childhood Education will be discussed.

Keywords: inclusion, equality, implementation, Early Childhood Education

Inclusive Education in The Early Years: Supporting the Challenge Presented by Policy and Practice.

KATHLEEN CLARK AND FRANCES ROSS- WATT
University of Strathclyde, Scotland, United Kingdom

This paper presents the findings of a research project which focussed on the understandings surrounding inclusive policy and practice held by staff in early years settings. The project was commissioned by an education authority which projects a responsible approach to policy and which desired that staff should be supported in their journey towards inclusion and the challenges that this presents. The underlying belief was that if staff were supported in their inclusive practice then children with additional learning needs would themselves be better supported within inclusive classrooms as is their entitlement. The main aim of the project was to produce a staff development pack of materials, based on identified needs. A survey approach, together with interviews was utilised at the outset to elicit staff's understandings of and attitudes towards inclusion and the rights and legislative framework that surrounds it. In addition, parents' views and classroom practice were captured on film to provide case study exemplar material of good practice which will be disseminated to schools where, in some cases, children's rights are less well understood as reflected in the reality of a range of practice. The project findings reflected varying attitudes amongst staff some of whom challenge the basic principles of inclusion. It was also clear from some of the data that a lack of understanding about children's rights in this regard permeated staff views. These findings raise questions about the quality of the inclusive experience which may exist for our most vulnerable children.

Keywords: inclusion, rights, challenge, support

SYMPOSIUM I/11

LANGUAGE, LITERACY

Individual papers

CHAIR: LIV GJEMS

Vestfold University College, Norway

Story Completion Technique in Preschool Education

ASLI YILDIRIM

Anadolu University, Turkey

Preschool age is the period in which children develop very fast. In that period, it is very important to bring up children as a self-expressive, questioning, researching, problem solving and creative individual. In this sense, a lot of activities are included in the preschool curriculum. Turkish language activities have an important place in the program and various methods and techniques are used. Especially the story completion technique improves children's problem solving skills, creativity, imagination, and thinking skills. The aim of this research is to determine the effects of the story completion technique on children's development.

Data were collected through the structured observation technique, a qualitative data collection method. A total of 30 classes of 6-age-groups were observed in different schools in Eskişehir, Turkey, in the 2006-2007 academic year. Frequency analysis and descriptive analysis were used to analyze the data.

The results indicated that teachers generally did not have difficulties in using the story completion technique. However, it was observed that teachers had difficulties in integrating children's ideas to compose an original output regarding the story. Also, it was seen that the story completion technique has a significant effect on communication skills and social skills. Besides, the story completion technique has an effect on children's problem solving skills, creativity, imagination, critical thinking, and social skills.

Keywords: preschool, story telling, story completion, problem solving skills

Supporting Language & Literacy in Early Childhood

MARLENE MCCORMACK

IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation, Ireland

Language and literacy are valued tools which enrich children's lives and are necessary skills which enable them navigate and manage within the education system. In modern Ireland, almost one third of school-going children as young as 6 years of age living in disadvantaged communities have serious literacy difficulties (Eivers et al., 2005), but becoming a competent reader, writer and communicator does not begin upon entry to formal schooling. Early childhood care and education services play a key role in supporting young children's literacy practices and the skills, knowledge and attitudes of staff are the most important influence on the quality of the programme (Stonehouse, 1991).

This study connects with practitioners to build a culture of integrated literacy within three early childhood care and education services in a disadvantaged area of West Dublin. The initial phase of the study establishes a baseline, exploring, through observations and interviews, current literacy practices within the settings and questioning taken-for-granted ways of doing things. Through training and on-site support in the second phase, literacy strategies and artefacts will be shared with and integrated into the daily life of the settings across the curriculum. Interpreting and understanding the impact of these interventions will be considered through critical reflection with stakeholders.

Underpinning this study is the intention to positively impact on children's literacy dispositions and skills as they participate in early childhood services and transition to primary school. It is based on the principle that early literacy learning is more effective when embedded in experiences that are purposeful and authentic (Makin and Whitehead, 2004; IPPA, 2004) and when practitioners are partners in the research process (Mac Naughton, 2005).

Keywords: literacy, curriculum, learning

Promoting Language in under 3's. An Holistic Approach in the Assessment of Language Development and of the Quality of Adult Intervention.

FERRE LAEVERS

Leuven University, Belgium

As part of the adaptation of the Process Oriented Child Monitoring System (POMS) for the under 3's, scales are being developed to track the development of children. This study focuses on the area of language.

Based on a literature search, a conceptual framework was developed to underpin two guides: one to interpret language utterances of children and the other to analyse interventions of adults.

The research took place in two child care centres. In each of them 17 groups were observed. Two types of observations were carried out: one focussing on individual children (30 minutes each) recording every utterance labelled as 'communicative', and one focussing on the practitioner (during two and a half hour each) recording every intervention seen as relevant for the language development of children.

In total data were collected on 42 children (between the age of 8 and 31 mths) and 24 practitioners. The data on children were complemented by testing their language skills with three existing instruments (depending on their age).

The grid to analyse the data on children's language consisted of 14 dimensions, amongst which, orientation towards 'language', reciprocal communication, gesture, differentiated speech, expressivity in form and content, ...

The analysis of adult interventions was based on 7 indicators of excellence in the adult's stimulation of language: substantiality of content, expressivity, adaptation to the child's level, creating contact, providing safety and space, stimulating language production, adequate feedback...

The main conclusions are: (1) evidence for the soundness of the framework used to identify dimensions (in children) and indicators (in adults); (2) insight in critical points of transition in children's development; (3) evidence of the large differences in language competences between children of the same age and (4) evidence of the large diversity in quality in the adult's support of language development.

Keywords: assessment, language development, babies & toddlers, adult style

SYMPOSIUM I/12 ASSESSMENT IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: TUIJA TURUNEN

University of Lapland, Finland

Assessing Quality and Supporting Reflective Practice

KAREN MAHONY

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE), Ireland

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) was established in Dublin, Ireland in 2002 to develop and co-ordinate early childhood education nationally. In 2006 the CECDE achieved one of its main objectives when it launched Siolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006). The predominant aim of the framework is to guide and support the development of quality within Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) settings nationwide, which requires a quality assurance system including assessment procedures that will ultimately lead to an award. On a national level a variety of competencies exist amongst ECCE practitioners. In light of this, the CECDE recognises that the development of quality assessment procedures must be considerate of the abilities of its practitioners and therefore must remain elementary, user-friendly and transparent. The CECDE are currently in the process of developing a three-stage assessment process to complement the framework. The following paper will take you through the process of development of such assessment procedures and will introduce you

to the second stage of the proposed procedures including the Portfolio and Documentation Guide and the Reflective Self-assessment Instrument, as well as the consultation process that has been carried out with a broad range of stakeholders in the ECCE sector in Ireland relative to such.

Keywords: quality, assessment, reflection, practitioner

Use of a Digital Adaptive Monitoring System in a Scientific based Curriculum for 3-6 Year Old Children

JEF VAN KUYK

Cito Netherlands, The Netherlands

The curriculum (Van Kuyk, 2003) in which the Digital Monitoring System is used, is developed on the scientific basis of the Dynamic Systems Theory ((Fischer & Bidell, 1998, 2006). In the curriculum is a Relational Component derived from the Attachment Theory (Bowlby (1969), (Ainsworth, Blehar and Waters (1978) (Erikson, Sroufe and Egeland (1985), based on well-being and safety, emotional support, caring and understanding, loving relationships, as well as respect for autonomy, structure and rules. Complementary to this component is the Educational Component, derived from the research on distancing theory (Sigel, 1993, 2006). The way in which the teacher stimulates the development of the children, challenges their curiosity, and works to understand what motivates them externally and internally.

Within the curriculum Assessment is focused on those two components. There is Authentic Assessment, to assess what children do and create in self regulation and a Systematic Assessment, to evaluate what the teacher is stimulating. As a part of this assessment a method independent Digital Monitoring System (Van Kuyk, 2005) is used to assess language, mathematics and social-emotional development on the basis of Item Response Theory (Eggen & Sanders, 1994).

Psychometric scientists insist that quality assessments must meet rigorous criteria for validity and reliability. Teachers warn that assessments can cause anxiety, feelings of failure and de-motivation in young children. This session reveals how a digital monitoring system can meet both the psychometric needs of the psychometric scientists, the teachers and the social-emotional needs of the children.

Keywords: curriculum, digital test, monitoring system, young children

Quality Evaluation in Preschool – a Collaborative Process.

GABRIELA PORTUGAL AND SÓNIA GÓIS

University of Aveiro, Portugal

Developing quality in preschool education has come to assume great relevance in our days. It has been demonstrated that a high quality preschool education can have significant long term effects in various dimensions of a person's life, including the actual learning of the children.

In this paper we'll present the results of a case study that is being implemented by the authors within a postgraduate research project that intends to contribute to the development of an efficient strategy to evaluate and to improve the quality and effectiveness of the learning of the children in contexts of preschool education. It is being developed by the General Direction of Innovation and Curricular Development of the Ministry of Education based on the methodology of evaluation and improvement, proposed by the EEL Project (Effective Early Learning) (Pascal & Bertram, 1999) having, as characteristics, an integrated

vision of quality, professional and organisational development and research in children education. To fulfil this objective it has been developed a case study in a public preschool context within a collaborative process of evaluation and development of the quality and effectiveness of the learning of the children, through the analysis of the context and processes experienced by children and adults. This research aims to characterize qualitatively the current situation of the preschool, to evaluate necessities working in collaboration with the involved actors in the process (early childhood teachers, education assistants, parents and children) and to define measures of reorganization as a form to guarantee the educational quality.

Keywords: quality evaluation, early childhood education, involvement, teacher style.

SYMPOSIUM I/13 PERSPECTIVES ON PLAY

Individual papers

CHAIR: SOPHIE ALCOCK

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Play at School: An Action Research Project in West Dublin

STEVE GOODE

IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation, Ireland

The opportunity to play whilst at school has recently come under scrutiny. Research suggests that in the USA and the UK there has been a reduction in the time that children go out to play each day (Blatchford, Pellegrini). The importance of break times in allowing children a break from academic activities has been shown to be crucial to educational attainment in children. With older children a break occurs when children change from one activity to another. However for young children it has been shown that not only do children need a break from activity but benefit greatly from the opportunity to engage in free play.

Additionally there is a very steep rise in the numbers of children suffering from over weight and obesity. One key factor in this rise is the lack of physical exercise that children are having each day. The Irish Heart Foundation recommends that a child should have at least an hour of exercise each day. Are there ways that schools can contribute to this?

There is little tradition in Ireland of thinking about and planning for children's play during break times. Few schools provide facilities for play, play equipment or toys and games, in many schools running in the yard is banned. The role of school staff is to 'supervise and not promote play.

The aim of this project is to promote play in school. Working in partnership with teaching and support staff parents and others members of the school community the project has identified barriers to play in school; for example, lack of knowledge of play, fears of children being hurt and subsequent litigation against the school, facilities, parental concerns. The project staff and the school community work together to overcome some of these barriers; in each school a 'committee' of project and school staff and parents has been formed to develop and implement a play plan for the school. Throughout this process children have been consulted and involved in determining what activities will take place.

This paper will report on the process in three large primary schools in west Dublin as work in undertaken to identify and remove barriers to play at break times. The changing attitudes of staff and pupils and practical examples of play at school will be reported.

Keywords: play, school yard

Preschool Children's Negotiations and Coordination of Perspectives in Play

ULLA MAURITZSON

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This study explores young children's communication and interaction in play situations in preschool from a sociocultural and dialogical theoretical perspective. During the last decades questions concerning how children learn to identify and become sensitive to other people's perspective have been in focus within the field of children's communicative development, i.e. in cognitive psychology. Many aspects of the human ability to take another person's perspective have been explored in the extensive experimental research on young children's understanding of so-called false beliefs. This study is conducted among preschool children's pretend play and the focus in the analyses is on how children participated in a so-called 'negotiated interactions' about what to play. I am arguing that children get a lot of practice when they inter-subjectively negotiate and coordinate different perspectives when they are playing with peers in preschool. The communication that takes place in these play situations, can be viewed as interactive learning achievements between the interlocutors in situated practices. Or as Katherine Nelson argues' [i]t takes the child beyond his own private concerns and beliefs and opens up possibility of understanding the concerns, and thereby the beliefs, of others in the Community of Minds' (Nelson, 2005, p. 45).

Keywords: pretend play, learning, communication, interaction

SYMPOSIUM I/14

ART AND CREATIVITY

Individual papers

CHAIR: THEODORA PAPATHEODOROU

Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

Developing Drawing as A Tool for Making Meaning: A Case Study

KATHY RING

York St John University, United Kingdom

This paper draws upon data collected as part of an ongoing longitudinal study of early years practitioners engaged in developing their support for young children as drawers. It presents a case study of one practitioner's developing thinking, beliefs, understanding and practice over a number of years. The study builds upon the work of Anning and Ring (2004); Bronfenbrenner (1979); Dyson (1993); Kolbe (2005); Kress (1997); Malchiodi (1988); Matthews (1998); Vygotsky (1978) and Wells (1986) and crosses boundaries between the subject disciplines of psychology, education, art and literacy. There is an emphasis within the methodology upon visual methods, with data being collected primarily in the form of visual images and practitioner/ researcher narratives that are often stimulated by the images collected. Within the case study, detailed evidence is given of how young children's use of drawing, as a tool for making meaning and creative thinking, is dependent upon the resources (used in the widest sense of the word) available for it within the environment. Particular recognition is given to the enabling context, where drawing is used by young children as a language with which to explore ideas and find solutions, both alone and with each other. Also recognised is the sensitivity of the practitioner, who in her engagement with the children is committed to their empowerment.

Keywords: drawing, meaning making, young children, practitioners

"The Importance of the Animal-image in Young Children`s Artwork".

CHRISTINE ZEISER

Louise-Schroeder-College, Wiesbaden, Germany

Looking at the artwork of young children the animal-image plays an important role as a topic of great interest for them. Young children express their inner feelings and personal aspects of themselves through the animal-image in their paintings, drawings and sculptures. Children are able to identify themselves with their created animal-image in their artwork. Having worked with young children doing Art Therapy I will address the question of how to interpret the animal-images produced by children. Hereby, it is necessary to reflect on the child`s and our personal cultural background and to research anthropological sources of humankind. By showing examples of children`s artwork the role of the unconscious which influences the image-making process and sometimes entirely can produce an animal-image will be discussed. Presenting a psychoanalytical exploration the focus of this presentation will be looking at the following questions: What stands behind the animal as a symbol? What kind of feelings and associations can animals as symbols contain in relation to the collective unconscious? Why can it be of great importance and help for the child`s development that she /he makes use of the animal-images in her/his artwork?

When working with young children the professional needs to be aware that art-symbolism is a complex process which can contain many different personal, as well as cultural and religious aspects of the individual child. An art-therapist can provide to the child a safe environment to express her/ his states of feelings and personal needs. This can encourage the process of the child`s non-verbal communication, finding new pathes to connect and to relate to the world.

Keywords: young children`s animal-images, Art Therapy, animal-symbolism, role of the unconscious

Images Forever

MARI ANNE E. GRYTE

University of Stavanger, Norway

Nature invites to experience with joy, desire and curiosity. It wakes us up, stimulates emotions and imaginations and opens up for wondering, action and practical work.

Thus nature presents a multitude of possibilities for creativity, experimental work and learning by discovery.

This paper is about aesthetical education. It`s based on development projects investigating how students, inspired by so-called Land art act and create in nature with nature`s own materials. The connection between children`s experimental play and the way students work with nature projects with their bodies as only tools is emphasized. Aesthetical experiences, when totally engaged here and now, represent a sense of wholeness which differ from everyday life and way of thought. Methods are presented how students` collaboration with nature and what nature has to offer stimulate activities and create spaces for reflection and innovative ideas.

Visual methods are used, not only for documentation, but to strengthen and prolong aesthetical experiences. Photos have their focus, something special is lifted up, like artists do in their work "when they slow down perception and invite exploration" (Dewey, 1934). The ever changing meaning of the images and how it opens up for further interpretations, is illustrated.

Practical experiences are discussed in relation to theories and ideas of Bakhtin, Csikszentmihalyi and Barthes.

Keywords: aesthetical education, Land art, Images, Semiology

SYMPOSIUM I/15

BASES OF DIFFERENCE: COLONIZING AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: JAYNE OSGOOD

London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

Session overview

This symposium opens up the critical issue of what is basic, by considering what is colonizing and what cultural diversity might do to European early childhood education traditions. We focus on perspectives drawn from postcolonial theory, critical theory and postmodernism to challenge what matters as contemporary practices and theories with children and adults in preschools and in higher educations for these. In so-doing we critique and reconstruct 'core values' of care and learning by considering difference. Through our research investigations of colonizing and cultural diversity we ask what happens to 'the basics' when bases are different. In practice and in theory, we ask if colonizing is an opposite of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

Keywords: 'basic', postmodernism, critical difference, postcolonial

Considering Narratives of Three Preschool Children in Relation to Core Values of Equity and Inclusion

ANN MERETE OTTERSTAD

Oslo University College and Oslo University, Norway

Oslo is becoming a diverse society. Of all children in school about 37 % have ethnic minority backgrounds. This condition challenges the professionals to find ways to study and analyze cultural difference and 'hierarchy and power positions' in early year's education and care. Cultural diversities challenge researchers to review methodological tools to go beyond colonizing practices. This paper reconsiders how preschool teachers categorized as minorities are in positions to negotiate and influence their professionalism. I aim to deconstruct narratives, with a focus on how discourses and power inscribe or create resistance of practitioners' positions. The research work attempts to trace dominant discursive traditions influencing negotiation processes of equity and inclusion.

As Doctoral research in process, this challenges mainstream researchers' positioning as 'doing research as an outsider'. Accordingly I explore and have designed de/colonizing research methodology to try to obtain equity in research processes. De/colonizing research questions require ethical and political consideration and awareness, and bring in new ideas and critical reflection for research participants. Additionally, I also search to decolonize the relationship between myself as the researcher, and the preschool teachers with whom I work. Their personal narratives allow me enter their worlds a little, while better understanding my own. The paper addresses power positions and cultural diversity positions in relation to a search for how regimes of discourses (after Foucault) are visible or invisible. This might be expressed as inscription or resistance processes. Further, discourses of categorization (such as otherness and ethnicities in relation to equity and inclusion) will be reconsidered and open to discussion.

Keywords: diversity, narratives, equity, inclusion

Practice when Bases are Different: Reconsidering the Everyday, its Norms and Values in Culturally Diverse barnehager (Norwegian preschools).

CAMILLA ELINE ANDERSEN

Oslo University College and Stockholm University, Norway

For some years now the national objectives clause for Norwegian kinder garden has been questioned. In June 2007 the 'Bolstad Commission' put forward a proposal for a new one. This proposal seems to be more adjusted to a diverse society than the current one as it includes core values such as respect for human worth, intellectual freedom, love for your neighbor (*nestekjærlighet*), equality and solidarity; and how these are visible in all religions and beliefs. As a preschool teacher myself I believe that presenting critical research such as we are attempting opens up more possibilities for people in culturally diverse societies. However, although such clauses and written curriculum statements (Norway's Framework Plan/Frame plan for kindergarden) are important when working within early childhood education, what really matters is what happens in the everyday lives of people in such institutions; and how children and adults are able to co-construct what is happening there. By looking at texts related to and coming from differently diverse environments where children aged 0-6 live their lives, this paper critically investigates how core values and norms are practiced or not practiced. My informing question is: How do preschool teachers and assistants, children and their families choose, or not choose, to relate to and act upon what is understood as core values? Critical and postcolonial theories will be used in readings of what cultural diversity might do to European early childhood traditions. As part of my Doctoral research I aim to investigate how to practice reconceptualized norms and values.

Keywords: everyday, norms, values, diversity

Considering Muslims: Blurring National and Religious 'basics' in a Norwegian Kindergarten (preschool) and an English Nursery School

JEANETTE RHEDDING-JONES

Oslo University College and Bergen University College, Norway

How are European early childhood education addressing implications of the Islamic Diaspora? In preschools, nursery schools, kindergartens and kinder garden there are now many Muslims. The children of Muslim families attend the preschools but only small number of Muslims is employed, mostly as assistants. This paper deals with how religious and national practices come together as curriculum 'basics' for Muslim practitioners in Muslim preschools in Norway. Here the challenges regard combining cultural, pedagogical, linguistic, and caring complexities, shared religious convictions and de-centering.

As European traditions (following Vygotsky, Montessori, Piaget, Fröbel and now 'Reggio') have influenced early childhood throughout the western world, these founders are followed as today's canon: the normalized undergraduate coursework studied for qualifying as a professional. What happens when history is reconstructed, by the insertions of new practices and theories, is that the older disseminations never actually disappear: they live on in useful transformations. In reconsidering whatever 'we' think is basic (according to our cultural constructions of early education and care) we bring not only the histories of our own particular cultures and their linguistic embeddings regarding pedagogy and care. We also bring what we think now at this particular point in time and place. When what we bring is Arabic, Somali, Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistani, Bosnian and additionally Islamic, then what is western will give way to something else. How this dislocates 'core concepts' which are essentially western (like development, growth, care, learning, play, quality, socialization and the German *bildung*) is the problem for this paper. Additionally, 'core values' of democracy, sustainable development and inclusion might also be open to question. Here the example of a Muslim nursery school in England shows English national constructs blurring with the Islamic in practices not seen in Norway, where the performance of 'Norwegian' is what matters to Muslims.

Keywords: muslim, 'basics', practices, theories

A Discussant's Response.

Bases of Difference: Colonising and Cultural Diversity

JAYNE OSGOOD

London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

What unites each of these three papers is their determination to interrogate and generally cross-examine certain practices that in very many ways are considered as 'ordinary', 'familiar' and 'basic'. Postcolonial, post-structural and critical theories are incorporated so as to assist each author unsettle particular canons of thought. In paper one for instance, Otterstad marks out how researchers can no longer rely upon the 'comforts' that were promised within certain methodological tools. Via practices of deconstruction she has been obliged to fashion methodological tools that have provided a means of examining diversity outside of colonial practices. Additionally the stories that have emerged as a consequence have forced a reflexive turn where her own particular ways of viewing the world including those relating to equity and inclusion have been destabilised. Similarly Andersen puts the issue of 'core values' including as an example 'love for your neighbour' under the spotlight where rather than seeing these as policy rhetoric she wants to investigate them within the lived realities of peoples' lives. Such realities are ethnically diverse. Meanwhile Rhedding Jones poses a hard yet pressing question when she asks: 'how is European early education addressing implications of the Islamic Diaspora?' In her view such a question challenges not only what constitutes the 'basics' or 'core concepts' in terms of curriculum but additionally it throws issues of identity into disarray. By drawing on data from a Muslim nursery school in England and by referring closely to work undertaken in a Norwegian Muslim barnehage she dislocates not only what it means to care and educate 'the child' but also she questions just what it does mean to be 'Norwegian' in contemporary times.

SYMPOSIUM I/16

PRE-SCHOOLING AS AN ARENA FOR DOING GENDER-EQUALITY

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: HILLEVI LENZ TAGUCHI

Stockholm University, Sweden

Session overview

This symposium examines different ways of understanding the construction of gendered subjectivities and aspects of gender-equality work in Swedish Early Childhood Education. The papers examine how different aspects of pre-school practices shape and constitute gendered subjectivities among girls and boys in different ways: Rooms, spaces, things and materials; investigative learning-practices in mathematics; as well as practices of "free play". The three PhD students invited to present in this symposium all work from within a feminist poststructural and material feminist framework.

Keywords: gender-equality, subjectivity, feminist poststructuralism, material feminism.

Theorizing Feminist and Aesthetic Learning Practices in Early Childhood Education

ANNA PALMER

Stockholm University, Sweden

The relationship between mathematics and sex/gender in Western culture is complicated and renders girls and women a disadvantaged position as learners. Moreover, students of early childhood education, of which 98 percent are women, have comparably negative attitudes towards mathematics and feel reluctant to teach it. The aim of the paper is to study whether or not alternative teaching methods in mathematics can produce more creative, joyful and egalitarian learning situations in early childhood teaching compared to traditional teaching methods. The paper investigates and analyzes a project that was performed by a student in early childhood teacher education with the aim to challenge the taken-for-granted mathematical teaching discourse, and to carry out a maths-project without text-books and teaching aids, following an aesthetic understanding of mathematics instead. The example describes how a group of six-year old children, one boy and four girls, create a break-dance choreography with support of mathematical concepts, foremost algebra, while simultaneously constituting gendered subjectivities in relation to educational and mathematical discourses, popular cultural and material objects. The data consists of pedagogical documentation from one chosen example, out of a body of data consisting of 75 students' mathematical projects and investigation with children during their vocational training. My analysis of the data is based on critical and discursive analysis carried out within a feminist and poststructural and material theoretical framework. The analysis shows that it is difficult, yet possible, to change taken-for-granted mathematical teaching practices act and talk in new and alternative ways without simplifying the mathematical concepts to be taught.

Children's Gendered Subjectivities and Becomings in Relation to Places and Spaces in Preschool

KARIN HULTMAN

Stockholm University, Sweden

Research about gender in preschool has in Sweden mainly been preoccupied by investigating the teacher's ways of treating the children and how this can be understood as important signals to the children about what is expected of them and their gender. This paper aims to shift focus from the "interpersonal" relations to the relations between settings, places and materials, and children's bodily performed gendered subjectivity in relation to these "concrete" but discursively charged things. The theoretic influences are based on a feministic poststructuralist theory (Butler, 1999; Davies, 1989; Davies & Harré, 1990; Deleuze, 2004; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Lenz Taguchi, 2000). The data consists of collective biographies with a group of researchers and students (Davies & Gannon, 2006). I have found that many children actively try to search up places that can be understood as "non-places" (see for example Augé 1995) i.e. places in the preschool that are not organised for any pedagogical purpose and where the children are not supposed to spend time. By understanding these non-places and the activities and subjectivities that are performed there as central and important we can, I argue, revisit the more domesticated places in the preschool and disrupt the taken for granted and normative ways of understanding these places and the children that occupies them (see for example hooks 1999, Burman & MacLure 2005).

Keywords: preschool environment, gendered subjectivity, material feminism, feminist poststructuralism.

Gender Formations in the Activity of "Free Play" in Pre-school – Neutral Child Performance or Subjugating Practice by the Teachers?

CHRISTIAN EIDEVALD

Jönköping University, Sweden

The aim of this paper is to illustrate the complexities that are embedded within gender formations and in so doing I try to shift understandings away from current polarities that exist within contemporary Swedish early years provision. By drawing on poststructuralist theories in general and in particular Foucault's (1977) work concerned with discourse I draw attention to certain pedagogical practices which in my view offer young children an impoverished way of 'being' in terms of their gender identities.

Additionally I strive to show why these practices have such a profound grip on Swedish practitioners by exposing some of the underpinning presumptions upon which they are predicated including biological theories and development psychology.

The paper describes some of the assumptions that both nourish and sustain one polarity – essentialist notions concerned with sex and gender – before moving to discuss its polar opposite - social constructivism. In part three I describe how data that informs the work, an example of "free play", was collected before moving on to offer multiple stories that emerge from untangling these. Such deconstructions emerge from feminist appropriations of post-structuralism and queer theories. Finally the paper considers what some of the repercussions are in terms of pedagogical practices when children's gender identities are considered in terms of being 'fluid'. It is argued that by making such a shift young people are not only able to 'perform' (Butler, 2006) gender in diverse ways but importantly they can become increasingly critical of why certain performances both work at subjugating and oppressing.

Keywords: free play, gendered subjectivity, positionings, poststructuralism

SYMPOSIUM I/17

HOW CAN WORKERS RECOGNISE, SUPPORT AND EXTEND CHILDREN'S SCHEMATIC DEVELOPMENT IN A PROVISION FOR UNDER THREES?

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: MARGY WHALLEY

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Session overview

This symposium consists of three strands of work carried out at the Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families.

The Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families is currently the only UK Children's Centre with an integrated research base. This provides unique opportunities to work collaboratively with early years educators and carers as practitioner researchers. This symposium will focus on the learning and development of children under three years of age and appropriate pedagogical engagement for children from birth to 3 years. The first strand considers how, through understanding children's schematic development, practitioners are more able to support and extend children's learning effectively, both in the cognitive and affective domains. The second strand focuses on recognising and supporting children's companionship in involvement. The third strand explores two aspects of emotional well-being - the 'relationship' dimension and the impact of the environment.

How can Workers Recognise, Support and Extend Children's Schematic Development in a Provision for Under Threes?

MARGY WHALLEY

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

'A schema is a pattern of repeated actions. Clusters of schemas develop into later concepts'

(Athey, 2003). This paper reports on a practitioner research project in which the researchers worked alongside a team of early years educators and carers who were trying to recognise, support and extend children's schematic explorations. The researcher proposes that through understanding children's schematic development practitioners are better able to support and extend children's learning effectively, both in the cognitive and emotional domains.

There is now a growing body of knowledge (Shaw, 1991, Tait, 2006, Arnold, 2007) which supports the belief that children are able to work through, and come to understand aspects of their emotional lives as well as their cognitive lives through schematic exploration.

Much of the research carried out to date has been with children over the age of three. The Baby and toddler Nest is our provision at Pen Green for children from one – two and a half years of age, and this research project provided the opportunity for baby nest staff as practitioner researchers and the Pen Green research team to study schematic explorations in children under three through an action learning set. It also gave the Baby Nest staff team opportunities to document and evaluate their pedagogical engagement and the strategies they have developed to support and extend children's schematic play.

Keywords: schemas, well-being, involvement, practitioner research, under threes,

How can Workers Recognise and Support the 'Companionship in Involvement' of Children Under Three?

FELICITY NORTON

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

This paper reports on a practitioner research project focussing on recognising and supporting children's 'companionship in involvement'. In previous studies (Laevers, Pascal & Bertram, Formosinho) involvement scales have been developed and used in settings to monitor how deeply children learn as an outcome of the quality of the provision and pedagogy. Examples of children aged under three, deeply involved, alongside other children or workers, within a nursery setting, were captured on video. Video vignettes were shared with practitioners to encourage and facilitate reflection into how workers can recognise and support children's companionship in involvement. During the reflections various questions were explored, such as: what does child-to-child involvement look like? What does adult-to-child involvement look like? How will recording companionship in involvement enrich our summative assessments? Will recognition of companionship in involvement change our pedagogic strategies? For many years the early years educators and carers at the Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families have used the concept of involvement (Laevers et al 1997) to judge the appropriateness of the provision we offer. This concept is shared with parents enabling us to gather information about how the children are currently developing and learning at home to help further enrich our summative assessments. The paper explores involvement from three perspectives; Jean Piaget's view of the child as an individual active learner, Lev Vygotsky's view on social relationships and how those relationships develop, and Loris Malaguzzi's and Colwyn Trevarthen's view of each child as competent and connected to adults. The outcome has implications for the development descriptors of involvement with children under three and for the enrichment of pedagogic strategies in practice within integrated centres where there is extended care for children from 0-3.

Keywords: schemas, well-being, involvement, practitioner research, under threes.

How can Adults Recognise and Support the Emotional Well-being of Children in an early Years Provision for Children Under Three?

JULIE MEDHURST

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

The Ten Year Strategy: Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children (2004) proposed radical reforms for early education and childcare in the United Kingdom. As part of this strategy, the government have produced an early years framework (EYFS) that will become mandatory for all early years providers in September 2008. A strong focus of the EYFS is emotional well-being. A four year study was undertaken at The Pen Green Centre for Children and Their Families (2000-2004). Completed in collaboration with parents and workers at the centre this study focussed on the emotional well-being and resilience of children 3-5 years (The Pen Green Research Team, 2004). Building on the findings of the 2004 study, the aim of this project was to explore the emotional well-being of children under three. Video recordings were taken of the children in their home with a parent, attending a 'Messy Play' group within the centre with a parent and during a crèche session with a key worker. Working within a participative paradigm this small scale study involved case studies of two families and three children under three and focussed discussion sessions with the crèche team. Using video analysis, the project explored two aspects of emotional well-being; the 'relationships' dimension (Dunn, 1993, Roberts, 2007), and the impact of the environment. The outcome has implications for the responsiveness of early years practitioners in supporting the emotional well-being of young children, and the design and construction of pedagogical spaces that support the development of responsive relationships.

Keywords: schemas, well-being, involvement, practitioner research, under threes.

SYMPOSIUM I/18 PLACING PLAY IN A POSTMODERN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: EUNJU YUN

Catholic University of Daegu, South Korea

Session overview

Since Friedrich Froebel inaugurated kindergarten as a place for young children's self-active play, play has become a critical feature in early childhood education. Slogans such as "learning through play" or "play for learning" have become everyday language in an early childhood classroom. However, it has been dominated by instrumental concerns to the point that the authentic meanings and qualities of play were buried in oblivion. This symposium is in response to this dominant modern understanding of play in early schooling and the focus will thus be on postmodern reflections of play. There will be four presentations on the topic of play in this symposium. The first presentation will examine the ways of multiple-layered meaning-constitution in the "liminoid" reality of childhood play: How children conceive the manifold dimensions of pretend play and in what multiple ways they create and experience the meaning-constitution during the complex process of refining genre characters and modes of enactment. The second presentation will be an attempt to recover the lost qualities of play and to reestablish a desirable relationship between play and learning with the lens of postmodern nomadism. In the third presentation, we will illuminate the nature of the social act of spontaneous dramatic play by analyzing children's discourse drawing on the concept of "rhizome" as the analogy. Finally, we attempt to explore the meanings of "playful teaching" teachers implicitly hold. The implications of playful teaching are discussed with the postmodern perspective, especially Foucault and Deleuze.

Playing the Liminoid Reality in and out of Frames

HAE-RYUNG YEU

Yeungnam University, South Korea

Going beyond the traditional view of play as mimicry or representation, I attempt in this paper to understand the ways of multiple-layered meaning-constitution in the 'liminoid' reality of childhood play. Empirical analysis is made to illuminate children's conception of genre modalities and play reality in their actual discourse and enactment in pretend play. This paper draws on postmodern reflections of childhood play, which acknowledge the essence of play within play flow itself, the unpredictable yet 'real' and dynamic back-and-forth movement. Research method involves qualitative interpretation of data obtained through field observations and interviews with children, teachers and parents. In contemporary anthropological perspectives a child in play is understood as playing multiple identities and roles through discourse and enactment. S/he comes to engage in an at least 'quadrilogue' acting either explicitly or implicitly the roles of player, play partner, director and audience at the same time. Within the frame of pretend play there also exists many sub-frames of pretending reality, where children play both the fabricated pretence of genre modality as well as the spontaneously occurring pretense, while linking fantasy with non-fantasy elements through metacommunication. Questioning the naïve traditional view of the 'fantasy vs. reality' division or the 'in- vs. out-of-frame' division, I demonstrate here how children conceive the manifold dimensions of pretend play and in what multiple ways they create and experience the meaning-constitution during the complex process of refining or constructing genre characters and modes of enactment. Reconsidering Young children's spontaneous dramatic play: An analogy of the rhizomatic thought.

Keywords: play, postmodernism, rhizome, playful teaching

Recovering the Lost Nature of Play in an Early Childhood Classroom

EUNJU YUN (1) AND SOYOUNG SUNG (2)

(1) Catholic University of Daegu, South Korea

(2) Keimyung University, South Korea

Play has been one of the critical indispensable elements in early childhood education. And one hardly claims the significance of play without mentioning the word "learning." Slogans such as "learning through play" or "play for learning" have become everyday language in early schooling since a large number of studies showed the effectiveness of adopting play in the context of learning. It has been corrupted by curriculum concerns and children's control of play has been usurped. What teachers call "play" is more structured and goal-oriented and does not allow for true free play by children. Understanding play as a means rather than as a purpose led to an "instrumentalization" of play with educational principles. Therefore, play is not play any more for young children. Rather, it becomes one of tasks for them to achieve in a given time. This study is in response to this dominant modern understanding of play and the focus will thus be on a neglected quality of play that is postmodern nomadism, a new way of living which highlights the movements by which the line frees itself from the points and renders points discernible. The ethics of nomadism are compatible with those of play in that both seek for acenteredness, nonhierarchy, openness, unexpectedness, invisibility, uncertainty etc. With the lens of nomadism, we try to recover the lost essential nature of play and moreover to reestablish a desirable relationship between play and learning in early childhood education.

Keywords: play, postmodernism, rhizome, playful teaching

Reconsidering Young Children's Spontaneous Dramatic Play: An Analogy of the Rhizomatic Thought

MOONJA OH (1) AND SHUNAH CHUNG (2)

- (1) Korea Center for Children and Teachers, South Korea
(2) Sookmyung Women's University, South Korea

Since Friedrich Froebel inaugurated kindergarten as a place for young children's self-active play, play has become a dominant feature of early childhood education. In early childhood classrooms of today, it is often staged carefully by adults as activities and laden with special purposes, because it is considered an essential tool for learning and teaching. In contrast, children's dramatic play in the natural setting is spontaneous, fluid and highly improvisational (Sawyer, 1997), drawing minimal attention and appreciation from educators and researchers. Studies on children's peer culture by Corsaro (2003) show that children engage themselves in constructing and reconstructing the meanings of the world, or, what we might call, self-initiated learning during their spontaneous fantasy play. In this process, children and play are inseparable, self-generating the play itself constantly. This is very close to the "rhizomatic thought," a term coined by Deleuze and Guattari. According to them, the rhizomatic thought is the consequence of provocations of an encounter, moves in all directions without beginnings or ends, and exists in between. Dahlberg (2006) comments that "the thought is a matter of experimentation and problematization lines of flight, an exploration of a becoming" (p. 25). Drawing on the concept of rhizome as the analogy, in this study, we illuminate the nature of the social act of spontaneous dramatic play by analyzing children's discourse. Children can be-in-the-play by constantly rebuilding shared meanings, transforming its themes through negotiation, redefining the role/function of objects, participants, time and spaces, and renewing the relationships among them in the ever-changing contexts.

Keywords: play, postmodernism, rhizome, playful teaching

Beyond a Good Teacher: What could be a Playful Teaching?

HEEYEUN KIM (1) AND HYOJIN AHN (2)

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(2) Incheon City College, South Korea

The purpose of this study is to explore the meanings of "playful teaching" teachers implicitly hold, but have not been paid attention, in their educational practices. It is generally believed that a good teacher should devote on correcting children's malbehavior, enhancing children's learning abilities and evaluating children's performance as a facilitator, a deliverer, an assistant or a guide. In this context, teachers have been educated to understand developmental functions of children's play, which defines early childhood so that it is separated from adult life including teachers' one. This study questions the concept of 'a good early education and care teacher', and starts with the presupposition of the continuity of children's life and adult's life. As far as play is the most important feature of children's life, education or teaching for young children could be deeply connected with 'playfulness' itself. This study attempts to derive the elements of playful teaching from the routine of educational practices. Observation and in-depth interview with teachers and 3-5 year-old children were made in early education/care classrooms. The elements of playful teaching are categorized; the curiosity towards children's life, the flow into children's context, the meta-communication within children's play, and the liberation from provided rules of teaching. The implications of playful teaching were discussed with the postmodern perspective, especially M. Foucault and G. Deleuze.

Keywords: play, postmodernism, rhizome, playful teaching.

SYMPOSIUM I/19 RESILIENCE IN MINORITIES

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: ARVE GUNNESTAD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Session overview

The study "Resilience in Minorities" builds on two projects: 1. Anne-Mari Larsen and Stella Nguluka (2007): "Where journeys meet. A comparative study of the culture of two minority groups: the San people of Botswana and the Travellers in Norway". 2. "Resilience in a cross cultural perspective. A retrospective study of resilience in children and young people in Southern Africa and Norway" by Arve Gunnestad.

The aim of the symposium is to understand the situation of minorities and to highlight how knowledge of resilience can indicate a way forward in keeping and developing the life and culture of minorities.

The study found a number of similarities between the two minority groups. This may indicate that minorities are faced with certain challenges just because they are minorities. The resilience study identified a number of protective factors that can help the child to be able to cope in adversities and recover after crisis. The symposium gives examples how these protective factors can be of help in the development of the life of minorities.

Keywords: minority, resilience, culture, risk factors, protective factors.

Resilience in a Cross-cultural Perspective A Retrospective Study of Resilience in Children and Young People in Southern Africa and Norway

ARVE GUNNESTAD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

The aim of the study is to understand the protective factors that can make children to cope in adversities, and to see how such factors can be of relevance in the situation of minorities.

The cross cultural study of resilience was done as a retrospective study where students from Zambia, Swaziland and Norway related from a difficult period in their lives and reflected on what helped them to cope. The study identified a number of protective factors that can help the child to be able to cope in adversities and recover after crisis. The study groups these factors in three main categories: 1) Network factors – the social support, 2) Abilities and skills in children – support from the children's own resources and 3) Meaning, values and faith – existential and cultural support. The study indicates how these three groups of protective factors are basic and operate in different cultures.

In this symposium we show how the strength from these three groups of protective factors could be resources for further development of the lives and cultures of minorities, exemplified by the Travellers and the San people. Networking with other minority groups and organisations in the larger society, development of minority relevant and friendly educational approaches and acceptance of cultural differences as a value in society and thereby opening up for true bi-culturalism are some of the areas highlighted in the study.

Keywords: minority, resilience, culture, risk factors, protective factors.

The Travellers and the Children's Rights to Their Own Culture

ANNE-MARI LARSEN

Queen Mauds College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This presentation will focus on the Travellers in Norway: their culture, travelling, family matters, lack of education and trust, and understanding.

The presentation is based on a developmental study. Information is gathered by interviewing and collecting stories from the Travellers in Norway.

The results show parts of the life of a minority culture in Norway which has never been accepted in the society. It shows the importance of belonging to a certain group, but also the difficulties like fear, not being accepted, mocked and not having the rights like other people in the society. It shows the importance of travelling and also how the travelling life has made difficulties for the education of the children. The children have not got a proper education, and they have not had the opportunity to use or being thought in their own language, Romani. They have not been accepted in the society, and many grown up Travellers today are sceptical and feel unsafe in the society, a feeling they pass over to the next generation.

Children has been taken away from their parents and put into foster homes or orphanages trying to make them “proper Norwegians”, and some were taken away from their culture, travelling life and their family. Women has been sterilised to try and avoid more Travellers to be born.

The study also shows the resilience in these children and their ability to survive in today’s society.

Keywords: minority, resilience, culture, risk factors

The San People of Southern Africa, and Their Children’s Rights to Their Own Culture

STELLA NGULUKA

Bokamoso Trust, Botswana

This presentation focuses on the San people of Botswana in Southern Africa: their culture, travelling, family life, education, and socio-economic circumstances.

This presentation is based on a developmental study. Information is gathered by interviewing, observation and collecting stories from the San people.

The factors that make the indigenous San people of Southern Africa unique are also responsible for the adverse circumstances they face today. This work explores their situation and portrays that as hunters and gatherers moving away from their traditional lifestyles has proved very difficult. Their children have found the new culture and languages in schools and mainstream society strange, unfriendly and alienating. Children have often run away from modern schools, never to return. As a result very few San people have attained high levels of education if any at all. For a people who have thrived on travel, in pursuit of a livelihood; settling down according to modern structures of cash ownership, materialism, legal systems and authoritarianism is distressing. San people vest a lot of attention into family ties and communal relationships. The individualistic modern ways of living in main stream society are problematic. Based on these very circumstances, mainstream society mocks and ridicules them. Consequently, most of them register similar symptoms of fear, skepticism, low-self esteem and are often vulnerable to all forms of substance abuse.

The study also demonstrates the resilience in these children to survive today’s society.

Keywords: minority, resilience, culture, risk factors.

SYMPOSIUM I/20

DEVELOPING TRANSITIONS GUIDELINES

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: HILARY FABIAN

Glyndŵr University, United Kingdom

Session overview

The theme: Representatives from six countries came together to develop transition guidelines for those involved with starting school. This presentation by Professor Inge Johansson (Sweden), Dr Hilary Fabian (UK) and Wilfried Griebel (Germany), describes the process of developing these guidelines and identifies the main elements of the outcomes that have been produced as a result of the work. Aims of the research: The research aimed to identify the key issues for stakeholders in the transition to school and to support families through the transition to school by developing and promoting transition materials. Theoretical and conceptual framework: the work on transitions stems from ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner), rites of passage (van Gennep), cultural understanding (Bruner), relationships (Corsaro), emotional well-being (Goleman), and children's agency (James, Jenks & Prout). The research questions: The main questions surrounding the development of the materials were concerned with perspectives. Methodology: A needs analysis was conducted through questionnaires to parents, teachers of the first class in school and educationalists in early childhood settings (e.g. nursery/ kindergarten). The main elements were identified and matched with current literature to identify key elements to be included in the guidelines. Main findings: The questionnaire raised a number of issues about the research itself as well as identifying themes. From these the group were able to identify issues such as common values, challenges for families, particular curriculum areas that might be helpful in easing transitions (e.g. music, science) and so on. These were then included within the five main themes of the final document. Relevance to practice: Guidelines have been produced to be adapted by each country and disseminated.

Keywords: starting school, stakeholder perspectives, values

Socrates Grundtvig Program “Transition” - a European Union Cross-national Co-constructive Challenge

WILFRIED GRIEBEL

State Institute of Early Childhood Education and Research, Germany

In segmented educational systems, children have to make transitions between family and educational institutions. Transition to formal school in international research has been identified to be a phase of coping with changes in many respects, being demanding and challenging to young children, and also to their parents (e.g. Dunlop & Fabian, 2007).

“TRANSITION – Training transition professionals in early childhood education” is a Socrates Grundtvig 1.1 program, coordinated by the Parents Association Baden-Württemberg e.V. in Boxberg, Germany (2006 – 2008). Project partners are persons from Austria, Germany, Latvia, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. National reports as well as a survey amongst parents have shown that there exists little shared knowledge about transitions throughout the participating countries and no appropriate support for parents. A curriculum has been developed and then conveyed and evaluated in a pilot course; in national courses it will be disseminated to train transition experts, who will be able to help communicate, collaborate, and participate parents and educational institutions during transitions.

The organizational framework of the EU-Commission sponsored project contained planning, contractual and financial management, team building, meetings, evaluation and dissemination (Bienzle, 2001).

In a with a highly regulated and prescribed format on the one side and project partners and participants with differing linguistic, professional, cultural, historic and political backgrounds on the other side, a dynamic process of collaboration developed that will be described and informed by some theoretical background about co-construction (Carroll et al., 2001; Roschelle & Teasley, 1995; Reisser, 2001).

Developing Transitions Guidelines 2: The Questionnaire Summary of the Results from a Questionnaire

INGE JOHANSSON

Stockholm University, Sweden

In Six European Countries Regarding Transition periods for Children (Transition)

The participating countries are: Austria, Germany, Latvia, Slovakia, Sweden and United Kingdom/Wales.

The questionnaire was sent to four groups of parents and teachers in the spring 2007.

These groups were asked 56 questions about their information of, involvement in and attitudes to their child's' transition from a childcare setting to primary school.

Generally the response rates for all countries and involved groups are low. In surveys like this one, low response rates are not unusual (for more details see the appendix). The results should therefore be interpreted with great cautiousness. The same thing also applies for comparisons between countries. The questions are asked and answered in a specific and unique cultural context in each country. For example the image of a childcare setting and also of pre-school and school can be expected to differ between countries. There are probably also different traditions of transition in various countries and among certain socioeconomic and cultural groups in each society. Such circumstances were not corrected for in the selection of the samples the questionnaire was sent to.

The design of the survey means that it should be regarded as a pilot study that has great implications for further development of questions like these in coming studies.

Some major trends in the response profiles can be summarized like this:

In UK/Wales and Sweden there are legislation means that all parents shall have written information and documentation about the transition and have an invitation to meet the school teacher responsible for their child. This leads to high scores on these aspects among the parents and teachers in these countries.

When we compare the practice of nursery schools and schools to deal with transitions, we find similarities and differences that are worthwhile to be discussed in more detail.

Anyhow, there is a picture given that clearly supports the notion that we could need a transition professional who's work more strongly takes into account the needs and rights of parents.

Interpreting the national profiles shown in the appendix is not so much of a direct comparison as an overview of differences and similarities between the participating countries. This picture can then best be used to encourage national discussions and reflections in order to better understand the current situation and local practices of transition.

On a European level, the questionnaire and discussing results *structured* the discussion about differing practice of dealing with transitions in the participating countries. Comparing answers gets complicated, because there were translations in national languages that might influence content and understanding of questions.

Developing Transition Guidelines 3: Key Themes and Outcomes

HILARY FABIAN

Glyndŵr University, United Kingdom

This final aspect of the symposium explores the main outcomes from the project. It is based on transition theory but, in addition, explores issues to do with values which are based on the EU common values including democracy, tolerance and respect for fundamental rights.

The methodology was based on groups of three coming together from six countries across Europe to share their practice and devise a common framework for transitions that would help parents and their children at the start of school.

The main outcomes of the project have been drawn from the work that has taken place over the last year and brought together here under key headings that include:

Communication;

Healthy relationships and social well-being;

Psychological and emotional well-being, belonging;

Learning processes, academic literacy and effective problem-solving.

The outcomes from the project are currently being disseminated within the countries involved with the project and will help to inform others about good practice in the transition to school. The training pack which has resulted from the project is produced in German and English.

SYMPOSIUM I/21

CHILDREN'S EARLY LEARNING IN SWEDISH PRESCHOOL

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: INGRID PRAMLING SAMUELSSON

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Session overview

The overall aim of the study, Children's early learning is to study variations of preschool environments and the effects these have on children's learning and knowledge formation. Questions at issue are: What characterizes preschool as a learning environment? What do children learn in different preschool contexts? How is different quality aspects constituted and related to one another?

The study has a longitudinal design. The complexity of preschool as a learning context can only be grasped by adopting several research approaches, and examining it from diverse perspectives and dimensions. Therefore, the study builds on three theoretical perspectives: interactions, variation theory and life world phenomenology. From these perspectives children's learning processes and construction of knowledge are seen as interactive and relational and as an internal relation between people and the world. The cognitive, social and emotional aspects of children's development cannot be separated as they constitute an integrated whole where children learn by experiencing, acting and communicating with the environment, which in turn interacts with them in various ways.

An interactive perspective of pedagogical quality in an educational setting means that the level of quality depends not only on how the environment is constituted to meet, extend and challenge the experience and intentions of individuals, but also on how the individual can influence and form both the overall environment and his or her own learning process.

A random sample of 38 preschools participate. The children (230) were between 1 and 2 years of age. Also the parents and the teachers (120) were involved in the study.

The production of data is both quantitative and qualitative. Evaluations of quality were conducted with a revised version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. Questionnaires to the teachers and the parents were developed and have been related to one another, to the preschool quality and to children's learning of language, mathematic, interaction and aesthetic.

Keywords: "early learning", preschool, toddlers, quality

Various Ways to Experience Basic Notions in Mathematics

INGRID PRAMLING SAMUELSSON AND ELISABETH DOVERBORG

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

As an aspect of following young children's learning in the longitudinal study Children's Early Learning, basic notions for mathematics are traced in children's verbal and/or non-verbal actions. The methodological approach is phenomenography, which means describing qualitatively different ways in which children relate themselves to each of the mathematical tasks. Their ways of relating themselves and solving each task are in the research understood as their ways of perceiving, experiencing or grasping it. The result will in this way become a description of various patterns found among 225 children between 1 and 3 years

of age. The data production took place in a separate room in preschool, where one and the same research assistant carried through a partly structured play situation where interaction and communication around six notions took place, of which we will here present some. Children's language and interest for the tasks are related to the results on a group level. We will particularly focus on one task where all children solved the task (sorting bears) and one where comparably few children had any idea of how to solve the problem (first and last). In this presentation we will present results of early mathematics and discuss the problems with this kind of work with children younger than three.

Keywords: young children, mathematics

Teacher Observations as a Method for Studying Toddler's Interaction – Possibilities and Challenges

EVA JOHANSSON

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This paper discusses teacher observations as a method for gaining knowledge on children's social learning. The study is part of a larger project: Children's early learning in preschool (Pramling Samuelsson, Sheridan & Johansson, 2004). A central issue has been to find out what characterizes Swedish preschool as a learning environment. The aim of this specific investigation was to study patterns of interactions in relation to children's intentions (Johansson, 2007) and to the affordances for interactions offered in the preschool context (J. Gibson, 1979, also E. Gibson, 2000). An observational schedule was developed, based on previous studies (Hundeide, 2006; Johansson, 2003; summer 2005). Certain aspects were found to be important issues to observe: the character of the interaction as a whole, the children's positions and their emotional expressions. The schedule was tested and discussed in close relation to the participating teachers. Finally, the teachers, on the basis of the schedule, observed the children. In this text the possibilities and challenges of the method, as well as the quality of the concepts used will be analyzed. The results point to the complexity of the method and the necessity of a joint educational process involving teachers and researchers in this kind of research. Further the importance of distinct definitions of concepts is essential. Indeed the results of such methods must be treated with care.

Keywords: "teacher observations", toddlers, "social learning", concepts

Perspectives of Pedagogical Quality in Preschool

SONJA SHERIDAN

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

In Sweden preschool constitutes the first step of the educational system. Despite a long preschool tradition and a nearly completely built out preschool system, we have limited knowledge of its effects on children's learning and knowledge formation. The aims of this paper are to discuss approaches, methods and methodological issues in relation to evaluations of quality in preschool, children's learning and teachers and parents view on quality. The study is based on Interactionistic perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Bruner, 1996) and a pedagogical perspective of quality (Sheridan, 2001).

From a stratified sample, eight geographical areas in Gothenburg were chosen to represent a variety in living conditions, ethnical and socio-economic backgrounds. Within these areas a random sample of 38 preschools were selected. In these preschools all of the children (230) at the ages 1 and 2 years of age, their parents and the teachers (120) participated.

To grasp the relationship between preschool quality and children's learning external and self-evaluations of quality were conducted with a revised version of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) (Harms & Clifford, 1980; Sheridan, 2005).

Questionnaires to teachers and parents were developed and were related to one another and to the preschool quality. The evaluations of quality with ECERS and the questionnaires to the teachers and the parents were statistically analyzed with SPSS.

Keywords: preschool, quality, children, learning

Early Second Language Learning among Toddlers in Preschool

ANNE KULTTI

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

My PhD thesis in progress is part of a Swedish longitudinal study, Young Children's learning, exploring the communication experiences of 10 children (aged 1.6 to 3 years) whose second language is Swedish. The study focuses on communication and second language learning in preschool context - how toddlers understand and make themselves understood in interaction. The fieldwork was carried out in eight preschool groups over a six-month period in 2006-2007 and consisted of video-recorded observations of children in interaction with other children and teachers. The theoretical framework used is interactional theories on learning and development (Vygotsky 34/1986; Säljö 2000; Nelson 1996; Ninio & Snow 1996).

The paper focus on methodological issues; video-recording as a method and systematic analysis of video data to study toddlers communication and language learning. The aim of the presentation is to invest the toddlers communicative strategies in interaction with other children related to the preschool contexts. The results consist of an analysis on three children within three preschool groups. These children have another first language other than Swedish and only one of the children share the first language with other children in the preschool group. The findings illustrate toddlers collaborative meaning-making in everyday actions but also create relations by participating in interaction, using the common language in preschool as one communicative resource.

Keywords: communication, (second) language, preschool, toddlers.

Video Observations of a Story Time Setting

KARIN GUSTAFSSON AND ELISABETH MELLGREN

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This study is based on individual video observations, 15-20 minutes for each child in a story time setting. In this paper we discuss how we analyze data from these observations. The study is based on an interactionistic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Bruner, 1996) and a pedagogical quality perspective (Sheridan, 2001). The cognitive, social and emotional aspects of children's development cannot be separated as they constitute an integrated whole where children learn by experiencing, acting and communicating with the environment, which in turn interacts with them in various ways (Marton & Both, 1997; Pramling, 1994; Säljö, 2000). We have arranged a story time setting at the involved preschools. One preschool teacher read to the toddlers one by one. The toddlers are about one to three years old. The preschool teacher reads an illustrated picture book (Tidholm, 2005). When the story is finished the teacher lets the child play with three-dimensional figures and some other object which are related to the story. After the story time setting the observer talked to the teacher about what happened and the teacher's experiences of the story time setting. Focus in the video observations is the child's understanding and interaction with the book (picture, text) and the teacher. How does the child interact and play with the figures and the other objects? Which are the critical aspects in this story time setting?

Keywords: communication, interaction, language, video observations

SYMPOSIUM I/22

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE- FOCUS ON THE YOUNGEST IN KINDERGARTENS

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: BERIT BAE

Oslo University College, Norway

Session overview

Small children's right to participation demands that we reconsider theoretical tenets and practices in early childhood institutions, and critically analyze how this right is understood amongst professionals in the field. The research presented is connected to a network project which consists of 6 sub-projects, based in different Universities/Colleges throughout Norway. The projects take as a point of departure that it is necessary to both problematise the concept of participation, and to critically analyze what the term means in relation to kindergarten practice. Adults' ethical beliefs, views about children and learning are seen as essential considerations, and we explore how preschool personnel, students and others can be more critical and conscious of their own behavior and frames of reference. The concept pedagogical improvisation is introduced as a possible contribution to new ways of thinking about didactics and learning.

Through explorative designs and in cooperation with practitioners working with children 1-3 years, themes such as playful interactions, learning situations, understanding children's expressions-ethical and didactic challenges, meal times as spaces for democratic learning, and video-documentation as means to consciousness-raising amongst staff, are studied.

The presentations in the symposium will be based on work-in-progress. From various vantagepoints theoretical, methodological and ethical problems, as they are encountered and reflected upon in collaborative processes, will be discussed.

Keywords: children's participation, listening, pedagogical improvisation, democracy.

The Meals in Nursery – the Cradle of Democracy?

BERIT GRINDLAND

University of Stavanger, Norway

What different awareness do adults in nursery have about the tensions between children as individuals and as members in the meal community in nursery?

In this presentation I will argue that the meal in nursery can be seen as the cradle of democracy.

The nurseries in Norway are pedagogical institutions for children less than 3 years and according to the National Framework Plan, the children shall have ability to learn in both formal and informal learning environments. The meals are first and foremost meant for nutrition and satisfaction of children's needs for food, but are also informal learning situations.

I have participated in twelve reflective conversations with adults (meaning teachers and their co-operators) at four nurseries, and my project has been to describe the adult's different awareness of the meals as situations where children can learn and practice democratic values like the individual right to participation, having freedom to choose and being treated equally. At the same time the adults have different awareness of the meals as situations for other democratic values as communication and shared community where children have to learn to respect other children's rights and to take part in and being a responsible member in the society.

The presentation will focus the differences in the adults' awareness of meals and about the tension between children's individual needs and rights and as members in the community.

Keywords: the youngest children, meal, democratic values

Pedagogical Improvisation - A Key Concept regarding Children's Participation?

TORIL SVERDRUP AND ANNE MYRSTAD

Tromsø University College, Norway

The concept pedagogical improvisation is introduced as a possible contribution to new ways of thinking about children's participation. The concept is inspired of the interdisciplinary book *Improvisasjon* of Sommerro and Steinsholt (2006). Improvisation is well known in the arts, and it is fair to assume that the concept could be of use in a pedagogical context as well.

The concept of improvisation, as used in this study, directs the attention towards the importance of adult's contributions in interaction with children; their spontaneity, ability of devotion, awareness of children's different expressions etc. These basic elements are of great importance for children's right to participate, because they create premises for children taking part as active subjects.

In our study we explore questions such as:

How is improvisation revealed in everyday pedagogical practise in kindergarten?

What kind of situations can be defined as pedagogical improvisation?

What kinds of skills are needed from adults in order to participate in pedagogical improvisation?

Digital photos and video footages have been used as tools for collective reflection upon these questions. Through this methodology, theory and practise are linked together and production of knowledge is established in a collaborative process. The aim is to use the concept of pedagogical improvisation to extend and expand the perspective on children's participation in kindergartens' toddler groups.

Keywords: pedagogical improvisation, children's participation

Research Methods in Practice-based R&D

ANNE TOVE FENNEFOSS AND KIRSTEN E. JANSEN

University of Agder, Norway

This paper will discuss the challenges in developing an explorative design and research methods working closely in cooperation with the practical field. We draw data from a pre-study in a regional project in spring 2007 and a recently started main project on children's participation in developing the learning content of the kindergarten. The project is part of a national research project on children's participation in a relational perspective – focus on the youngest children in kindergartens (NFR 182864/S20)

The research study is a practice-based R&D project where the aim is to establish knowledge in key areas in the kindergarten by promoting organized cooperation between owners, researchers and the staff of two kindergartens. In the research study on children's participation in developing learning content the main research method is video observation and video stimulated recalls (Haglund 2002, Moyles, Adams and Musgrove 2002). One of the dilemmas is how the establishing of data can be constituted through methods developed through cooperation. How might the participants from the practice have an impact on the research methods? And secondly if so, will this methodological influence affect the quality of data? In this regard the methodological problems also are connected to ethical dilemmas (Tiller 2006, Alrø, Dirckinck-Holmfeld 1997).

Keywords: research methodes, practice based R&D, ethical dilemmas

Listening is Dangerous

NINNI SANDVIK (1) AND NINA JOHANNESSEN (2)

(1) Østfold University College, Norway

(2) University of Stavanger, Norway

In the context of the local Norwegian kinder garden (kindergartens) important questions relate to listening to the youngest children, aged 1-3. This challenges both the understandings of voice and language as these children mostly express themselves through the body and not by speaking the verbal language and the understandings of listening itself.

Clark, Kjørholt and Moss (2005) claim that listening is dangerous. They lean on Foucault who said that everything is dangerous. By this he meant to draw our attention to the impossibility of neutral and value-free relationships and practices, and the impossibility of individuals being able to stand outside power relations offering disinterested and benign knowledge and options (Clark, Kjørholt and Moss, 2005, p.9). The danger of listening is connected to different problems regarding taking the power relation into account or not. If this is not reflected upon, there is a chance that the listening only becomes another way of governing the child. We have to ask ourselves how we listen to children as 'Other' (Levinas, 2008) who we are listening to, when we are listening and who are opinions are taken into account? We also challenge our listening to expressions traditionally regarded as disturbances of the pedagogical order.

We call for some critical reflections on adults' role, and in implications on restricting children voices, especially when their views challenge our status quo. The question, however, should be how we should start communicating children's views even if they challenge us? (Habashi, 2005, p.34. Listening in this way tends to move both children and adults instead of just mediate the children's voices (Deleuze, 2001). Since this is two Doctoral research projects in process, no findings are yet available.

Keywords: listening, bodily communication, power

THURSDAY 4th SEPTEMBER
SYMPOSIUM SET II
13:30 – 15.00

SYMPOSIUM II/1
POLICY - ORGANIZATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: INGE JOHANSSON

Stockholm University, Sweden

New Objectives of the Kindergarten Act in Norway. Basic Values, Challenges and Dilemmas with Regard to some Human Rights Conventions

INGEBORG TVETER THORESEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

In 2006 the Norwegian government initiated a revising process of the objectives of both the Education Act 1998 and the Kindergarten Act 2005. The Norwegian Parliament will change the objectives in both documents in autumn 2008.

The revising process can be seen as an example of the ways in which international law can influence national law. The main aim of my paper is to highlight some of the dilemmas which may appear when international legal / policy documents such as the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child are implemented in a local context. The current situation in Norway is used as an illustration of this, because it is in concrete cases that dilemmas are revealed.

A brief historical survey is provided as background information for the current changes and challenges. The data of my study are, first and foremost, law texts and regulations political documents and reports, and statements from an official hearing /consultation process. The paper highlights some Human Rights principles which may seem to be contradictory. On the one hand, the parents have the right to bring up their children according to their own conviction - and the state is obliged to secure these rights. On the other hand, the state has the

right to determine the values of its education. However, as the principle of freedom of belief also applies to the child, childrens' rights also have to be explored.

Keywords: new objectives, basic values, freedom of belief, children's and parent's rights

Relationships Matter: Professionals Engaged in Integrated Working in the Scottish Early Childhood Sector

GRACE PATON

University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom

The research is concerned with the policy of integrating children's services as a means of countering the damaging effects of inequalities and poverty. Since devolution, the Scottish Government legislation has taken account of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, but Scottish policy on integrated children's services has been influenced by economic dependence upon and political affiliation with central Westminster government. In November 2007 the first Scottish Nationalist Party administration established a new concordat with the Local Authorities. National indicators and targets related to this concordat reflect an aspiration to tackle inequalities, but spending on promoting integrated working in the early

childhood services allows considerable discretion across Local Authorities. Whilst acknowledging the crucial importance of economic factors, (Baron et al 2001) the research sets out to examine the role of relationships and social capital in diverse professional groups engaged in integrated working with young children and families in South West Scotland. A small scale qualitative study uses interview data to examine the perceptions of professionals, and draws on the key concepts of social capital, bonding, bridging and linking networks and the importance of trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988: Putnam, 2000: Stone, 2000), as well as cultural capital. (Siisianem 2000: Field 2003). Early findings appear to indicate some consensus that relationships matter, and that many professionals are committed to integrated working. However factors contingent to the success of the policy are highlighted and these may have implications for policy development

Keywords: equality, relationship, social capital, children's services

The Giant in the Playground: Investigating the Reach and Implications of the Corporatisation of Childcare Provision

FRANCES PRESS

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Australia has traditionally been conceptualised as a 'public good', funded by government and delivered through community organisations and public education systems. More recently this has changed, and a significant proportion of childcare is now provided by private 'for-profit' organisations. Increasingly this 'for-profit' provision in Australia, is being characterised by the dominance of large, publicly listed for-profit corporations and the trend is growing internationally. However, there has been little research or public debate about the potential impact of this trend and what is at stake in this rapidly changing landscape.

This paper draws on our research about corporate provision of childcare in Australia to explore the existing and potential impact of corporatisation on aspects of children's policy.. The paper carefully traces the corporate structure, business relationships and practices, promotional material and 'products' of one large corporate childcare provider in Australia to inform an analysis of the its effect on such things as policy context, commodification of curriculum, shaping of professional identities and the possible transformation of early childhood from a site of community building into a site of consumption. The paper concludes by invoking a broader view of childcare provision that positions childcare not only as a community resource, but as a public space contributing to a democratic project. In such a view, issues of participation and identities for activist citizenship for children, teachers and the community are central. The paper asks whether such a view is likely to be realised when corporate interests dominate.

CO -AUTHOR: CHRISTINE WOODROW, *UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA*

Keywords: corporatisation, early childhood policy, commodification, professional identity

SYMPOSIUM II/2

THE QUESTION OF POWER

Individual papers

CHAIR: JEANETTE RHEDDING-JONES

Oslo University College and Bergen University College, Norway

Reconsidering Care in Early Childhood Education

BENTE ULLA

Østfold University College, Norway

Drawing on feminist poststructural theory (Davies, 2003; Lenz-Taguchi, 2004), I choose to reconsider care as a core value of early childhood education. This gives me an opportunity to extend, emphasize and challenge care. My aim is to reexplore, rewrite and reconceptualise care as a core value in early childhood education. I choose to do this through a critical discussion which can contribute to resist a growing and dominating focus on the isolated child. Care can also function as “a line of flight” (Deleuze, 1983) away from the massive call for effective and controlled practises in/of early childhood education. When I focus on the doing of care, I stress the practise, the agency, the shifting subjectivities and the activity in the everyday life in “barnehage” (kindergarten/preschool) institutions in Norway. Power and discourses (Foucault, 1980) related to knowledge, gender and childhoods has positioned care as “a natural female way of being with children”. I argue that this leaves out the complexity, the contradictions and the knowledge that the profession in “barnehage” holds. I resist a dichotomised approach, and take up the idea that the subjectivity are multiple, shifting and ambivalent; subjectivities are both weak and strong at the same time and in shifting and various ways giving and receiving care. When simplifying care, the net of discourses grips into those involved; most of all it simplifies and reduces the responsibility for the other and the ethics that is woven into the practice of care.

Keywords: care, power, profession, feminist-poststructuralism

The Importance of Challenging the Globalized Developmental Psychology in Early Childhood Education

TONJE KOLLE

Østfold University College, Norway

This paper will focus on the now globalized concept of developmental psychology having a great impact on early childhood education. It is important to challenge and trouble dominating discourses within in a discipline, because dominating discourses produce power and they will have great impact on kindergarten practices (Burman 2008, Cannella 1994, Nordin-Hultman 2004, Rose 1999). From a gender perspective it is important to investigate the dichotomy of theory and practice, understanding theory as something different than practice (Lenz Taguchi 2004). One consequence of developmental psychology is the use of child observation programs, setting certain standards of “normalized “ child , and the use of globalized evidence based programs to improve the children’s behaviour. Within children’s right to be protected and cared, also lies the concept of what is for children’s interests. What is for children’s interests can be looked upon as problematic if normalized standards and evidence based programs seems to be the answer. If we turn to other concepts like the now globalized philosophy of Reggio Emilia, we will find “the rich child” as a core value. This concept focus on the possibilities of early year’s education and the need for documentations and making children’s learning visible. My research is an ongoing deconstruction of texts from a feminist post- structural perspective. My findings show that the developmental discourse still is dominant in early childhood education.

Keywords: globalization, dominant discourse, developmental psychology, deconstruction,

Constructing a Misfit. Practices of Stigmatization and Marginalization of a Rebellious Child in a Polish Preschool

KATARZYNA GAWLICZ

Wroclaw University, Poland

Polish discourse on early childhood education emphasizes the importance of treating children as individuals, attending to their needs and interests, and creating appropriate conditions for their development. Taking as a point of departure a case of a preschool child considered misbehaved and having “special needs,” I analyze day-to-day on-the-ground practices that call the stated ideals into question. I draw on data from my ethnographic research on power relations, normalization and construction of dominance-subordination structures, carried out for three years in two Polish preschools and inspired by Foucault’s theories of power. As my findings indicate, for numerous reasons (including structural ones, such as a lack of professional assistance for preschool teachers, inadequate funding and too high child-teacher ratio) specific institutions appear incapable of providing appropriate care, and rather than working towards inclusion of “special needs” children, they reinforce their marginalization. I demonstrate how a preschool turns one such child into a scapegoat, misfit and ultimately a criminal. In so doing, I address a broader problem of the preschool’s failure to deal with children who explicitly challenge existing hierarchical power relations and struggle for more independence and autonomy, refusing to follow regulations imposed by staff. As a result, a “special needs”/“problem” child becomes an indication of the preschool’s only limited success in fulfilling its stated objectives of approaching children as individuals, listening to their voices and taking their wishes and preferences seriously. Such a perception of stigmatized children can foster a critical reflection on and change of a usual preschool daily practice.

Keywords: child-adult relations, misbehaved child, children's autonomy, power

SYMPOSIUM II/3 DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP

Individual papers

CHAIR: HILARY FABIAN

Glyndŵr University, United Kingdom

Democratic Participation and Active Citizenship in Policy for the Early Years in Australia

JOANNE AILWOOD

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

The inclusion of ideals of democracy and citizenship in education curriculum and policy for the early years is a significant theme in European research. However, it is not as widely pursued in Australian contexts. With a new federal government committed to widespread reform of early years provision in Australia, it is timely to reflect on where the early years field currently stands, and how it might move forward. A commitment to children’s democratic participation and active citizenship within policy and curriculum in the early years is one important aspect of this current struggle for meaning, knowledge and governing in Australia.

This paper makes a textual analysis of a recent curriculum for the early years in Australia: the Queensland government’s Early Years Curriculum Guidelines [EYCG] (QSA, 2006). The analysis investigates the EYCG looking for a) themes, language and categories regarding democratic participation and active citizenship, b) how are children constructed within the text and c) what implications these themes, language, categories and constructions have for connecting Australia to global communities. Within this analysis there is some comparison with European policy, in particular the Swedish document, Curriculum for the Pre-School Lpfo98 (Skolverket, 2006). This comparison highlights the possibilities for many policy makers in Australia to reflect differently on who they think young children are, and how institutions, policies and curricula produce and manage young children’s educational experiences.

Keywords: policy, democratic participation, citizenship

The Child as Citizen in Early Childhood Policy

LINDA MITCHELL

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Several writers (e.g., Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Mayall, 2003; Moss & Petrie, 1997) have discussed the inadequacies of some commonly held discourses of childhood to realise possibilities for children's citizenship, and the value of examining explicit theories of childhood in order to think critically about the nature, role and purposes of early childhood education. However, empirical data is scanty.

This paper uses a set of principles derived from social constructionist theory and values expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to analyse discourses of childhood in early childhood policy in New Zealand. It draws on data from a doctorate thesis that included focus group meetings and interviews to elicit policy views of senior government officials from New Zealand's rights-based government agencies, Education and Social Development Ministries, and The Treasury, and leaders in teacher education institutions. The paper focuses on the New Zealand policy context during a period of social, economic and educational reform in the early 21st century, and while *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki*, New Zealand's early childhood education strategic plan, was being developed. What discourses about childhood are being taken up by policy analysts, and what is their effect? How are institutional frames of thinking reflected in policy analysts' views? What are some policy implications for the creation of early childhood centres that would support democratic citizenship? This paper examines views and issues concerning ECE policy in New Zealand currently to explore these questions.

Keywords: citizenship, policy, childhood

Icelandic Preschools: the Nordic Welfare Model or Neo-Liberalism, Child Centred or Applied Behavioural Sciences?

KRISTIN DYRFJORD

University of Akureyri, Iceland

With in the field of early childhood in Iceland there is a strong sureness for a child centred philosophy of the whole child. This certainty has for longest time been like a guiding light for early childhood educators and how they organize and select their working approach and methods. In Iceland the philosophy has also been strongly connected to the idealism of the Nordic welfare. However over the last few years there has been a strong current toward pedagogy based on applied behavioural sciences which I partly trace toward the rise of neo-liberalism in the society and the discourse that our society is becoming undisciplined and as a result the early childhood educators need to bring more discipline into the schools. In my paper I use Basil Bernstein model of; Types of pedagogic practice: visible and invisible (2003) to analyse the trends in the Icelandic preschool. I connect the philosophical approach of the preschools to Moss (2007) ideas on democracy with in the early childhood settings. Most preschools in Iceland have a website were the schools put out all sorts of information, among other the school curriculum and description on projects. Those websites are the base of my data. My main findings indicate that the whole child approach is living a good life in the preschools but at the same time the applied behavioural sciences are grooving fast in form of child discipline programs such as; SMT, PPS, ART and SOS, programs that can be traced to USA.

Keywords: democracy, pedagogy, neoliberalism, curriculum

SYMPOSIUM II/4 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Individual papers

CHAIR: KAY MARGETTS

The University of Melbourne, Australia

About the Right's of Children with Disabilities in Norwegian Kindergartens

INGVILD ÅMOT

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

The main aim of this paper is to give an overview of connections, similarities and differences in how children's rights are described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CNC) and the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Especially focus the rights of children with social disabilities and their participation and inclusion in society. Shifts of paradigms and discourses connected to the terms of childhood and disability have made changes in comprehension and interpretations of central concepts. Those changes influence content and interpretations of both conventions. In addition to the content of CRC there are discussions whether the Western traditions and values connected to rights and discourses are based upon Anglo-American liberal tradition. Such discussion does not seem to be emphasised in connection with the rights of people with disabilities. CRCs inevitable rights concerning children in general do not seem to be as inevitable for children with disabilities. Some rights are of more particular and fundamental importance to children with disabilities. Through CRPD the rights of children with disabilities have become more visible. The policy connected to children with disabilities in Norwegian kindergartens has developed in the shadows of other kinds of policy development. On one hand disability policy and on the other hand the welfare state and the evolvement of kindergarten policy as a part of the ongoing discourses on the concept of childhood.

Keywords: CRC, CRPD, social disability, participation

Acknowledging Children's Words

LUIGINA MORTARI AND VALENTINA MAZZONI

University of Verona, Italy

The aim of our research is to explore the subjective children's wellbeing, (Campbell at all, 1976; Ben-Arieh e Frones, 2007): What do children consider essential for a good life?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child assures them the right to express their own view in matters that affected them.

This statement posed a methodological question: How do we acknowledge children's experience?

The goal of this presentation is to show the way we acknowledge children's words. The paper suggests the strategies we chose to elicit children to express their experience sincerely, significantly and from their point of view.

According to the naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln, Guba, 1985; Mortari, 2007), the fundamental practice of "researcher-as-the-instrument" implies two further premises:

Creativity as a vital component of a constructing qualitatively research design;

A close relationship with children akin to friendship (Clandinin and Connelly, 1988). A friendly relationship is the only condition to create a fertile ground being able to generate reliable data.

To achieve these purposes, reflexivity is a central part of our research process. We continuously and critically reflect on the methods to choose and their application (Connolly, 1998, Mortari, 2007) and this reflection carries out some suggestions:

1. Using innovative research-friendly activities, which can be creative, funny and can encourage children to be more actively involved;
2. Multiple methods mean multiple languages;
3. Giving children a personal space to think about themes on their own before discussing with the whole class;
4. Giving children their time.

Keywords: children's well-being, children's words, naturalistic inquir, research-friendly activities

Teachers as Artists, Authors and Agents of Learning

KATHLEEN GOOUCH

Canterbury Christchurch University, United Kingdom

This paper reports on a study which examines the practice of two early years educators as they struggle with political, policy, cultural and institutional influences on their practice. It has been undertaken at a time when the roles of teachers in England are being increasingly viewed as technical in nature and skills based in content and when the new statutory policy, the Early Years Foundation Stage, has described in detail both the content and the pedagogy with which those working with babies and young children must engage. This work has been concerned to identify and celebrate some of the complexities involved in teaching young children and, in particular, how a 'moment of mutual understanding plays a decisive role in turning words into concepts' (Vygotsky 1986 :123). The contexts in which such 'mutual understanding' takes place in this study are in play, which has been initiated, resourced and sustained by children and during which a 'polyphony of voices' (Wertsch 1991: 65) can be heard. The teachers in this study demonstrate and analyse their own guiding philosophy for practice, which is essentially both organic and playful, and potentially in contrast to the prevailing prescriptive discourse. The three key issues addressed in this paper are the teacher as co-author of play contexts, the co-construction of authentic relationships and the teacher as both an agent and an advocate for children's learning.

Keywords: guiding philosophy, prescriptive discourse, 'polyphony' of voices

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

SYMPOSIUM II/5

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: JOHANNA EINARSDOTTIR

Iceland University of Education, Iceland

Can we Catch the Voice of the Young Child?

ANJA TERTOOLEN

Educatieve Federatie Interactum, The Netherlands

In this study we investigate the possibility to communicate with 5 year old children about their education and to hear their personal voices.

The importance children give to the communication depends on the authority they attribute to the speaker. A second major aspect of (spoken) communication is the aspect of dialogue, in which the voice of the one person speaks through the voice of another (M.M. Bakhtin, J. Wertsch et al).

At first, communication takes place mainly in the family circle. Through communication families tend to maintain and reproduce themselves socially, just like all institutions (P.Bourdieu et al).

On the basis of this theoretical framework, we presume that reproduction is founded on psychological mechanisms for the reproduction of social values and ideas. Given this theoretical framework, we wonder whose voice we hear, when the child is speaking. Is it the authentic voice of the child, or do we hear the parents' or teacher's voices as well?

Making sense of the educational setting and the ways to question this, is often ascribed to students, but teachers and parents also make sense of educational contents and structures and give their opinions about it. Therefore, we assume that the voice of the young student is essentially polyphonic. This research comprises literature study, an empirical survey, and a multi-case study with the aid of a grounded theory approach, in order to catch the voice of young students.

In this paper we report on the most prominent findings of the empirical survey.

CO-AUTHORS: JEANNETTE GELDENS, HERMAN POPEIJUS AND BERT VAN OERS

Keywords: communication, voice, education, reproduction

Uncovering the Hierarchies of Citizenship when Implementing Child Participation In Local Government.

KYLIE SMITH

University of Melbourne, Australia

This paper will draw on data from a research project Respecting children as citizens in local government: participation in policies and services. This paper directly links to the conference theme Reconsidering the basics in early childhood education as data will explore how a local government in Melbourne, Australia took a child's rights approach in recognising young children in their community as active citizens who have valid and important knowledge and should have a say in the planning, implementing and evaluation of their world.

Aims of the research:

The aims of this research project were to:

- increase child participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of services and facilities provided by or for the City of Port Phillip
- support people working for or with the City of Port Phillip to develop strategies and techniques to support ethical and respectful consult with children
- inform the development of the City of Port Phillip's Children's Plan and its emergent protocols for consulting with children.

Theoretical and conceptual framework:

This paper will use critical theories to examine the struggles in implementing child participation and how power knowledge relationships circulate within and through discourses to establish and re-establish hierarchies of citizenship not only between adult/child binaries but also amongst children through issues of ability, language, age, culture, race, gender and class. Pablo Freire wrote:

Citizenship is not obtained by chance: It is a construction that, never finished, demands we fight for it. It demands commitment, political clarity, coherence, decision. For this reason a democratic education cannot be realized apart from an education of and for citizenship. (Freire, 1998:90)

This paper examines the fight for citizenship through illuminating the power knowledge relationships that circulate.

Methodology:

This qualitative research project used action research as its methodology (see, Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998; MacNaughton, 2001a). Action research is a cyclical process where participants collaborate with each other to identify problems, plan actions to address those problems, take action and collect data, reflect critically on their data, draw conclusions and, on the basis of their conclusions, plan further action in another cycle.

This action research project asked participants to reflect on:

- how they currently understand child participation?
- how children currently participate in their work area?

- what are the possible ways children could participate in their work environment?
- what could they do differently in their work environment to ensure children can participate?

Main findings:

The main findings from this project are:

- Young children can and do have valid and important knowledge about their world
- Young children can influence and change local government policies and practices
- Even with the commitment of a whole local council to recognise children as active citizens who have a right to participate in the development of their worlds hierarchies of citizenship exist. This means that for many children who are living in poverty, are under the age of 5, have English as a second language or have a disability they continue to be silenced.
- Critical theories provide a framework for analysis that raises questions about how adults effect how child participation is undertaken and which children are consulted.

Keywords: child participation, citizenship, local government

Estonian Early Education and Care: Where are the Equal Rights for Our Children?

EVELIN TAMM

Estonian Association of Child Care Professionals, Estonia

During the Soviet Regime early education and care was centrally organised and almost every child had a place in kindergarten. These institutions had the aim of educating new generations according to the needs of the Communist Party.

After Estonia regained its independence in 1991 educators had to build up a totally new approach to education – a democratic one. Because of the economic collapse the finances for all the public services were low. During recent years, especially after joining the EU Estonia has seen the rapid growth of national wealth. However, in spite of this the educational, social and health sectors have retained their low level of state funding and importance at the Government level.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child the budgeting for areas related to children has to be prioritised. Estonia has ratified this convention in 1991.

For some years now our birth rate has risen and as a result most of the local governments are not able to provide quality education and care for all the children under 7 years of age. New kinds of private services are being arranged with low levels of local funding and few government regulations with which they have to comply. “The old kind” of early education in big kindergartens with more than 200 children has still not disappeared. These and many more problems are facing the early education and care in Estonia today.

My paper aims at analysing the policy and legislation documents related to the area of early education and care and compare it to the everyday realities of Estonian families and children. The questions asked are: Are the rights of Estonian children well looked after? Do all Estonian children have the same rights for early education and care?

Keywords: children’s rights, early education and care, national policy

SYMPOSIUM II/6

ENVIRONMENT, PLAYGROUND, OUTDOOR I

Individual papers

CHAIR: SHIRLEY WYVER

Macquarie University, Australia

Early Communication, Development of Speech and Language

HANNA-SOFIA POUSSU-OLLI

Faculty of Education, University of Turku, Finland

The aim of this study is to monitor early communication, the development of speech and language from birth to the beginning of going to school, to define risk-factors hindering the development of communication, speech and language (and external factors) and to examine the gender-linked development of communication, speech and language.

The development of communication, speech and language are monitored on the background of the origins and diversification of the child's interaction in the family and other environments. The study analyzes early distinctive marks of communicative and linguistic disorders and the impact of various risk-factors on linguistic development. The necessary interventions are planned on these grounds. The subject group is formed of 56 children whose communicative and linguistic development is monitored from birth till their going to school. The research periods are: pregnancy, birth and the neonate phase, early infancy, preschool and the school-beginner phase.

The research methods include observations, video-recordings, sound-recordings, individual and group measurements. The statistical methods used for various analyses were distribution data, t-tests, Pearson's coefficient correlations and graphics. The reliability of the measurements was analyzed through the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha.

The study belongs to a more comprehensive international Early Dialogue-project, which is carried out in cooperation with Finland, Germany, Poland and the Baltic countries.

Keywords: pregnancy and birth, risk factors, environments, development of communicative and linguistic abilities and disorders

Locating 'the Child' in Ecological Sustainability Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education 'Down Under' in Aotearoa New Zealand: Conservation or Transformation

JANITA CRAW

AUT University, Aotearoa/New Zealand

This paper opens up an exploratory discussion that centers on different understandings of the child in early childhood education. It draws threads from two current research projects: First, my master thesis that uses concepts of figuration/s and fabrication/s to examine how teachers are configuring different understandings of the child and making these understandings visible ; it is intent on bringing the 'blurred, multiple borders, the interstitial spaces, and the multiplicities of identities" (subjectivities) that are/might be available to children into the spotlight (Bloch, 2006, p. 39-40). The second, a collaborative (Ministry of Education) Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) that is examining how a number of early childhood teaching teams cultivate and enhance children's learning through their engagement in ecologically sustainability practices. This project is intent on engaging with both western and (indigenous) Maori perspectives on ecological sustainability; a principle of an ethic of care for self, other and the environment is at the heart of this project. Locating the child in multiple borders and interstitial spaces enables a critical look at how the child is/might be configured in pedagogies that actively and ethically involve children in ecological systems of thought and daily practices that promote sustainability of (human, non-human) life on the planet.

Keywords: ecological sustainability, place, child as citizen

Complex systems Theory and ECD - A New Look at Sustainable Development

JACQUELINE HAYDEN

Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands

Despite the growing body of evidence about benefits of ECD, including longitudinal outcomes based on both economic and social measures, commitment, policy making and/or resource distribution to programs for young children remain at low levels in many nations.

This gap between strong evidence, good practice and the entrenchment of that practice in policy and structures represents what the author refers to as *the third space*; the invisible barrier which prevents ECD from becoming a fundamental aspect of the civic landscape.

This paper uses complex system theory to analyze the forces and constraints for overcoming the 3rd space. Complex system theory has only recently been applied to analyses of social service delivery and international development. It focuses on assessment of feedback loops, connections, interconnections, *non-policies* and bottlenecks which constrain or enable a 'package' to infiltrate multi sectorial community, state, and/or international systems.

This paper argues that complex systems theory holds a key for assessing and addressing critical components associated with scaling up and sustainability of ECD services and programs.

Keywords: sustainable development, scaling up, systems analyses, policy

SYMPOSIUM II/7 MENTORING, REFLECTION

Individual papers

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM

University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

What the Mentor Saw...

MIKE GASPER AND PAUL WATLING

Amber Publications and Training (APT)

This paper, relevant to strand 5 Professionalism and Challenges / Demands for Professional Development, explores the experiences of a group of leadership mentors working with Integrated Children's Centre leaders in England. The issues examined have arisen from questionnaires and semi structured interviews conducted with mentors from the National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership delivered by the University of Warwick and Worcester University.

The study is grounded in the theories of Clutterbuck, Bell, Shea, Glaser, Pegg, et al who all recognise the importance and value of leadership mentoring to quality service provision; Friere in relation to empowerment and liberation, and, Knowles, Kolb and Boyatzis in relation to andragogy.

The paper will provide insights into the mentors perspectives and areas covered will include the benefits of mentoring to

- a. the leader,
- b. the team
- c. the families and children using the children's centres and
- d. the mentor themselves.

We intend to critically reflect on the symbiotic relationship which these insights illustrate, leading to the development of a clearer understanding of how mentoring can positively benefit the field of multi-professional children's services.

The presenters are both experienced mentors in the field and have been involved in the development of both the NPQICL programme of mentoring and other mentoring programmes linked to broader professional development within Early Years and Pre-School Education and Care.

It is envisaged that the paper and the dialogue that it will encourage will further develop the field of leadership mentoring within multi-professional children's services.

Keywords: mentoring, leadership, multi-professional, andragogy

A Learning Network - the Creation of a Professional Learning Environment

CAROLE GOODCHILD

University of Teeside, United Kingdom

In this paper we report on an evaluation of the continuing challenge of identifying the impact of targeted continuous professional development (CPD) with a group of 23 teachers involved in the care and education of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage within 19 primary schools in York. It builds on the previous study which focused on learning networks (Francis, M and Goodchild C. 2007) and makes comparisons between the two networks.

The need for a second network was recognised as a significant strand of the Local Authorities Early Years Outcomes Duty Plan. This would play a large part in ensuring that the achievement of young children was raised and the gap narrowed between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest by increasing the knowledge, skills and understanding of the practitioners involved in the training.

The research methodology and methods of enquiry used to measure the impact of the programme include questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, informal discussions and case studies. The research seeks to explore the personal learning journeys of practitioners and examine how self reflection has moved practice forward.

Questions central to this paper are:

Are we developing reflective practitioners who are self-evaluative?

Does targeted CPD impact on children's learning?

Has the training given practitioners a deeper knowledge and understanding of Early Years pedagogy?

CO-AUTHORS: STEPHANIE WINDSOR AND MARGARET FRANCIS

Keywords: continuous professional development, networks, foundation stage (3-5 years)

Revisiting Informed Assent: Intention vs Reality

DEBORAH HARCOURT (1) AND HEATHER CONROYM (2)

(1) Bond University, Australia

(2) EtonHouse International Schools, Singapore

Following on from previous research that the authors have undertaken around informed assent (Harcourt & Conroy, 2005), this paper will give further consideration the notion of informed agreement to participate in relation to researching with young children. In response to a perceived lack of focus on the informing processes, the authors will examine the development of children's understandings of the research process and the position young children are currently holding in research. With the research intention to invite children to take lead agency, or at least shared agency in the research process, children offer researchers opportunities to make meaning of their actions, events, places and relationships. This paper aims to create a heightened awareness of the purpose and processes of seeking informed assent from young children when attempting to undertake collaborative research projects. This holds particular weight where the research project has the intention for children to hold the lead, or shared, agency with adult researchers. Acknowledging the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC, 1989) and the current thinking about child as an agentic being (Danby & Baker, 1998; Woodrow, 1999), the authors believe it is timely to create a context for professional discussion in relation to how genuine partnerships can be formed with children as research collaborators. It would appear that the process of seeking the child's informed assent (as opposed to just

their assent) to participate in the research project is critical. In concluding with a discussion about significant aspects to consider when seeking informed assent from a young child, the authors also reflect on perceived obstacles which may impede this process of collaboration. We challenge the research community to consider the possibilities and potentials of truly seeing young children as research participants, rather than generators of data.

Keywords: Informed assent, children as research participants, ethics

SYMPOSIUM II/8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: MARESA DUGNAN

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE), Ireland

Beyond Professional Status: Developing a Culture of Continuing Professional Development in Early Years

DENISE HEVEY

University of Northampton, United Kingdom

Following significant expansion of early years services, the UK government is committed to unprecedented investment in the transformation of the early years workforce. Targets include graduate leadership of all early years settings by 2015 through the implementation of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). In Autumn 2007 the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) announced funding for Local Authorities to help sustain those achieving EYPS in their key role of improving practice across the private, voluntary and independent sector. A problem for these 'early adopters' is that they are relatively isolated through working in small scale, dispersed settings. This paper explores how six Local Authorities in the East Midlands are working together to create a virtual support network, provide regular update opportunities and develop a flexible Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework through which learning and training by different providers can be accredited at HE level. It will question the desirability of learning leading inevitably to upward academic progression in favour of consolidation, application and extending breadth of knowledge and skills in line with a 'climbing frame' approach (Pugh and Abbott, 1998). It will set out the principles of the CPD framework, consider the challenges of collaboration and discuss issues around developing a culture of CPD in a sector in which initial professional identity has yet to be established.

CO-AUTHORS: JOHN CLAYTON, GERALDINE CHAFFE, SUE KENNEY, ALISON HILL, CLARE BELL AND JULIA MARTIN

Keywords: professional status, CPD, identity development, accreditation

Assessment in Early Childhood Education – Challenges for Professional Development

PAULA SANTOS

University of Aveiro, Portugal

To work in a qualitatively superior way in early childhood education presupposes that the early childhood teacher is able to respond to the diversity of childhood experiences, which is patent in the different educational contexts. Nevertheless, it also presupposes that the early childhood teacher has a deep knowledge of the content areas he/she approaches and that he/she uses documentation and assessment strategies that can fundament the curriculum development and the teaching-learning processes. In this presentation we intend to present the preliminary results of a project focused on the development of an instrument to aid the pedagogical practice, facilitating the relation between the practices of documentation,

assessment and curricular edification (the CFI – children follow-up instrument). The construction of this instrument is structured around the principle that assessment should be processed based and should make possible the development of practices that are oriented not only by the future benefits and effects (competences development), but also by the current quality of life of children, having as inspiration the work of Laevers et al. (1997). The use of CFI helps to understand the early childhood practices in kindergartens located at the centre of the country (Aveiro district) and to collect data that allow the identification of common problems and hindrances to improvement and innovation in preschool, that can act as orientation for the training of early childhood teachers and the description of possibilities to deal with the identified problems and that can be part of a guide for schools and early childhood teachers.

CO-AUTHORS: GABRIELA PORTUGAL, AIDA FIGUEIREDO, NATÁLIA ABRANTES, OFÉLIA LIBÓRIO, SÓNIA GÓIS

Keywords: assessment, professional development, pedagogical practices improvement

Student Teachers' Perceptions of Childhood: Questions for Initial Teacher Education

SOFIA AVGITIDOU

University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Knowledge of student teachers' prior perceptions and beliefs has been reported to play an important role in their initial education. The aim of this research was to explore early childhood student teachers' perceptions of childhood during their first year of studies. Specific theories of childhood have been presented in relation to analytical categories such as this of structure versus agency and universalism versus locality (James, Jenks & Prout 1998, Corsaro 1999) which formed the theoretical basis of this research.

Research data were collected during one of student teachers' taught courses through the writing up of a text answering two questions: a) "what characteristics would you attribute to childhood" and b) "do you think that children can make decisions about matters that concern them? Please explain your answer". The analysis of 111 written texts involved both the use of critical discourse analysis and content analysis.

Regarding the first question, results showed homogeneous and repetitive patterns in student teachers' descriptions of childhood. Words such as spontaneity, tenderness, happiness, playfulness were used as characteristics of childhood, sometimes in a normative form ("children must be..."). It is interesting that, although students did not have prior scientific knowledge or any systematic observation of children, they had a clear idea of what childhood was. Regarding the second question, children were not perceived as competent critical thinkers by the majority of student teachers and the role of adult was highlighted as the person having the main responsibility for children's safety and development.

Discussion of these findings is related to proposals for deconstructing the notion of a homogeneous, normative childhood in student teacher thinking and practice during their initial teacher training.

Keywords: childhood, student teachers' prior beliefs, initial teacher education

SYMPOSIUM II/9 RELATIONS, ATTACHMENT, ETHICS

Individual papers

CHAIR: ELIN E. ØDEGAARD

Bergen University College, Norway

Ways of Seeing - Ways of Understanding - Joys and Sorrows of Teaching Relational Observation at University Level

GERD ABRAHAMSEN

University of Stavanger, Norway

The paper describes my experience in introducing a relational observation method for students in their third and final year of their Early Childhood Education at the University of Stavanger. The qualitative observational course, has run from 1996, with 30 students each year. This detailed observational method is based on Object Relations theory and aims at helping students to increase their educational and psychological competence. Theoretical seminars in plenary groups and observational seminars in smaller subgroups have the same object of ambition: to show that the concept of applied psychology in the educational field can have a positive impact on the preschool teachers' ability for self-reflection and understanding. Central to the learning outcome is the study of how relationships are formed and sustained between children under three and the nursery staff in the context of playing and learning.

The students' experiences from the actual observations and the observational seminars are discussed. The students' feedback on their learning experience is also examined. My main findings include students' growing awareness of the significance of children's non-verbal language, understanding the significance of developing an emotional relationship with children, recognition of social and emotional aspects that promote or inhibit the learning process and a higher degree of self-reflexivity in themselves.

Keywords: early child education, object relations theory, relational observation, self-reflection

Use of Video Footage to Support Educators to Develop Reflective Capacity

KAYE COLMER

Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Australia

Attachment theory and key ideas from the Circle of Security (Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin & Powell, 2000) have been adopted by an integrated early childhood centre to support the development of individual relationships between educator and child. Central to this approach is the importance of educators to understand children's cues, to act as a secure base for children and to be emotionally available.

Analyzing the impact of day-to-day experiences and their interactions with children is frequently difficult for educators particularly in group settings. Frequently children are viewed as having behavioural or developmental problems. The use of video footage and time for educators to view interactions provides insight into the true nature of many struggles and allows the educator to gain understanding from a child's perspective and to appreciate a child's emotional state.

Concepts from the Circle of Security provide a framework for reviewing video footage and include educator's state of mind, sensitivity, hypothesizing about child emotional needs, cues, exploration and attachment pattern and the role of the educator to take charge to help the child to organize his/her feelings provide reference points.

Over two years of action research which included group observation of video, maintaining journals, discussion groups and individual mentoring, educators have gained deeper insight into their own influence on children's behaviour and have been supported to increase their emotional availability to children.

Pre and post questionnaires in relation to educators understanding of attachment theory and application of wellbeing and involvement scales were used.

Keywords: professional development, reflection, attachment

Implications Tied to Implementing Subject Spheres in Barnehaugen

KIRSTEN JOHANSEN HERRIGMO

University of Agder, Norway

The Norwegian Child care system (Barnehaugen) has been given a mandate to both provide the users with care, as well as meet their pedagogic and educational needs. This duality can be explained by the importance of the child care system in the Norwegian family policy. Approximately 80% of Norwegian children under the age of 6 attend Barnehaugen. Since 2006 Barnehaugen has been seen as part of the system of education, and therefore call on rethinking Barnehaugen as an arena of learning.

The aim of the study is to reach a theoretical basis for further developing a Subject Didactic approach to the Subject Sphere of *Nærmiljø og Samfunn* (Community and Society) founded in the understanding of the duality of the commission of Barnehaugen.

Based on Micro- interactionist perspectives (Berger & Luckmann 2000, Mead 1976, Bråten 2006, 2007) for understanding the Socialisation process I will discuss the role of the staff as *Significant Others* tied to the concept of Model Monopoly. I will see if it is a fruitful concept for the context of Barnehaugen in relation to both, establishing and re-establishing knowledge, norms and attitudes.

This theoretical discussion opens up for the question of what are the significant others supposed to bring in to Barnehaugen as a constructed community? By interpreting Barnehaugen as a constructed arena for cultural learning, both formal and informal, and the staff as significant others, one can think in new directions for methods tied to the Subjects Spheres in Barnehaugen different from School.

Keywords: socialisation, significant others, model monopoly, subject sphere

SYMPOSIUM II/10

EMOTIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Individual papers

CHAIR: FAYE STANLEY

Wolverhampton University, United Kingdom

The Relationship among Emotional Labor, Emotional Intelligent and Job Satisfactions for the Kindergarten Teachers in Taichung city

HSUEH- SHAN CHANG (1) AND HSIN- HUI TSAI (2)

(1) *Providence University, Taiwan*

(2) *Chih Yung Senior High School, Taiwan*

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between emotional labor, emotional intelligence and job satisfaction for kindergarten teachers, and use different background variables to explore the differences of kindergarten teachers in emotional labor, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction. The research results are used as a basis to provide concrete suggestions as references for educational authorities and future research.

This study used quantitative methods through survey investigation, using 240 kindergarten teachers in Taichung City as the research subjects. The research tool is the "job attitudes and job satisfaction survey." The resulting information undergoes statistical analysis using methods such as the mean, standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson product-moment correlation.

The main findings of this study are as follows:

1. The emotional labor, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers are high for the mid range.

2. The emotional labor of kindergarten teachers has some differences due to background variables such as age, marital status, number of years worked, and status; the background variable of academic experience does not show significant difference.
3. The emotional intelligence of kindergarten teachers has some differences due to background variables such as age, marital status, number of years worked, and status; the background variable of academic experience does not show significant difference.
4. The job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers has some differences due to background variables such as age, marital status, and number of years worked; the background variables of academic experience and status does not show significant difference.
5. For kindergarten teachers, there is a positive correlation between emotional labor and emotional intelligence, higher the emotional labor, higher the emotional intelligence.
6. For kindergarten teachers, there is a positive correlation between emotional labor and job satisfaction, higher the emotional labor, higher the job satisfaction.
7. For kindergarten teachers, there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, higher the emotional intelligence, higher the job satisfaction.

Keywords: kindergarten teachers, emotional labor, emotional intelligence, job satisfaction

Pre-schools as Learning Organizations

MERETE MOE AND FRODE SØBSTAD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

There are reasons for claiming that Norwegian pre-schools are successful institutions. They score high on most user tests and leaders of pre-schools are regarded as the best leaders in the society by Nike-Consult in the leading business publication i Norway, Dagens Næringsliv (Haarde 2007). What are the characteristics of pre-schools as organizations? To try to answer this, we collected the reflections from the staff in five pre-schools on their health and on humour and joy through survey and focus group interviews. We also asked about their relation to the management, to their working environment and development as professionals. Based on these data we draw some conclusions of what staff in pre-schools regard as important factors for well-being and development. Humour and joy were most mentioned, besides a meaningful work situation and daily contact with children. We also found significant relations between humour and the psycho-social work environment, and between humour and willingness to stay in their jobs until they retire. Our results are discussed in relation to theories on learning organizations (Argyris & Schön 1996, Senge 1990), long-term-healthiness (Johnsson, Lugin & Rexed 2006), health and work environment (Karasek & Theorell 1990), positive psychology (Seligman 2007), and humour (Svebak 2000, Søbstad 2006). Important in these discussions are, in our view, learning in teams, powerful visions and ability to see your own role in the realization of the visions. Pleasure in work, openness and willingness to make changes are also found to be important premises in this respect.

Keywords: learning organizations, humour, health

Constructs of Childhood: Enduring or Open to Change? Early Years Students' Reflections on First Hand Experiences of Childhood and Early Years Education in a Different Country and Culture

GILL MCGILLIVRAY

Newman University College, United Kingdom

Globalisation brings change for children and their families in the guise of increased poverty and inequality for the world's poorest populations and communities. Students undertaking Early Childhood Studies degrees or similar degrees related to early years care and education in the United Kingdom are likely to encounter modules with a focus on childhood in a variety of contexts. Literature that explores constructs of childhood has the potential to stimulate

students' understanding of some of the key issues that relate to childhood and related sociological perspectives such as poverty and inequality.

This research aims to explore early years students constructs of childhood, with a specific focus on their reflections and experiences during a week long visit to The Gambia, West Africa. The use of personal journals and discussion groups during and after the visit were designed to provide opportunities for students to articulate their position, to begin a process of deconstruction of childhoods, and to reflect on their direct experiences of early years education and childhood in a culture and country different to their own.

The work of Bronfenbrenner and Bourdieu and post-structural approaches were useful in providing a theoretical basis for discussion and analysis.

The implications for students' learning through such first hand experiences, as well as personal and professional development, were identified in the research analysis to inform the planning of possible future visits, module content and delivery on related degree courses.

Keywords: constructs, childhood, The Gambia, ethics.

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

SYMPOSIUM II/11
SOCIAL VARIATIONS

Individual papers

CHAIR: KAREN ARGENT

Newman University College, United Kingdom

The Multicultural Kindergarten in Rural Districts - Presentation of a Research Project

TOVE SKOUG

Hedmark University College, Norway

Kindergarten is seen as the most important preventive and social adjusting arena for children in pre-school age who, for various reasons, need extra help in this development. In the Strategic Plan 2007-2009 the Ministry points out that research has shown that well-prepared kindergarten programs aimed at minority children have a positive effect on their Norwegian language skills when they start school and their progress through school. Further the Ministry points out that the characteristic of a multicultural kindergarten is that "*..the staff look upon cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource.*" In our project the kindergarten in "*rural district*" is in focus . Most knowledge and experience about the multicultural kindergarten's educational practice, published in Norway, is from an urban context. Little research within this field have been done in rural districts. A relevant hypothesis is that in rural districts with few minorities, the assimilation pressure upon the children is harder and a compensatory way of thinking would easily influence the educational practice in kindergarten. Different fundamental conditions have to be addressed in order to provide an optimal learning environment to the childrens development in view of identity and language. The theoretical approach is based on a socialcultural educational perspective. This paper will present a cluster project including 4 projects which focus on different aspects of educational practice, having the multicultural kindergarten in rural districts as a joint concern. The paper will present the design and some of the research questions in the different "sub"-projects.

Keywords: cultural diversity, language environment, parental involvement, multicultural interaction in play

Social Bridging? ECEC Programs as Support for Social Cohesion

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(1) *Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

(2) *Melbourne University, Australia*

OECD (Starting Strong 2) argues for the capacity of ECEC programs to promote social cohesion. ECEC programs, as the first social institutions that link families to broader society, present the potential to foster social understanding and the inclusion of diverse groups. This paper draws on two sources of data that present children's accounts of their social relationships and friendships in a range of ECEC settings:

1. A study of 665 children attending 4 different forms of pre-school provision in an Australian City

2. A study of Indigenous children attending ECEC programs in a remote Australian mining community

The paper identifies the limitations and possibilities of ECEC programs for social bridging and speaks to policy implications. Key themes emerging from the findings are the role social, geographical, time and social factors which facilitate or constrain connectedness of families and children within ECEC settings.

Keywords: social diversity, social bridging, ECEC programs, family

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

SYMPOSIUM II/12

WELL-BEING – IDENTITY

Individual papers

CHAIR: WILLY AAGRE

Vestfold University College, Norway

Majority – Minority Relations and the Practice of Skiing in a Norwegian Day-care Centre Context

RANDI DYBLIE NILSEN

Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Norway

'Nature' and outdoor play make up a substantial part of the content in Norwegian day-care centres. To spend several hours outdoors regardless of season is a common practice, and additionally the groups might take regular outings on foot or ski. Field-work data from a day-care centre that perceive themselves as 'multi-cultural' form the main basis for analysing majority – minority relations, and central aspects of children's experiences as well as staff practices will be illuminated. Skiing is of particular interest to explore in terms of the central position this activity has in a Norwegian context, and how diverse child identities related to skiing are constructed in a day-care centre setting. This study is framed by the Social studies of childhood (including perspectives on culture and identities) and what have been termed a majority inclusive approach. It aims to illuminate practices, which in a Norwegian cultural context are taken for granted as being valuable for children in day-care centres and beyond. By highlighting what is taken for granted within the majority group, research might contribute to reflexivity in relation to both day-care centre practices and policies.

Keywords: Norwegian day-care centre, majority - minority relations, practices and identities, skiing

Children's Temperament, Emotional Well-being and Quality of Day Care

NINA SAJANIEMI AND EIRA SUHONEN

University of Helsinki, Finland

The objective of this research project is to study the relationship between the quality of day care, the emotional well-being and temperament of children in early childhood education.

The quality of day care centre activities and the involvement of the adult staff in interaction have an essential effect on the well-being, growth and development of children in day care. Interaction tuned to the child's messages is a measure of good quality, for it offers protection and helps the child to develop self-control. By self-control we mean the child's ability to control his or her emotions and adjust the level of stress.

The study group consisted of 140 children in 15 different day care centres. The level of stress was assessed by measuring the functioning of their autonomous nervous system. The functioning of the autonomous nervous system was determined from the level of stress hormones (cortisole) in saliva samples taken five times a day. The children's behaviour was evaluated with the Blank for Behavior Observation and the temperament with the Children's Behavior Questionnaire. Quality of day care was assessed with the Self-Assessment Inventory Form. The results were analysed by SPSS using General Linear Models as Repeated measures and Anova.

The cortisol levels of children and staff followed mainly the normal diurnal pattern. However, there were flattening of expected daytime rhythms and exceptional high afternoon levels both in children and staff. Exceptionally high cortisol levels were correlated with hyperactivity and impulsivity in children. In addition, some children with special need had atypical diurnal cortisol pattern.

Keywords: quality of day care, emotional well being, stress, temperament

Supporting Quality in Preschool Services in Ireland

BRONAGH CLELAND

Centre of Early Childhood development and Education (CECDE), Ireland

This paper outlines the steps that the CECDE have taken in conjunction with DES in order to meet this commitment. It details the process used to identify eligible

The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) was established in 2002. Three years later the Centre fulfilled one of its main aims through the development of Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. The Framework is now ready to be piloted.

During the initial phase of developing Síolta, CECDE created quality standards and support tools for practitioners working in settings that cater for children from birth to six. Simultaneously, the Department of Education and Science (DES) formulated an action plan for social inclusion entitled "DEIS" (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools). Within this plan was a commitment to "...add value to existing childcare programmes in disadvantaged communities" (DES, 2005:33). As part of this commitment they decided to introduce additional supports for preschools.

preschools for financial assistance in order to improve the quality of their preschool service through the Síolta standards. It also gives information on the emerging needs highlighted by the identified preschools. The paper concludes by making recommendations for introducing further practical supports to assist with the roll out of Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

Keywords: disadvantage, quality, service supports

SYMPOSIUM II/13

INTERACTIONS IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: TULLIA MUSATTI

Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies, Italy

Children's Constructive Interaction Patterns

SONJA SHERIDAN

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The aims of this paper are to describe children's constructive interaction patterns and to find structures and conditions, which promote that kind of interplay in preschool. The overall research question is: What aspects constitute constructive interplay among children in preschool?

In this paper we describe how preschool children interact and how they themselves express and conceive constructive interaction patterns. The theoretical framework of this paper is based on an interactionistic perspective in which individuals and the environment influence and are influenced by each other in a continuous interaction.

The paper is based on an empirical study directed towards children's individual, collaborative and competitive learning in preschool as well as the conditions in this context that promote constructive interaction. The study was carried out at two Swedish preschools. Three girls and three boys aged five, from each preschool were interviewed. The data production consists of video-observations, individual and group interviews and children's drawings. The analysis of the data is qualitative and can be described as interplay between empirical data and interactionistic theory, or as an analytical process of abduction.

The results highlight that children continuously and successfully integrate and combine individual work, cooperation and competition in one and the same learning activity. Constructive competition motivates children to cooperate. Competition early is part of children's life. Different forms of constructive interplay motivate children to achieve beyond their own expected potential at the same time as it makes learning more exciting.

CO-AUTHOR: PIA WILLIAMS

Keywords: preschool children, learning, constructive interplay

Concert at Lunch - an Ethnographic Study in a Baby Nest

SABINE HEBENSTREIT-MÜELLER

Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus, Germany

Proposed is the presentation of a video production showing a research approach to the field of early childhood education. It combines an ethnographic approach with theoretical reflection on the material produced, to be used also for ECE training. Focus of observation is the performative level of child-child interaction and teacher-child interaction. The special topic of this video (in a series of others) is toddlers having lunch with their nurses. It shows that for the kids the meal is much more than eating or being fed. It is a strongly communicative event even though most of them cannot speak yet except some of them single words. The video shows what comes before the words: Its music, rhythm and tuning in! The film can make more evident than verbal description, how these kids establish their own rhythmic order of action and communication while responding to the order of the adults serving and enjoying a meal with them. and how skilful nurses can create a cultural space for the kids where encouragement of children's activities and adult needs for order do not disturb but support each other. A theoretical commentary uses the material to give evidence to the thesis that musical cooperation is the proto-language of the human species.

Keywords: ethnography, early childhood (under three), music as a language, rhythmic order

Self-regulation and Metacognition in Young Children: The role of Reflective Dialogues

SUE ROBSON

Roehampton University, United Kingdom

In recent years there has been increased emphasis on the value of eliciting children's perspectives on their lives (Alderson 2005, Clark & Moss 2001). This paper presents data from one part of the Froebel Research Fellowship: The Voice of the Child (2002-8) and addresses the research question: What are the children's perspectives on their activities in early childhood settings, and how do they reflect upon these?. Drawing on socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky 1986, Rogoff 2003, Wenger *et al.* 2002) and Vygotskian perspectives of language as a key tool for self-regulation, twelve children, aged 3-4 years, were videotaped during child initiated activities. Episodes were viewed and discussed by children and keyworkers in 'reflective dialogues'. These were coded using the CIndLe Coding Scheme (Whitebread *et al.* 2007), and compared with analyses of the original activities, for similarities and differences in the children's self-regulatory and metacognitive behaviour. The results show that children in this age group demonstrate a range of types of metacognitive and self-regulatory behaviour, and that their talk in the reflective dialogues reveals evidence not always apparent to practitioners during the course of the activity itself. Whilst the frequencies of self-regulatory and metacognitive behaviour during an activity and in later reflection were similar, the differing contexts supported significantly different types of such behaviour. Using videodata and extracts from reflective dialogues, this paper will consider the different ways in which children's activity and talk may elucidate their thinking, and the role of adults and other children in supporting a child's self-regulation and metacognition.

Keywords: self-regulation, metacognition, video, dialogue

SYMPOSIUM II/14

ICT IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: SANDRA HESTERMAN

Murdoch University, Australia

Playful Computer Writing. Preschool - Lower Primary (4 - 9 year olds)

ARNE TRAGETON

Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

30 year research shows that writing is easier than reading for 4-7 year olds, but handwriting is complicated. Computer research in school is common, but few study computer writing for 4-9 year olds. Almost none combine such studies with play research.

Problem: Will playful computer writing and delaying handwriting to grade 3 give better writing results? Through action innovation/research in 14 classes in Nordic countries (1999-2002) the 6 year olds learned writing and reading through playful writings on computers. Traditional textbooks became unnecessary. In grade 2 they produced own textbooks by playing "Publishing house", and "Newspapers office". In grade 3 the children composed newspapers and advanced books in different genres. The writing stimulated intensive reading. Rich school libraries were important.

The development is documented by 7500 multimodal texts and 60 edited videos. "PC classes" showed higher quality in composing fairy tale and factual prose than "handwriting classes", significant on $p > 0.001$ level. Surprisingly, also the handwriting tests showed significant higher quality in the PC classes on $p > 0.001$ level, in spite of the delayed handwriting and shorter exercise time. The results may lead to radical changes in literacy learning. www.hsh.no/home/atr/tekstskaping Click English articles. Click VIDEO. The second video in English.

The strategy now spreads to hundreds of classes in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Sámi region, Kurdistan (Northern Iraq). A textbook for teacher education are translated to Danish, Swedish, and Finnish.

Also many preschools use this emergent literacy stimulation for 4-5 year olds.

Keywords: play, 4-9 years, computer, writing

Extending the Play Environment to the Digital Environment: The use of ICT in Early Childhood Education

NINA BØLGAN

Oslo University College, Norway

The national “Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens” calls attention to the fact that ICT should be part of day to day activities in Early Childhood Education (ECE). ECE-staff are slowly approaching the digital world together with children of one to six years of age, but most lack digital competence.

During the last years I have carried out action research, development projects and supplementary education on ICT. The main aim has been to find out how ICT could become a meaningful part of day to day activities in ECE, and to increase the quality of the use of ICT in ECE.

To participate as full members of their society’s children learn what is necessary through interactions with a wide range of ICT-equipment, that is mediated by friends and adults. While exploring ICT in practice, staff had to raise their own questions in the ICT matter. The underpinning idea was that staff would provide a role-model for children and motivate children to use a wide range of technologies in an educational, creative and playful way. This should enhance both staffs and children’s ICT capabilities. Examples of work that has been done in Norway will be presented.

Staff must be offered supplementary and further education on educational, creative and playful use of ICT. Otherwise staff will sustain their thinking of digital equipment as neither suitable nor useful in ECE. My work has affected both for practice and policy of ICT in ECE in Norway.

Keywords: ICT, play, learning, digital competence

Interactive Whiteboards, Interactivity and Play in the Classroom with Children Aged 3-7 Years

ALEX MORGAN

Swansea University, United Kingdom

This paper examines the current use of interactive whiteboards in the teaching and learning of children aged 3-7 years in Wales UK. It considers both teachers’ and children’s reflections regarding the use of this ‘novel’ technology. Observations in thirty classrooms with interactive whiteboards (IWB) and interviews with teachers and children from these classroom settings are analysed to develop an understanding of current practice regarding the use of IWBs and the thinking behind this. Findings reveal that the teachers value and promote ‘playful’ and ‘interactive’ experiences as vehicles for learning. Evidence of the use of the IWB technology to support learning experiences which were either ‘playful’ or ‘interactive’ were however limited. This study suggests that IWB are routinely being used to support a more instructionist form of pedagogy than would be supported by the socio-cultural principles held by the majority of teachers interviewed or of the new Foundation Phase currently being implemented in Wales. Affordances, identified by practitioners, of IWB technology to support a ‘pedagogy of play’ are discussed.

Keywords: interactive whiteboard, interactivity, play, learning

SYMPOSIUM II/15 DRAMA, ROLE PLAY

Individual papers

CHAIR: DALILA LINO

University of Maine at Farmington, USA

How does Drama respond to Concepts of Knowledge and Learning?

AUD BERGGRAF SÆBØ

University of Stavanger, Norway

In this paper I will address concepts of knowledge in relation to dramatic play and creative aesthetic learning processes. I will focus on the 6 and 7 years old when presenting some aspects from my research. One important aim was to see how teachers dealt with challenges and possibilities when integrating drama, play and creativity in the teaching - and learning process. This aim is related to the fact that educational documents argue for play and creative aesthetic expressions- and learning forms in all education, and especially for the youngest ones. It is a problem that research on arts and creativity in education show there is a gulf between the rhetoric "lip service" given to arts and creativity in learning and the provisions provided in praxis. The theoretical and conceptual framework is linked to phenomenology, progressive education, socialconstructivism and sociocultural perspectives on learning.

My methodology is classroom case studies, reflective interview following the case studies and individual interview with the children.

My main findings is that children enjoy learning and are very productive when the teacher integrate play, improvised drama and teacher-in-role and structure a creative and intersubjective learning process that is truly constructivistic. The children took on a reflective and cooperative position in the learning process and showed a high degree of reflection-in-action. The main challenges for the teacher to succeed, is a willingness to play with the children, to structure a creative teaching and learning process, use her creativity and understand what play and fiction really are about. Possible implication of the study for policy and practice is to strengthen the teachers competence in creative aesthetic teaching- and learning processes.

Keywords: learningprocess, creative teaching, drama, socialconstructivism

What's in it For Me?: The Impact of an Artist Working with 6-7 Year Olds.

SUE FAWSON

University of Wolverhampton, England

This paper discusses research aimed to investigate the impact that an artist working with 6 and 7 year olds in a primary school in England would have upon the children's development, upon the school, and upon the artist himself. The theoretical context is set within the learning theories of Vygotsky, Bruner and Bandura; the creative and artistic development theories of Lowenfeld and Brittain, Matthews and Barnes; and the early educational approach of Reggio Emilia. The methodological design employed a case study within which data were collected through observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and still photography. The findings were that there were far greater benefits to the children's development than recognised by teachers and the artist: the school did not maximise opportunities for staff development from this experience: the artist was aware of his own learning and development as a result of the artist-in residence experience. The recommendations from this study were to produce a training document for schools which encourages the use of artists working within early education settings and to identify the potential opportunities for young children and staff development through such projects. It is envisaged that the paper would fit within the arts and creativity in early years strand. The issues within the research would correspond to the conference theme in that it reconsiders

what is meant by 'early childhood education' and questions how an intervention by and artist to the planned curriculum could enhance the basics of young children's development and learning.

Keywords: artist-in-residence, art, drawing, development

From Narratology and Ludology to Dramaturgy; A Theoretical Analysis of Digital Role-plays as Means of Narratives, as Games or as Means of a Theatrical Practice for Preschool children

VIGDIS VANGSNES

Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

Stord/Haugesund University College has received research-funding from the Research Council of Norway to examine the effect on children's social and linguistic development when they use digital objects in preschool. One of the objects we will take a closer look at will be digital games and especially digital role-plays. One main issue will be to examine different interactive linguistic practises as they occur between the game itself and the players, among the players themselves and finally between the grown-up preschool-teacher and the children playing.

The first step in this project has been to theoretically examine digital role-plays in order to analyse parts of the phenomena. I have written a scientific essay about this topic and want to present the result of this analysis in this paper.

I will therefore, in this paper, analyse digital role-plays as phenomena of art and discuss different positions research on this phenomena may take. Traditional research can be divided into two different positions. The position of narratology; those who see these plays as means of stories being told and ludology, those who first of all see and analyse them as means of games. I want in this paper to argue for a third position, a dramaturgic position, and discuss the phenomena as means of a theatrical practice. Examining and understanding these role-plays as theatre can help us see and understand the linguistic interaction going on between the different participants of the communicative process from a new and exciting perspective.

Keywords: digital games, role-play, dramaturgy, linguistic interaction

SYMPOSIUM II/16

RELATIONSHIPS

Individual papers

CHAIR: HEIDI OMDAL

University of Stavanger, Norway

Reconsidering the First Year of School

PAM WINTER (1), BOB PERRY (2) AND SUE DOCKETT (2)

(1) *Department of Education and Children's Services, Australia*

(2) *Charles Sturt University, Australia*

In 2008, South Australian teachers from preschools and the first year of school are collaborating and learning together in supported networks to reconsider Reception, the first year of school. The aim of the research project is for teachers to, through a site based research study, strengthen the coherence and continuity in children's learning environments

and learning as children transition from preschool to school. The project's academic colleagues, Professor Sue Dockett and Associate Professor Bob Perry from Charles Sturt University, undertook a preliminary literature review and situational analysis before networks nominated for selection. The participants in a network include preschool and school educators and district curriculum leaders. Foci for participation in the project include developing a culture of inquiry, professional inspiration, self/group reflection (using observation instruments for pedagogy and relationships with children), promoting children's involvement and wellbeing in the learning environment (with the aid of observation instruments including the Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children) and examination of curriculum content and assessment.

The paper will address the project's context (which includes an increasing trend for the priorities and traditions of schooling for older children to be pushed down into the transition year); the underpinning theoretical framework located in social constructivist and interpretive paradigms and experiential education where children's wellbeing, agency and active involvement are given priority; the methodology, the observation instruments used and the findings to date.

Keywords: pedagogy, transition, relationships, engagement

The Crossing Borders Project: Mutually Interesting Tasks, The Bridge to Relationships

CAROL HARTLEY AND SALLY PETERS

Mangere Bridge Kindergarten, New Zealand

In 2006, Mangere Bridge Kindergarten was chosen as a Centre of Innovation for the Ministry of Education, New Zealand Centre of Innovation project 2006- 2008 (Ministry of Education, 2002). Mangere Bridge's innovation "Crossing Borders" revolves around exploring and enhancing children's transition experiences, and developing relationships with two local schools. This paper reports on one aspect of this three year action research study.

Earlier research showed that teachers were often dissatisfied with current practice and arrangements (Timperley, McNaughton, Howie & Robinson, 2003). Lack of communication between early childhood and primary school teachers, tensions in the balance of power and differences in educational experiences are well documented. These are considered to be crucial influences in transition to school experiences for children and families (Brostrom, 2002).

Our research focuses on research exploring common issues in transition to school for children and families, and developing strategies to strengthen relationships between early childhood and school settings by collaborative interactions to develop a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998).

Timperley and Robinson (2002) report that interactions and relationship building needs a focus to co-construct these relationships in the transition experience to provide continuity for children, families and teachers. "Mutually interesting tasks" form the basis of this segment of the action research project. These tasks revolve around identifying strategies and resources from interviews with children and from the contributions of families.

The mutually interesting tasks began with the children's portfolios, and now take the form of several ICT projects, which have provided the means to strengthen and deepen relationships. This presentation shares work in progress illustrating the value of collaborative enterprise in building of reciprocal, responsive, respectful transition relationships.

CO- AUTHORS: PAT ROGERS, JEMMA SMITH, EMMA RITZEMA-BAIN, MARGARET CARR

Keywords: relationships, collaboration, interactions, strategies

Transforming Transitions

ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP

University of Strathclyde, Scotland, United Kingdom

The study of educational transitions in young children's lives has the potential to inform policy and practice. In this paper key factors in educational transitions, such as teacher collaboration, parental participation and children's agency are considered as tools for change in the context of the new Scottish Early Level of 'A Curriculum for Excellence 3-18'. Early educational transitions have often been conceptualised in terms of children's readiness for school, children's adjustment to school, and increasingly and more equitably in terms of schools being ready and adjusting to children. The debate continues as to whether policy developments to smooth the transition to school so increasing continuity and coherence of experience, or equipping children to cope with change is the best way forward. A cohort of 150 children from a school intake of over 1,000 children was studied over a 12 year period. 28 were focal children, of these 28, 20 continue in the local authority schools to the present time. Five time points were considered in order to understand which variables might be significant over time: the ways in which the young people claim they cope with challenges as adolescents, is compared with the ways in which they coped with change on transition to first school. A particular focus is taken on 10 individuals in order to illustrate their transition trajectories, to tease out relationships between early and later transitions, and to answer the question 'do transitions matter?'

Keywords: transitions, trajectories, policies, practices

SYMPOSIUM II/17

PARTICIPATORY LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS FOR TODDLERS AND INFANTS

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: JOANNE BROWNLEE

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Session overview

The proposed symposium aims to address participatory learning in early childhood programs for infants and toddlers, with a focus on how infants and toddlers experience participation rights in their everyday lives. The perspectives of researchers from a number of countries are represented, these being, Australia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The early years are an important period for learning. There is an increasing professional and research interest in understanding pedagogical approaches to practice for infant and toddler group care settings. This symposium will present theoretical and research perspectives about how ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) contexts promote ideals of democracy and citizenship in the very youngest, through participatory learning approaches. The symposium will offer insights into national policies, provisions, and practices in regard to programs for infants and toddlers, explore cross-national perspectives and respond to the recent interest in a rights approach to education and care.

Keywords: toddlers, infants, participatory learning, childcare, relationships, observations.

Looking, Listening and Learning in an English Day Nursery

PAULETTE LUFF

Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

The aim of this paper is to argue the importance of observant, attentive and responsive work with babies and toddlers, and to highlight the significance of the various positive relationships which can enhance their care and learning. This paper will begin with two brief vignettes of

mealtimes in day nurseries and relate the contrasting scenarios to the current context of care and education in England, including brief reference to national guidance for practice in early childhood settings, whilst emphasising the importance of relationships for participatory care and education. The main content of the paper will be organized using three key themes: adult and child relationships; relationships between children; and relationships between the adults involved with the children. Each of these themes will be explored using evidence from detailed observations of young early years practitioners at work, in the under twos' room of a small London day nursery. Discussion will focus upon how each of these important relationships may contribute to involvement in shared learning and form a basis for relational and participatory pedagogy for people under three.

Keywords: toddlers, infants, participatory learning, childcare, relationships, observations

“Doing the Right Thing” Different Life-worlds and Similar values in Toddler Interactions

EVA JOHANSSON

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This discussion refers to conventions and “doing the right thing” as a moral concern among children. The base for the discussion is two investigations of morality among children (aged 1-3 years) in different day care contexts in Sweden and Australia. The aim was to create knowledge about the children’s experiences of values and norms concerning treatment of and behavior toward each other in their every day interaction. In the Australian study the initial analyses revealed a value of “doing the right thing” (Johansson, manuscript) as a specific moral concern among the children. This value did not occur in the Swedish investigation of toddler’s morality (Johansson, 1999), however when re-analyzing some of the data aspects of this value appeared. However, rather than performing a cross-national comparison the purpose has been to mirror the content of “doing the right thing” to the structure of relevance (Schütz, 1999) in the different preschool groups and viewing these as aspects of the children’s different sociocultural life-worlds (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The concepts appeared useful as tools for analyses gaining new insights in children’s morality with reference to particular social and historical contexts. The analysis indicates that the value of doing the right thing can be interpreted as both a moral obligation and a moral responsibility expressed as the children’s concern for the rules but also for their teachers. Yet, the children’s experiences of conventions may differ pertain to the children’s specific life-worlds in their different cultures of preschools.

Keywords: toddlers, infants, participatory learning, childcare, relationships, observations

Teacher Beliefs about how Toddlers’ Learn: Implications for Practice

JOANNE BROWNLEE

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

The exploratory research reported in this paper investigated the nature of beliefs about children’s learning held by 12 group leaders in Australian toddler programs as well as their practices. Interview transcripts were analysed to identify the relationship between beliefs about children’s learning and actual teaching practices. This was based on an assumption that such alignment is important in making judgements about the nature of beliefs. Group leaders' beliefs and practices were positioned on a continuum of instructivism through to constructivism. Constructivism in children’s learning was considered to be indicative of more participatory teaching practices. Implications for quality in child care are discussed.

CO-AUTHOR: DONNA BERTHELSEN

Keywords: toddlers, infants, participatory learning, childcare, relationships, observations, beliefs about children's learning.

The Guiding Principles of Participation: Infant, Toddler Groups and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

BERENICE NYLAND

RMIT University, Australia

This paper discusses principles of participation. When the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was developed the participation element of the convention was considered to be representative of a new way of seeing young children. Previous approaches to rights had concentrated on children's needs; like the right to shelter, clothing, education and a family. This needy child has gradually been replaced in the public imagination with the child that has agency, is an active player in learning and has enormous communicative competence to make this possible. The very idea that infants and toddlers have participation rights like "the right to have one's opinion taken into account" (UNCRC article 12) was a new proposition to many people.

As children grow their understanding of the world increases, as does their capacity for co-constructing reality in the context of relationships. All children participate within their culture. However, the concept of participation rights goes beyond the act of participation and includes the quality of the environment itself and the relationships that the child engages in. The focus of this paper is the differing theories and views of participation, everyday experiences and the quality of the environments, both physical and social, that are provided as a frame for children's participation. The main emphasis is on our images of children and how our beliefs about children will influence theory and practice and impact on the design of contexts that can be enabling or constraining in relation to children's freedoms and participation rights.

Keywords: toddlers, infants, participatory learning, childcare, relationships, observations

SYMPOSIUM II/18

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY AS RESEARCHERS (CHILDREN AND TEACHERS) THROUGH NARRATIVE ASSESSMENT (LEARNING STORIES): PERSPECTIVES FROM AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: WENDY LEE

Educational Leadership :placeProject, New Zealand

Session overview

As Project Facilitators working within the Educational Leadership Project Aotearoa New Zealand we have put together three perspectives that consider the ways in which both teachers and children build their identity as researchers. The three perspectives we present are:

- Teachers as Researchers: Pedagogy, Positivity, Passion and Politics
- Captured by a Mountain! A pathway to bi-cultural understanding.
- Thinking minds, listening hearts: a dialogue between teachers and infants that creates space for inquiry

This work illustrates the transformational power of using narrative assessment practices. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Learning Stories have changed the face of teaching and learning and assessment making room for teachers and children to explore the space between teacher intention and child intention. The notion of both teachers and children as researchers is now being embedded into the fabric of early childhood education.

Teachers as Researchers: Pedagogy, Positivity, Passion and Politics

WENDY LEE

Educational Leadership :placeProject, New Zealand

This presentation outlines the ways in which teachers in early childhood settings have become powerful learners through their work as researchers on a professional development project called the Educational Leadership Project, (ELP). One of the requirements of participating in ELP is to develop a research question for investigation during the year. At the end of each year teachers present their research findings to the wider ELP community. In this presentation I describe the outcomes of the participation in these research projects in terms of developing four qualities that parallel the four principles of the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum, Te Whāriki. These outcomes are described in terms of a pedagogy of relationships as well as positivity, passion and politics. Examples from teacher researchers work illustrate these four outcomes. The ELP project teachers were found to be critical and constructive commentators of their own practice. Given the right affordances, teachers provided evidence that they were ready, willing and able, to take on a collaborative role in researching within their educational setting (Carr, 2001). Research provides a powerful pathway for engaging in 'good work' as described by Gardner et al. (2001). Teachers are, more than ever before, developing their role as researchers and through this practice experiencing more deeply what it is to be a teacher (Rinaldi, 2006).

Keywords: professional development, curriculum and assessment, teacher researchers.

Captured by a Mountain! A Pathway to Bi-cultural Understanding

ROBYN LAWRENCE

Educational Leadership :placeProject, New Zealand

Exploring children's' right to be supported and encouraged to experience and investigate a bicultural understanding through a developing awareness and understanding of the journey of the indigenous people of New Zealand.

Te Whaariki, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum is a bi-cultural document. The foundation curriculum statements require early childhood settings to provide opportunities for children to reflect on alternative ways of doing things; make connections across time and place; establish different kinds of relationships and encounter different points of view. Children in New Zealand have the right to develop knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This paper presents an investigation that brings about shifts in understanding, knowledge and bi-cultural thinking when the teachers and the children focus on a significant landmark, which is just 'over the fence'. That landmark is a mountain that has two names, many stories and belongs to the people of the past, the present and the future.

The research tracks the journey of the developing relationship with, and the exploration of, the mountain - Ohuiarangi. We discuss the impact on the community of learners as the children discover the stories and connections and, as the investigation deepens, they stumble upon, puzzle over and struggle with bi-cultural issues that arise in their search for answers. The teachers discover that through exploring connections and deepening the relationship with the mountain an invitation to belong is extended through the stories of the people of the land, the tangata whenua. Discovering and investigating the past history of the mountain moves this community along a pathway of bicultural understanding that goes beyond the obvious, making connections across time and place.

Keywords: bicultural awareness, children's rights, bicultural curriculum, children as active participants

Thinking Minds, Listening Hearts: a Dialogue between Teachers and Infants that Creates Space for Inquiry

LORRAINE SANDS

Educational Leadership :placeProject, New Zealand

Greerton Early Childhood Centre, through a New Zealand Ministry of Education, Centre of Innovation research contract, is exploring the ways the teacher/researchers work to build an investigative learning/teaching culture. Learning story assessments (Carr, 2001) document this process. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999, p.154) comment that 'Documentation as a learning process, but also as a process of communication, presupposes the creation of a culture of exploration, reflection, dialogue and engagement.' Imagine the possibilities for making a difference to learning when teachers work hard to build a learning setting that intrigues, invites puzzled exploration and celebrates struggle and effort inside meaningful endeavour (Dweck, 2006). Unravelling these possibilities has been a deeply motivating factor for the work of the team of teacher/researchers at Greerton Early Childhood Centre. Teachers see themselves as learners with and alongside children in building an understanding of how the world works. This socio-cultural view underpins the learning and teaching framework and documentation provokes a 'meaning-making discourse', building dialogue around the Principles of Te Whāriki, the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum (1996) – a lense that is visible and accessible to children, teachers, families and beyond. It is this context of learning and teaching as 'collaborative endeavour' that captivated teacher interest to find out more about what kinds of settings and relationships make a difference to children's learning.

This presentation considers an aspect of the research related to building a listening dialogue with babies through question-asking and question exploring: the space between teacher intentions/questions and children's intentions/questions and the ways in which inquiry plays out as a 'dialogue'.

Keywords: professionalism and challenges, curriculum and assessment, children as active participants, teacher researchers.

SYMPOSIUM II/19

BASIC LEARNING IN A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: SONJA KIBSGAARD

Queen Mauds College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Session overview

The Topic of this symposium is focused on basic assumption for learning.

This self-organized symposium will consider how different possibilities of learning connected to subjects as music, language and education psychology will be expressed in Kindergarten. This Symposium is based on chapters from a book where this theme is emphasized. This book will be published in May 2008

Basic Learning in a Stimulating Environment in Kindergarten

SONJA KIBSGAARD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Basic reading, writing and mathematics are a specially focused area within the school curriculum. At the same time we can see that the new framework for kindergartens is much more explicit than then old one when it comes to language and mathematics. The foundation

of mathematics and language is made in the kindergarten, and therefore basic reading, writing and mathematics is of great concern for the kindergarten. Does this mean that the kindergarten is to be regarded as a school? Fundamental questions related to formation of a new identity in kindergarten must place the child in the center. What do children like? How do they think? How do they understand? How do they look upon their surroundings? Learning can not be anchored in books and other sources of knowledge; it must be related to each child's hunger and thirst for knowledge.

The children in kindergartens are younger; they are more playful, have more fantasy and are more wondering than when they reach school age. The starting point for understanding children and how they learn must be related to knowledge of what a child is how it is thinks, reflects and look upon the world.

When the pedagogic of kindergartens is changing, it will be reasonable to ask questions related to the child as an individual and a learning human being. Each child is unique. The kindergarten is facing interesting challenges. With so different expectations from different positions, it is important that the kindergarten is location and reinforcing its identity.

Children are learning together with people that are engaged. Thus the way children regard adults will be an important factor in the child's process of learning. The engagement of the teacher, her playfulness, curiosity, and ability to see the child will, together with adequate skills related to the different subjects, be an important contribution to the child's discovery of the arts of reading, writing and mathematics. In this way good learning can be given a solid foundation in the kindergarten.

Keywords: learning, identity of kindergarten, mathematics and language

Music and Basic Learning in a Stimulating Environment. Informal Learning – Good Learning?

MORTEN SÆTHER

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This paper addresses learning in a stimulating environment in the kindergarten. We have witnessed a debate in the media where it has been asserted that a more systematic education in basic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic ought to be prioritized. It is expected that systematization, i.e., a specially adapted educational approach, will result in children improving their basic skills, and the sooner, the better. The kindergarten and the school have different educational traditions. The school curriculum is governed by learning plans characterized by well-defined targets, where the students are obliged to adapt to the requirements stipulated by the school. In the kindergarten, on the other hand, it is possible to use the child itself as a starting point to a greater extent; an approach enabling educators to challenge and adapt activities to each individual child. Preschool children will display varying levels of maturity and motivation for reading, writing, and arithmetic. In my opinion, the possibilities of the kindergarten with regard to enhancing basic skills for school-age children involve a strengthening of the premises for learning in general.

In this presentation I would like to address the opportunities inherent in informal learning situations. Based on experience and observations, I will present a number of examples of informal learning situations where music constitutes a part of the activity or dialogue. In this context, we define informal learning situations as everyday activities, here-and-now situations taking place during play, education, and other kinds of interaction. My basis for good learning potential is that the child itself must be the driving force.

This presentation will focus on children's curiosity as well as the need to explore and make use of creative expressions. My objective is to demonstrate that music as a medium may prove to be particularly conducive to the development of children's basic skills. *Basic skills are defined as the fundamental competence acquired by children in preparation for their future lives, where social skills and communicative ability constitute key factors (Lillemyr, 2004).*

My presentation furthermore contains examples of children's use of musical elements during play and communication:

- a) Music and social skills
- b) Musical communication
- c) Music and the spoken language

In conclusion, I would like to address the educator's role in informal learning situations where music is included as a key element.

Keywords: informal learning, musical communication, music and expressions

Developing Literacy in a Stimulating Environment The Importance of Dialogue between Children and Adults

MARIT SEMUNDSETH

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

There are different educational traditions in kindergarten and in school. Norwegian media currently debate different ways to raise the level of literacy skills among children, and a key notion in this debate is how children's literacy skills can be of a higher level than is seems to be today. According to this, we can hear a lot of talk about the importance of language stimulation at an early age. Then, what characterizes a stimulating literacy environment?

In this presentation I will discuss what I think is of importance when it comes to the conceptual word language stimulation. I will try to show how a stimulating environment, characterized by dialogue between children and adults, can contribute to the interpretation of a written text made of a 4 year old girl called Idun. The character of the conversation between this girl and the adults is what probably gives her a feeling of being both knowledgeable and of being an important person for other people.

Her meeting with adults who are listening to her, who are paying attention to what she says and writes, adults who answer her questions and who constantly are encouraging her, can give her confidence in herself both as a writer and as a dialogue-partner. Confidence and belief in her own skills are important also for her later on in her adult life.

A bag containing lots of positive experiences, a functional and well developed language and a high level of self esteem, is a bag that every child is able to carry all by itself. Such a bag will never be too heavy to carry!

Keywords: literacy, language stimulation, dialogue

SYMPOSIUM II/20

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: DORIAN DE HAAN

INHolland University, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

CO-CHAIR: INGRID ENGDAHL

Stockholm University, Sweden

Session overview

Globalization, democracy, migration and communication technology have made the world bigger and more complex. These societal developments influence people's life and also the life of young children. Children's future is often beyond the boundaries of the community in which they grow up. They have to make choices.. In this period of individualism, children will make choices which improve their well being as individuals. But a complex world also asks for citizens, prepared to take responsibility for the social and physical environment. At the

international and national levels it has been recognized that education has an important role to play in children's identity and citizenship development. At the local level, (pre)schools have begun to think about curricula which involve issues of identity, participation and responsibility. In this symposium we will present educational initiatives which address these issues. The contribution from the Netherlands is about children's social world, and focuses at identity and citizenship development integrated in a literacy curriculum. The Swedish contribution discusses concepts and practices of education for sustainable development and reports about children's learning processes outdoors within an educational framework.

Keywords: identity, citizenship, sustainable development

Our Classroom, My World: a Methodology for Identity and Citizenship Development in Early Child Classrooms

DORIAN DE HAAN AND ELS SCHELLEKENS

INHolland University, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

In today's world, most children will experience a diverse environment, in which families have different backgrounds and make different choices. Early in life, children may experience tensions as a consequence of power relations in society that do not consider all communalities and choices equally. They need environments that are inclusive and respectful of their identity, environments in which their needs for uniqueness and relatedness are recognized. More than ever, it is important that teachers pay attention both to children's individuality, communalities and responsibilities. Although in most school policy papers the importance of identity and citizenship development is recognized, few instruments exist that enable children to reflect on and communicate about their own individuality and give them responsibility in the co-construction of classroom culture. This project "Our classroom, my world" aims at developing a methodology by integrating social goals in learning to read and write and to use ICT in a meaningful way, starting from children's own lives. As young children already often have access to computers and the Internet, the school should teach them how to use ICT with regard to privacy and respectful communication. The methodology is being developed in close cooperation with schools by creating a kind of learner's community incorporating meetings of practitioners, designers and researchers.

The theoretical foundation of the instrument is a model that includes three levels of social competence: the intrapersonal level (identity), the interpersonal level (social relations between children) and the group/ societal level (citizenship). In this presentation we will discuss the use of classroom websites designed to attain these social goals and related reading and writing activities.

Keywords: identity, citizenship, literacy, ICT

Our Classroom, My World: Results of Working with a Classroom Website as a Key to Incorporate Social and Cognitive Goals

MARIJE DE HOOGD

INHolland University, The Netherlands

The project "Our Classroom, My World" contains two components: the design and evaluation of an instrument for developing identity and citizenship in young children. The aim of the research is to monitor the design and to evaluate the methodology. Interviews with children and teachers, video-observation, document analysis of the (digital) products of the children are main techniques of data gathering. Next to these qualitative methods, quantitative methods will be used (questionnaires, rating scales). In this presentation we will present the first research results, which show that it is possible to incorporate identity and citizenship goals in a reading, writing and ICT-curriculum in a structural way. We will show how children think about and deal with certain aspects of social competence involved in the methodology.

Keywords: identity, citizenship, literacy, ICT

Education for a Sustainable Society Leads to a New Perspective for Early Childhood Education

INGRID ENGDAHL

Stockholm University, Sweden

All parts of the educational system in Sweden, from preschool to university, have a specific responsibility to educate for sustainable development (ESD). ESD has three components - ecological, social/cultural and economic – they are intertwined and the education also has to be performed in a democratic way, ensuring participation and influence for all learners. ESD has a dual task, both to lay the foundations for a democratic approach and empowering the children with action competence and to establish a genuine interest for nature, for the environment and for natural science.

The Swedish policy on sustainable development and the task specified in the national curricula are written texts with goals for reaching high quality in all preschools. However, the national guidelines are not sufficient. Early childhood education has a pedagogical tradition well aligned with ESD. Preschools are on their way, working with ESD. But is it enough? There is a need for a conscious choice, made by teachers, directing the pedagogical activities.

ESD shall recognize gender issues and the rights for girls and boys to equal possibilities and responsibilities, and teach the basic life skills. I suggest a new meaning in 'learning for life' (as opposed to life long learning); that is learning about sustainability and to survive by recapturing basic life skills. We could build our activities around new Rs; reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, respect, reflect and refuse.

Keywords: sustainable development, gender and environmental perspectives, preschool curriculum

Education for Sustainable Development in the Pedagogical Praxis in Swedish Preschool Settings

EVA ÄRLEMALM-HAGSÉR AND ANETTE SANDBERG

Mälardalen University, Sweden

In 2002 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014. In the draft from UNESCO (2004) concerning the international strategy for education for sustainable development the importance of education is underlined as an important factor and key roles were identified – inspiration to believe that change is possible, action competence, fostering of values, behavior and lifestyles, learning democratic processes, future-oriented thinking. In Sweden the education system, from preschool to university, has a specific responsibility to actively work to ensure that sustainable development will be a perspective that permeates work within all levels.

Childhood experiences are important to develop environmental values and as a majority of the Swedish children goes to preschools it's important to study didactical arrangements and strategies towards sustainable development in preschool settings. The purpose with this paper is to illustrate the concept sustainable development in the pedagogical praxis in preschool from the children's and the practitioner's perspective of 'activities for sustainable development' by reporting an ongoing study.

Keywords: sustainable development, gender and environmental perspectives, preschool curriculum

SYMPOSIUM II/21

WHO IS AN EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONAL? POLICY DIVERSITY AND WORKFORCE ISSUES IN 12 EU COUNTRIES

Self-organised symposium
Chair: VALERIE SOLLARS
University of Malta, Malta

Session overview

The main purpose of an ongoing project entitled *Systems of early education/care and professionalisation in Europe (see^{pro})* is to systematise and analyse contextually nested data on professionalisation policies and practices in the twelve countries to join the European Union since 2004. These are mostly post-communist countries in the Baltic, central and eastern regions of Europe, and also include Cyprus and Malta in the south. International comparative studies to date have paid relatively little attention to the early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems in these countries, which have been undergoing radical transformations in recent years, resulting in a number of implications for the professionals involved. The project is being funded by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The three papers relate to the conference strand of 'professionalism and the challenges for professional development'.

Keywords: professional profiles; professionalisation strategies; 12 EU member states

Tracking Professional Profiles in 12 ECEC systems

PAMELA OBERHUEMER

State Institute of Early Childhood Research (IFP), Germany

A decade or so ago, international comparisons of early education and care systems were still a relatively novel means of extending individual and collective knowledge and understandings of policies and practices beyond national borders. Today they have become an essential ingredient in trans-national co-constructions of sustainable systems of early childhood provision built on local needs and resources. However, little comparative work exists on the early childhood professions and professionalisation strategies. In a climate of enhanced mobility and an overall European policy commitment towards increasing access to early education and care, the professional education/training and in-service support of personnel working with young children are critical quality issues. What are the professional profiles and role constructions that guide policy decisions? In the case of the newer EU member states, there is to date only a limited resource and research base to draw upon. The *see^{pro}* project is seeking to address this 'knowledge gap'. During five-day visits to each country between March 2007 and March 2008, a range of stakeholders, researchers and policy officials were interviewed by the project researchers. Commissioned reports by national experts provided the research team with background material for conducting semi-structured interviews in a focussed and informed way. This paper looks at selected findings and policy implications from a comparative perspective. These include: staffing issues relating to patterns of governance and structural features of provision; academic level of initial education/training; questions of content; professional profiles; opportunities for continuing professional development; current workforce issues and challenges for the field.

Keywords: professionalisation strategies, comparative analysis, 'new' EU countries

The Implications of Recent Policy Changes for Early Childhood Professionals in the Baltic Countries

MICHELLE J. NEUMAN

Open Society Foundation, United Kingdom

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania developed extensive public early childhood provision staffed by highly-trained pedagogues during the Soviet era. In the early 1990s, the transition to a market economy led to a decrease in access to many public services, including education and care provision for young children, and also to a decrease in quality. In recent years, the three former communist countries have struggled to rebuild their early childhood systems while also responding to changing societal demands. As a result, policies and services for young children are emphasising more child-centred pedagogy, parent involvement, and individualisation. This paper will discuss recent policy trends in the three Baltic countries, focusing on the implications for the initial training and ongoing professional development of staff who work with young children. Some of the current cross-national debates include the appropriate level for initial training of professionals, inclusion of children with special needs and from linguistically/culturally diverse backgrounds, and attracting and retaining qualified staff. Joining the European Union has led to some harmonisation of policies; however, the Baltic countries still retain nationally distinctive characteristics in their approaches to early years provision.

Keywords: professionalisation strategies, comparative analysis, the Baltic countries

Professionalisation Approaches and Workforce Issues in the Slovak Republic and Slovenia: Common and Divergent Features

INGE SCHREYER

State Institute of Early Childhood Research, Germany

This paper looks at the current training routes of pedagogical staff working with young children in two of the central/eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004: the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. In recent years, professionalisation strategies in these countries have been undergoing a series of transformations. The presentation compares both the initial and continuing professional development of staff in these two countries. Differences but also common features will be emphasised. As in many of the 'new' EU countries, restructuring and reforms have been on the early childhood education and care agenda in the Slovak Republic and Slovenia since the mid-1990s. For example, there are currently different policy approaches toward the education and care of the under threes and also towards the required staffing qualifications. The training of staff working with children of different ages will therefore be analysed, taking into account the entry requirements, duration and location of training, qualifications and the possible fields of work. Issues of status, remuneration and working conditions will also be raised. Relevant statistical data will help to contextualise these developments, and an indication of future challenges for the field will complete the picture.

Keywords: professionalisation strategies, comparative analysis, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

SYMPOSIUM II/22

RECONCEPTUALIZING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PRACTICES, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: HILLEVI LENZ TAGUCHI

Stockholm University, Sweden

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

Session overview

This symposium will address how early childhood education is being transformed in British Columbia, Canada to address the critiques presented by the reconceptualist literature (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Swadener, Cannella, & Che, 2005; Taguchi, 2006). It will feature how transformation is taking place at the practice, training and professional development levels. The “professionalism and challenges/demands for professional development” strand will be addressed; and the overall ‘questioning’ theme of the conference will be reflected in the three papers that the symposium will feature. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the three papers featured in the symposium include postmodern, poststructural, anti-colonial, and anti-racist lenses. These conceptual lenses will allow the presenters to question the taken-for-granted assumptions that have dominated the Canadian early childhood landscape for the last century and provide the tools to engage in ‘new’ ways of thinking about practice, training and professional development. The three papers will be based on findings of three qualitative studies that each of the presenters directed.

Keywords: deconstructive analysis, professional development, training, practice

Reconceptualizing Professional Development through a Newly Developed Early Learning Framework

VERONICA PACINI-KETCHABAW

University of Victoria, Canada

Following the theme of the conference, the first paper will address the challenges of the concept of professional development as currently negotiated within the British Columbian early childhood education context. The concept of professionalism has re-emerged in British Columbia as a new early learning framework is enacted and negotiated by early childhood educators. The aims of the paper are: (1) To challenge the definition of professionalism currently used within the British Columbian early childhood context. (2) To provide insights into how early childhood educators are challenging understandings of professionalism and simultaneously negotiating postmodern frameworks of ethical practice within the context of a newly developed Early Learning Framework. (3) To address how early childhood educators are shifting in their own perceptions towards seeing themselves as intellectually engaged professionals working within post-foundational conceptual frameworks.

Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education Training with Pre-Service Educators

ALEJANDRA SANCHEZ

Douglas College, Canada

This paper will address how pre-service educators do deconstructive analysis in the classroom as well as the negotiations that students engage in when doing multiple readings of children’s learning processes. Deconstructive analysis has been an essential component of the pre-service educators’ educational experience. The paper will also discuss how and why a collective understanding and research culture based on postmodernist perspectives is essential for the transformation of early childhood training in British Columbia, Canada.

Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Practice in a Kindergarten Classroom

LAURIE KOCHER

Douglas College, Canada

This paper will address the personal experience of the author migrating through the professional spaces of being both an early childhood educator and a teacher educator. The paper will discuss how the author works closely with children (and their families) through pedagogical documentation practices to deconstruct the possible meanings embedded in the classroom's everyday experiences. The presentation will also address the profound influence that pedagogical documentation has for educators to transform taken-for-granted definitions of professionalism.

Conclusions: The symposium will conclude with a summary highlighting the links and divergences between the three papers.

SYMPOSIUM II/23 A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: CATH ARNOLD

Pen Green, Ireland

Session overview

The three papers in this symposium report on the

1. Conceptualization of
2. Process of, and
3. Outcomes of a collaborative professional development study in the Dublin Port area designed to improve outcomes for children and families in the long term.

Creating a Shared Vision- An Early Learning Initiative

CATRIONA FLOOD AND BRIGINA CROWE

National College of Ireland, Ireland

The Inner city port area of Dublin has suffered a decline in traditional job opportunities resulting in economic hardship for local communities. Adaptation to new opportunities in knowledge based industries is slow due to low levels of educational attainment.

The Early Learning Initiative in Dublin's port area focuses on improving educational attainment by working collaboratively with community based service providers and family support agencies to create an inclusive vision of intervention and support. Interventions start from birth and continue until the end of formal education providing a continuum of support for children and families with an emphasis on parental involvement in their children's education.

This paper gives a brief overview of the initiative and documents the development of the initiative from planning stages through to implementation. Research undertaken included:

1. Initially a pilot baseline study of 100 families with children zero to six years of ages was carried out by Dartington Social Research Unit.
2. Expert Advisory panels were used to define possible outcomes and identified best practice programmes using a logic model.
3. Outcomes and programmes were further refined by community based service providers to secure local ownership, a shared vision and commitment.

While the programmes evolve gradually with community service providers, initiative strategies are influenced by a variety of theoretical frameworks including the work of Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky, Laevers, Whalley and Freire

The early stages of this initiative have commenced with early years workers engaging in professional development and considering the Pen Green Framework for Engaging Parents which is proving to be transformational in terms of early childhood practice, linking theory with practice and work with families.

Keywords: community based, inclusive, continuum, shared vision

A Learning Journey together: Children, Parents and Professionals

CATH ARNOLD

Pen Green, Ireland

This paper reports on the process of engaging with a small group of community child care providers within the area of Dublin Port. Researchers/facilitators from the Pen Green Research Base, Corby, Northants, England worked in collaboration with the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) at the National College of Ireland to develop an initial two year Professional Development project on Involving Parents in Their Children's Learning. The long term aim of this research and development project was for workers in the Dublin Port area to develop the 'Dublin Approach to Engaging Parents'. A significant decision made early on in the project was to work with the same small group of workers throughout and to provide a support system for participants. A key element was the engagement of a well-known local practitioner and trainer, who acted as a 'cultural broker' for participants (Chrispeels and Rivera, 2001). We were interested in how power was devolved: between facilitators and participants; between participants and parents; between workers and children. We used the Freireian concepts of 'dialogue' and 'co-intentional education' as a framework for exploring and reflecting on the relationships and processes (Freire, 1970). Our method of finding out drew on action research, critical theory and community education (Elliott, 1991; Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). The conference strand most closely linked to this paper is 'Professionalism and challenges/demands for professional development'.

Keywords: community-based, cultural brokerage, dialogue, co-intentional education

Multiple Perspectives on the Value of a Shared Professional Development Experience

MONICA CASSIDY

National College of Ireland, Ireland

This paper reports on some of the outcomes of collaboration between a small group of practitioners from the Dublin Port area and researchers/facilitators from the Pen Green Research Base and the National College of Ireland. The authors highlight the positive characteristics of community education and the sense of power and pleasure that can be generated when women engage in adult learning. New learning was often transferred not only into professional work but also into personal relationships with families and communities.

Drawing on the Freirian concept of 'transformation' and Mezirow's concept of 'perspective transformation' we tried to capture some of the complexity experienced by the participants, through video feedback (Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1981). By using a multiple perspectives approach we have offered a voice and a common framework for dialogue to participants to share their practice with others (Raban et al, 2003). This collaborative approach to education where learning comes from shared experiences excited workers engaged parents and gave a voice to all. A number of evaluative techniques to explore this process were developed in collaboration with group members, ELI and Pen Green facilitators, one of which will be discussed in this paper.

The value of the development and connection of linkages with parents and providers in early years settings used in the project are mirrored in the core principles of "Siolta", the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. The development of partnerships with parents is also reflected in the upcoming curriculum for early years, "Towards a Framework for Early Learning" by the NCCA.

It is envisaged that this process of engaging parents will develop into a Dublin/ Irish approach to involving parents.

Keywords: video feedback, transformations, leadership, outcomes

SYMPOSIUM II/24

RAISING QUESTIONS AND REFLECTING ON PRACTICE

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: KATE HAYWARD

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Symposium overview

The Pen Green Centre for Children and Families has a long history of working closely with parents to promote their understanding of, and full engagement in, their children's development and learning. The three pieces of research presented in this symposium build on this work at the Centre. The first examines a 'knowledge sharing approach', which recognises and respects parents as their child's first educators. The second looks at the factors which lead to differentials in parental involvement across groups who traditionally find public services hard to access. The third focuses on the effectiveness of weekend access to parent and child groups in encouraging the involvement of fathers in their children's learning.

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

Raising Questions and Reflecting on Practice

KATE HAYWARD AND ANGELA PRODGER

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

'Parents and professionals can help their children separately or they can work together to the great benefit of the children (Athey, 2007). Parental involvement has been at the heart of the work at the Pen Green Centre for Children and Families ever since it opened in 1983. A comprehensive programme of parent-worker partnership has been developed. It is a 'knowledge sharing approach', recognising and respecting the knowledge parents have of their own children. Drawing on the work of Freire, Mezirow and Athey this paper considers this particular way of working. The authors describe the systematic approach undertaken within the nursery staff team to document and record the effective engagement of parents in their children's learning. Socio-spatial mapping of the community accessing the nursery and analysis of supporting data is used to contextualise current models of parental engagement. Through a process of discussion and reflection on the data the staff team are able to develop critical questions about practice relating to access for all parents and the nature of the transformative relationships that take place through this way of working. The importance of this process in the sustainable development of parental involvement programmes in Children Centres is explored.

Keywords: parental involvement, access, knowledge sharing, children's learning, sustainability

Engaging Fathers in Their Own Space and Their Own Time: How Weekend Access to a Setting Enables Fathers to Engage in Parent and Child Groups

EDDIE MCKINNON AND KATE HAYWARD

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

At the Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families we have been developing a framework for working with parents since the centre was established in 1983. Over the years many initiatives have been offered to engage specifically with fathers. Video reflection and the sharing of child development theories in groups has been successful.

We have a vibrant Dads group on a Sunday and over recent years a Saturday baby massage group for fathers has grown and developed into a Saturday parent and toddler

group. This paper looks at the development of weekend access for fathers to parent and child groups and the key factors that enable fathers to engage in their children's learning in the centre.

A range of complementary methodologies are used to examine the processes that have taken place, including:

- semi-structured interviews with fathers
- reflective accounts from workers
- Socio-Spatial Mapping

We investigate how 6 different fathers came to access the groups at the weekend and why these groups are particularly attractive to men. We consider how practitioners work within the centre at the weekend and how the centre's 'weekend environment' contributes to encouraging access by fathers to parent and child groups.

Keywords: fathers, priority groups, inclusion

Access and Engagement Issues Explored through 6 Case Studies

KATE HAYWARD AND MARGY WHALLEY

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

The Pen Green Centre for Children and Families is located in Corby, a fast growing town in rural England with a unique history. Corby developed into a steel town in the 1950's with a huge expansion of the population by skilled workers from Glasgow, Scotland, Ireland and Eastern Europe. In the 1980's the steel industry collapsed and Corby became an area of high unemployment. Today there are still areas of multiple deprivation.

Parental involvement has been at the heart of the work at the Centre ever since it opened in 1983. A comprehensive programme of parent-worker partnership has been developed. The socio cultural profile of the community served by the Pen Green Centre has changed rapidly over the last two years with a 20% increase in families speaking a language other than English in the home.

This study describes how six members of the multidisciplinary senior management team of the Pen Green Centre for Children and Families looked at the issues around access relating to parental involvement in their children's learning. Semi-structured interviews with parents from a range of different groups who traditionally find public services hard to access were undertaken. The processes that these parents described as being important in engaging them in their children's learning through the centre are explored.

The critical questions are: What enables some parents to become involved in their children's learning through the Pen Green nursery and baby nest? Can this knowledge help us to involve other parents? Is our approach to involving parents in their children's learning transferrable?

CO-AUTHORS: HEATHER DONOYOU, TRACY GALLAGHER, JUDY POTTS, ANGELA PRODGER, JOHN BRUCE AND ELAINE YOUNG

Keywords: parental involvement, exclusion, cultural transferability

SYMPOSIUM II/25

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF QUALITIES OF CARE AND EDUCATION: DISCOURSE BETWEEN ASIA AND EUROPE

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: RIYO KADOTA (1) AND KIYOMI AKITA (2)

(1) *Seinan Gakuin University, Japan*

(2) *University of Tokyo, Japan*

Session overview

As stated in OECD (2006), in terms of qualities of care and education, developing professionalism and encouraging challenges/demands for professional development have been promoted through utilizing ECERS-R (2004) or SICS (2005) at an individual preschool setting along with incentives at macro-policy level. Qualities of care and education can be shaped by beliefs in each culture, expectations in each society, or perception in practices. In OECD report (2006), types of trends/focuses in early childhood care and education are categorized into two: the early education tradition (France and English-speaking countries) and the social pedagogy tradition (Nordic and central European countries) which does not include Asian countries point of views. How do Asian perceptions regarding qualities in practices and protocol of professional development can be interpreted in these trends? In this particular symposium, ways in which Japanese and Taiwanese early childhood personnel have tackled the issues are shared (e.g., strategic approaches of improving qualities of practices, focus points of reframing regulatory frameworks, and challenges of creating a quality measurements/protocols). To comprehend meanings of qualities of care and education through reflecting the Asian approaches, an European early childhood scholar who has engaged in studies of quality improvement in practices are invited as our discussant. This symposium aims to create fruitful dialogues beyond the existing typologies. Through the dialogues, the symposium will create a constructive and provocative atmosphere to explore meanings of raising qualities of care and education.

SYMPOSIUM
SET II

Policy and Practice Regarding Quality of Care and Education in Taiwan

MARN-LING SHING

Taipei Municipal University, Taiwan

In past twenty years of the early childhood education in Taiwan, the programs of institutions in ECE had changed a lot. However, the spirits of ECE remain the same and the major changes in the programs are teacher's roles. In the symposium, I will present the policies and strategies in recent twenty years regarding the quality in ECE program. In the meanwhile, I would like to discuss the quality issues related to the practices.

To discuss the meaning the practice related to quality in ECE, the Asian way (Taiwanese ways) of thinking of good programs will revealed. Parents' thinking will also be discussed.

Keywords: quality, professional development, regulatory frameworks, measurements/protocols

How Japanese Perceive Quality of Care and Education: Policy and Measurement of Child-Care Settings

RIYO KADOTA (1), AYAKO TAKAZAKURA (2), TAKAKO NOGUCHI (3), MASATOSHI JIMMY SUZUKI (4), HIROSHI ASHIDA (5) AND YUTAKA ODA (6)

(1) *Seinan Gakuin University*

(2) *University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Education*

(3) *Jumonji University*

(4) *Hyogo University of Teacher Education*

(5) *University of Hyogo*

(6) *The National Institute of Special Needs Education*

As stated in OECD (2006), in terms of qualities of care and education, developing professionalism and encouraging challenges/demands for professional development have been promoted through utilizing ECERS-R (2004) or SICS (2005) at an individual preschool setting along with incentives at macro-policy level. Qualities of care and education can be shaped by beliefs in each culture, expectations in each society, or perception in practices. In OECD report (2006), types of trends/focuses in early childhood care and education are categorized into two: the early education tradition (France and English-speaking countries) and the social pedagogy tradition (Nordic and central European countries) which does not include Asian countries point of views. How do Asian perceptions regarding qualities in practices and protocol of professional development can be interpreted in these trends? In this particular symposium, ways in which Japanese and Taiwanese early childhood personnel have tackled the issues are shared (e.g., strategic approaches of improving qualities of practices, focus points of reframing regulatory frameworks, and challenges of creating a quality measurements/protocols). To comprehend meanings of qualities of care and education through reflecting the Asian approaches, an European early childhood scholar who has engaged in studies of quality improvement in practices are invited as our discussant. This symposium aims to create fruitful dialogues beyond the existing typologies. Through the dialogues, the symposium will create a constructive and provocative atmosphere to explore meanings of raising qualities of care and education.

Keywords: quality, professional development, regulatory frameworks, measurements/protocols

Perception of Quality of Care and Education in the Particular Activities: Analysis of Clean-Up Time in Japanese Preschools

JUNKO MINOWA (1), KIYOMI AKITA (2), KATSUO YASUMI (3), TOKIE MASUDA (4), FUMINORI NAKATSUBO (5) AND FUMIKO SUNAGAMI (6)

(1) *Kawamura Gakuen Woman's University, Japan*

(2) *University of Tokyo, Japan*

(3) *Itabashi Fujimi Kindergarten, Japan*

(4) *Shukutoku Vocational College, Japan*

(5) *Hiroshima University, Japan*

(6) *Chiba University, Japan*

The purpose of this research is to examine Japanese preschool teacher's words to children in the time of put things in order and clean-up their room. Preschool teachers put words on the children by various scenes. They instantaneously judge appropriate correspondence while reading children's feelings, the reaction, and their problems. They also consider the timing and the place, and put the word improvising by an actual scene. But preschool teachers sometimes feel difficult to put words on the children by the scene. One of the most difficult scenes is when children put things in order and clean-up. In Japan, children put things in order and clean up their room by themselves at the end their play in accordance

with the delimitation of time, and to shift to the following activity. On the other hand, putting things in order is a severe phase that it is necessary to make feelings of the children who wants still to play switched from an act it indispensable to shift the following activity for preschool teachers. In a word, it is thought to be a putting-things-in-order scene that it is a situation in which the conflict and the collision are caused easily between preschool teachers and the children. When discussing the quality of the child care and education, this might be a significant consideration - how preschool teachers utter their words to their children in particular when children need to discipline themselves. In this presentation, we will illustrate certain dilemma, frustration, difficulties, and efforts of Japanese preschool teachers and argue how we can examine this issue as the quality of the child care and education.

Keywords: quality, professional development, regulatory frameworks, measurements/protocols

FRIDAY 5th SEPTEMBER
SYMPOSIUM SET III
10:00 – 11.30

SYMPOSIUM III/1
TEACHER EDUCATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: ÅSE AKSLEN

NLA College of Teacher Education, Norway

Research and Participation; Toddlers in Black Box

ÅSE ELISABETH JØRGENSEN

Telemark University College, Norway

Challenges in what ways research should be a part of the study program.

The focus on practitioner research (MER, 2007) challenges the pre-school teacher education in relation to what ways research should be a part of the study program, and further in what ways the students should get experience with research.

In the study program nursery pedagogy at Telemark University College the students are involved in what we call a case study. This can be looked upon as a pre-study towards a mini – action research project in kindergarten. This is an interdisciplinary project in corporation with subjects from Pedagogy, Drama and Arts and crafts. The case-study invites toddlers from local kindergartens to visit the University, and they enter Black Box in groups for students to observe and explore their activities and relations.

The aim of the study is to develop professionalism related to the toddlers. We will argue the importance of the students/pedagogues choice of theoretical approach that frames the study. Theoretical choices and interests can help students in their phenomenological interpretations and analyzes, and to theorize practice professionally.

Even though the intentions are to seek the children's perspectives and meaning- making, there are several ethical dilemmas we want to high lighten. For example how the students self-positioning influence the interpretations, and how the position of power affects the students findings. How can theoretical choices and interests limit the interpretations, and predict the findings? We will argue that a critical view is essential. We ask: How can we develop an ethical approach observing toddlers, and how can we consider children's participation in research?

CO-AUTHORS: JAN RAGNAR SETSAAS AND MARIT BØE

Keywords: practitioner research, participation, ethical dilemmas, critical reflections, pedagogical documentation

Student Teaching Practicum: The Perceptions of Student Teachers and Cooperating Teachers

TSUNG-HUI TU (1) AND WEI-YING HSIAO (2)

(1) Kent State University, USA

(2) Southern Utah University, USA

Field experiences are critical components to novice teachers' view about teaching. The quality of student teachers' learning experiences in the field has immense impact on their career preparation. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of student teachers and cooperating teachers about the student teaching process in preschool settings in Northeast Ohio, USA. A total of 19 out of 31 surveys from the student teachers and 22 out of 23 surveys from the cooperating teachers were received. Results of the study showed that both student teachers and their cooperating teachers had positive impressions about the student teaching process. Student teachers identified the significant things they learned as well as the challenges and difficulties they faced during their student teaching. The cooperating teachers indicated that having a student teacher was helpful in many ways, and they would consider having more student teachers in the future. The study suggests that the university supervisors and cooperating teachers need to continue being available, reliable, encouraging students to ask questions and keeping open communication with student teachers.

Keywords: student teaching, student teacher, cooperating teacher, university supervisor

"The Unconvenient Things are not Discussed ...": About Leadership, Power and Conflicts in Preschools.

ARNA H. JÓNSDÓTTIR

Iceland University of Education, Iceland

In this presentation I will introduce a case study performed in one preschool in the capital area in Iceland. On the EECERA conference last year the first thoughts about the findings were introduced and now the final results will be presented. The aim of the research was to shed a light on the relations between the leadership emphases and the staff related problems and to focus on what has been called 'the underworld' or the micropolitics of preschools regarding those problems. A second purpose was to explore how this micropolitical dimension affects the leadership behaviour of the preschool head teachers and what strategies they have to deal with it. The third purpose was to focus on the gender dimension of the preschool head teacher's leadership and staff's behaviour in the relation to the problems under examination. Almost every preschool head teacher in Iceland is a woman and only about 4% of preschool teachers and other staff are male. According to Rodd (2006) the traditional features of the feminine approach to leadership is argued to be appropriate in today's world in general and in early childhood settings specifically. Is the leadership in the preschools, with its emphases on relations, teamwork and closeness only "good" and successful or are there some "negative" accompaniments? In the presentation I will focus on that question and also introduce how the findings led me to the research questions in my EdD thesis.

Keywords: leadership, micropolitics, gender, preschools

SYMPOSIUM III/2

HISTORY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: JAN-ERIK JOHANSSON

Oslo University College, Norway

From Learning to Teaching? Reconsidering Elisabeth Alander's Educational Policy and today's Pedagogical Practices in Finland

JORMA VIRTANEN

University of Tampere, Finland

SYMPOSIUM
SET III

In 1920 the question of kindergartens was lively discussed in the Finnish teachers' journals. It was considered social and educational points demanding that the kindergartens would be included in the public educational system. The demand was justified with the claim that the kindergarten age and school age belonged to the same growing category.

Elisabeth Alander (1859-1940), one of the grand pioneers of the Finnish kindergarten pedagogy resisted the demand. In her writings she presented interpretation from different trends of the Froebelian tradition. One of the trends emphasised teaching practices, the other home close relation learning environment. The Finnish kindergarten had been based on the foundation of the latter trend. She did not understand the unifying schools and kindergartens. Why will a conclusion which is more natural not be drawn then, Alander asked. The kindergarten had already been organised good, a confessed bottom, the school on it further built. This was the simplest solution of the question, she wrote. The debate stopped right at the beginning.

In the history of early childhood education this event that has shown above is called the "favourable moment which passed by" (Hänninen & Valli 1986). The point of view has been that the unifying of pedagogical practices is inevitable, in spite of the temporary backlashes. However the new interpretations of the past have become possible in research (Lowe 2002). It is methodologically essential to describe "the years of the danger of kindergarten practices" when reconsidering wide-ranging effects of the educational policy of Elisabeth Alander nowadays.

Keywords: educational policy, history of early childhood education, methodology, pedagogical practices

Women and Children between Home and School: Mapping Kindergarten Terrain

JOANNE AILWOOD

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Histories of early childhood education in Australia note the philanthropic and psychological underpinnings of professional practices and beliefs. They usually follow the development of ideas and institutions, generally within traditional sorts of historical frameworks. Not surprisingly, given the dominance of developmental psychology in understandings of childhood, such histories tend to avoid a detailed analysis of the ways in which the accepted practices of early childhood education function as techniques for governing the daily lives of young children, their mothers and their teachers.

It is these regimes and techniques for practice, as they are operationalised within kindergartens, which are the focus of this paper. In this paper I analyse the 'truth games' that link motherhood, childhood and early childhood education. To do this I take a historical perspective, making an analysis of the work of Froebel, his followers and the development of kindergarten during the 19th century. Froebel ordered and codified the interactions and plays of young children and their mothers, integrating these into his system for kindergarten education. This is a system that produced significant and enduring tactics and strategies for the government of women and children between home and school. In my analysis I ask what regimes, practices and language Froebel invented, for what purposes and with what effects. I particularly focus on investigating the tactics and strategies for governing women in kindergartens; as mothers, teachers and citizens, asking how the truth of, and intertwining of, teacherhood and motherhood was produced, and rendered practical within kindergartens.

Keywords: Froebel, history, mothers, early childhood teachers

Enhancing Young Children's Well-being, Creating Spaces to Belong: an Analysis of Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity as a Focus of Programme Development within the Bernard van Leer Foundation

MARGARET KERNAN

Consultant to Bernard van Leer Foundation

Promoting social inclusion and respect for diversity and associated values such as democracy, participation, citizenship and belonging are increasingly recognised as key values in work with young children in early childhood education and care settings (DECET, 2007, OECD, 2006, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005). In 2006, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation identified Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity as one of three thematic foci for its grant-making. This paper traces the evolution of the key concepts, values and terminologies and presents case studies to illustrate how these are understood and put into practice within programmes and projects supported by the Foundation. An historical analysis of grant-making is used to demonstrate how early childhood services and programmes have moved from goals related to advancing opportunities of children from marginalised groups, towards the current emphasis on promoting the rights of all young children to experience environments which are inclusive and respectful of individual and group identities. Findings will be discussed with reference to their implications for the wider early childhood education and care community.

Keywords: respect, diversity, inclusion, belonging

SYMPOSIUM III/3

QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: SONJA SHERIDAN

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Dilemmas with Quality Assurance in Swedish Preschools

KARIN LAGER

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The aim of this paper is to highlight dilemmas in relation to quality assurance/systematic quality work in preschool as experienced by participants involved in a competence development program. Different values in national and municipal policy texts arise dilemmas in practice.

The paper is based on a study which aims to evaluate a competence development program initiated by Swedish National Agency for School Improvement. The aims of this program are to strengthen quality assurance in preschool in Swedish municipalities, and to enhance the participants' competence to evaluate quality and goal achievement in preschool.

The competence development program is evaluated by the University of Gothenburg, and is part of my thesis in process. The theoretical viewpoint is based on interactionistic perspectives in which children learn by experiencing, acting and communicating with the environment, which in turn interacts with them in various ways (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1986) It is also based on a pedagogical perspective of quality in which four dimensions are used to explain how national laws and guidelines effect quality in preschool (Sheridan 2007).

The data production is based on interviews with 28 participants, observations, surveys and texts produced by the municipalities. Preliminary results from the interviews are dilemmas as experienced by the participants in relation to quality assurance in preschool. The dilemmas are concerned with goal achievement corresponding to goals to strive for in the Swedish

curriculum for preschool, how to document children's learning processes and pedagogical processes in preschool.

Keywords: quality, policy texts, goal achievement

The Core Value Elements of the Concept of Early Childhood Education

ULLA HÄRKÖNEN

University of Joensuu, Finland

The aim is to point out the central core value categories and extensions and intensions of the concept of early childhood education. The theoretical frame of the study will be based on the general systems theory and systems thinking. From the historical writings of the pedagogues as Froebel, Steiner, Montessori, for instance, Härkönen has found the systems model of early childhood education. This model consists of the core categories of their pedagogical thinking and the views on the practice. From the textbooks, published during thirty last years in Finland, Härkönen has analyzed the definitions of the concept of early childhood education. As the result the core extensions and intensions of the mentioned concept has been found. While fitting in this study together the systems model of pedagogical thinking and the extensions and the intensions of the concept of early childhood education the core value elements of early childhood education, derived from a long term history and also from one national reference, can be shown. The method employed in order to acquire new knowledge has been the text content analysis. This paper is a qualitative culture research. The researcher is going to create a new pedagogical systems theory and this study will be a part of this process. Pedagogical systems model and thinking and the core values inside them will show a new creative approach to early childhood education theory and practice.

Keywords: early childhood education, pedagogical systems theory, pedagogical systems model, extensions, intensions, content analysis

Positivist and Post-Positivist Approaches in Early Childhood Education

MINE GOL-GUVEN

Bogazici University, Turkey

In this theoretical paper, I will discuss that our understanding towards acquisition of knowledge is the main determinant of the way we provide early childhood education (ECE) programs and services to children and their families. Positivism claims that there is just one truth waiting to be discovered. In this approach, the people who have the knowledge (truth) are seen as authorities. They have the privilege of making a decision of sharing their wisdom with others or not. They also decide how much knowledge is to be shared. On the other hand, post-positivism sees multiple truths and gives freedom to individuals to seek their own subjective truths. The truths are varied, based on individuals' perceptions that are affected by the context and the conditions that the individuals are in. The knowledge can be questioned and no authority can block the way it is challenged.

In this paper, I will take these two approaches and connect them to our practices in ECE. When making the connections, I will argue that the approach we identify ourselves with affects the program, the environment (classroom), materials, and our practices. Most importantly, it affects ourselves as teachers and the way we behave towards our students. In addition to having an effect on our practices in classrooms, these approaches have global influences on the policy level. At both the personal and policy level, the approach we internalize shapes our ways of looking at the issues in ECE and the decisions we make when we provide education and services to children and their families.

Keywords: positivism, post-positivism, early childhood education

SYMPOSIUM III/4

CHILDREN'S RELATIONS TO MEDIA, VIOLENCE AND WAR

Individual papers

CHAIR: TORGEIR ALVESTAD

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Understanding of War: Views From 5- to 8- Year Old Emirati Children and Their Teachers

MEHMET BULDU

United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates

As declared in the Conventions of Children's Rights, children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. This study investigated how young children and their teachers in United Arab Emirates (UAE) perceive war, with the practical aim of obtaining information helpful to promote peace education and to provide curriculum guidance for teaching peace education and civics to promote a healthy development of children's personality. 107 local children, ages 5 to 8, and 8 teachers were included in the study. Utilization of children's drawings and semi-structured interviews with children and teachers were the means of data collection. The data was analyzed using a phenomenological procedure. Results revealed that children view war as bad for morally relevant reasons. Age and gender seemed to be crucial factors in children's view of war. Participant teachers stated negative attitudes toward war and could not justify why wars happen; and, reported that they did not cover this topic unless it was emerged from children. Teachers asserted that they avoid discussions of war in school primarily because of their concerns to shield children from anxiety; reluctance to cause parent objections; they think it is not an appropriate topic for young children, or school curriculum does not cover it. Implications for teachers of young children, schools, parents, and early childhood and elementary teacher education programs are presented.

Keywords: concepts of war, young children, teachers, peace education

The Rights of the Abused Child as Reflected in Children's and Adolescents' Literature in Israel

SARA ZAMIR (1) AND LEAH BARATZ (2)

(1)Ben gurion University and Achva Academic College, Israel

(2)Achva Academic College, Israel

The aim of this research was to examine whether (and how) the corpus of children's and adolescents' literature constitutes a source for instilling or, alternatively, undermining children's rights in the context of family violence. For this purpose we examined the plots of stories featuring abused children as their protagonists. The findings show that although the stories arouse sympathy and pity for the abused child, they are not very effective tools for dealing with cases of violence in the family. In these stories most agents of society, and law enforcement agents among them, are presented as shallow people of no consequence, implying that one should not have great expectations about their roles in society. Although these stories may be trying to portray an authentic social condition, their social message is actually is helplessness.

Keywords: the abused child, violence in the family

SYMPOSIUM
SET III

Child Stars: Children who Actively Participate in the Media

JANE O'CONNOR

Univeristy of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

This research explores the continuing existence of the child star in Western celebrity culture. The paper asks why, when childhood is now dominantly constructed as a private, protected space and the economic activity of children is viewed as an outdated and unsavoury practice, do we still demand and tolerate the employment of young children to perform for our entertainment? Using the theoretical framework of childhood as a social construction, the paper examines how the child star falls outside normative constructions of childhood and thus represents a challenge to the ideals of childhood innocence and adult control. Drawing on theories which explore issues around the commodification of the image of the child and of childhood itself, the child star is deconstructed as being symbolic of the complicated status of the modern child who is expected to embody traditional characteristics of childhood, whilst also being part of an ever more commercialised, media saturated society. The research involves discourse analysis of media stories about child stars such as Macaulay Culkin and Charlotte Church from British and American newspapers and magazines. The findings suggest that the continuing presence of child stars in our cultural landscape is due both to their commercial value and their function as a shared public symbol of the negative consequences for those individuals who transgress the boundaries between childhood and adulthood. The implications of allowing children to continue actively participating in media entertainment given that this contradicts the fundamental value of childhood as a private, protected space are explored.

Keywords: media, representations, employment, commercialisation

SYMPOSIUM III/5

ETHICS, CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Individual papers

CHAIR: FERRE LAEVERS

Leuven University, Belgium

Young Children Constructs of Quality

DEBORAH HARCOURT

Bond University, Australia

Early childhood research and policy are focusing increasingly on issues of 'quality' in early childhood education. Much of the focus, however, has been on adult-generated notions of quality, with little attention being devoted to children's own views of their experience in early childhood settings. Conducted in the context of early childhood education in Singapore, this research breaks new ground by contributing children's own insights into their experience in two early childhood classrooms in Singapore. Informed by the sociology of childhood conceptualisation of child competence (James & James, 2004), the research methodology drew on the mosaic approach to researching with children (Clark and Moss, 2001). In addition to children's photography, mapping and conversations, this study further demonstrated young children's competence by adding written narratives and worksamples to consider the quality of their early childhood settings. The findings of this study were generated, beginning with the understanding that young children have the competence to articulate their ideas using a range of symbolic literacies. They formed views and constructed theories about their preschool experiences, in particular about the teachers, the curriculum, the physical environment and friends, and gave a clear indication of what constitutes good

quality in those domains. When offered a platform to discuss the issue of quality in early childhood settings, the children articulated ideas about their own best interests. This study concludes by calling for those engaged with children, to act upon the contributions offered by this group of children to our understanding of quality.

Keywords: children's perspectives, children's rights, quality

A Nordic Approach to ECE System and Social Differences - a Danish trial. Challenges for Professional Knowing and Learning

BENTE JENSEN

Aarhus University, Denmark

The aim of the study is to develop an intervention and test its effects based on a theoretical concept of learning and social innovation. International research shows that early interventions can make a positive difference, and, as shown in American RCT studies, there are long-term effects. However, international research does not come closer to the two different main approaches to the Early Childhood Education systems (ECE) – the holistic/academic, respectively, nor to the questions of how pedagogic initiatives and framework conditions work as prerequisites for success (best practice) seen in a inclusion/exclusion perspective. Institutional findings show huge differences. Our hypothesis is that the relation between the various actors are of great importance and preliminary findings show that municipal and institutional differences influence the exchanges of knowing and learning taking place. Preliminary results from the Danish trial: Action Competencies in Social Pedagogical Work with Socially Endangered Children (The ASP-project) based on a Bourdiean perspective - indicate that there is reason to focus more on teachers' professional skills and qualifications concerning new challenges. It is demanding for teachers working with the entire ECE/ASP-implementation process because they have to reflect upon their own practice and role in relation to create and implement new knowledge of socially endangered children. Based on an analysis of the Nordic situation, the papers discusses preliminary results emphasizing the question of the challenges for the professionals working with evidence-based knowledge and learning in the ASP-project, a RCT study which aims at social innovation in 60 centres, covering 2700 preschool children.

Keywords: early childhood education (ece), social inequality, professional knowing and learning, social innovation

Reserving a Dining Experience.

RITA MELIA

National Childrens Nurseries Association, Ireland

Cultivating, physical, social and linguistic development in toddlers, in full day care childcare facilities, through the dining experience.

Reserving a Dining experience:

This paper focuses on the importance of the holistic development of toddlers through the dining experience. This wonderful learning experience is often not recognised as an important daily occurrence, in children's lives. Little is documented regarding best practice in relation to the dining experiences of children. This paper involves a comparative study of the experiences of toddlers and pre school children in two full day-care childcare settings. It presents an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, using interviews and questionnaires in both settings. The research findings will indicate the important learning opportunities, children, before, during and after this social occasion. The author will argue the importance of advise, support and education, required by childcare providers, regarding the importance of the dining experience for children.

Within the two settings, one service includes the dining experience as part of its quality evaluation of the service. The second service has not placed any emphasis on the dining

experience, other than its functional value. The author, uses, photographs, interviews, and questionnaires, to form the basis of the knowledge presented. The learning experiences for children in both settings are examined and an analysis of the findings in relation to the theme of reconsidering the basics in early childhood education, particularly where young children are active participants, will be presented. The methodology includes, primary and secondary research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. All ethical considerations are adhered to.

Keywords: cultivating, the dining, experience.

SYMPOSIUM III/6 CHILDREN'S VOICES

Individual papers

CHAIR: CHRISTINE STEPHEN

University of Stirling, United Kingdom

Child-friendliness in Early Childhood Centre-based Environments

PÄIVI LINDBERG AND HELI KOTILAINEN

STAKES, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Finland

Early childhood environment has an important role in the learning and development of children (Bjorklid 2005, Brotherus 2004). In our study we focus on child-friendliness in early childhood environments. Kyttä (2003) has identified two criteria for a child-friendly environment: children's possibilities for independent mobility and possibilities to actualise affordances in the environment. Potential affordances exist in the environment but are not necessarily actualised. Possibilities for independent mobility reveal many affordances, and the actualisation of affordances motivates the child's further exploration and mobility in the environment. (Kyttä 2003.) Our aim is to clarify 1) what kinds of potential affordances do centre based early childhood environments have, and 2) how do the educators' activities either enable or disable the actualisation of these affordances. The data of our study consists of site plans and layouts of two day-care centres with approximately 350 digital photos. This data is analysed by a method called trace-mapping (Helsinki University of Technology, Environmental Psychology). In this method traces are used to evaluate to whom the environment is for, what kind of pedagogy is utilised, and in our research especially how freely children can participate. The theoretical basis of our study is multidisciplinary. It has elements of educational science, environmental psychology and architecture (Biesta 2007, Kyttä 2003, Rapoport 1982). The study is part of a project of creating an assessment tool for centre based early childhood environments indoors and outdoors. This tool can be broadly utilised by educators planning the pedagogical environments, and by planners and designers of new day-care centres.

Keywords: environment, affordance, participation, learning

From Goteborg to Walsall: A Comparison of Practitioners' Pedagogical Beliefs, Relating to the Learning Experiences Offered to Children aged Six.

FAYE STANLEY

Wolverhampton University, United Kingdom

This paper reports on a small scale study, investigating the learning experiences of children aged six in a Swedish and an English classroom. It also considers pedagogical beliefs of practitioners, any barriers in implementing these beliefs and the perceived role of the adult in enhancing children's learning experiences. The study draws on the theory of Vygotsky, Bernstein and Alexander on pedagogy and pedagogical framing. The research design involved semi structured interviews with eight staff based on discussions of narrative

observations and photographs taken in the two classrooms. It was found that professional ideologies were very similar in relation to children receiving a play based curriculum and the role of the adult to facilitate and scaffold children's learning experiences. There were also similar perspectives on valuing the whole child through a balance of an adult and child led curriculum, thus supporting the views of Siraj-Blatchford, when drawing on findings of effective pedagogy. However, whilst in Sweden it was reported that there were relatively few barriers to practitioners being able to implement their pedagogical beliefs, in England there was a wide gap between professionals' ideologies and the perceived barriers to effective pedagogy, especially concerning training, the curriculum, inspection and national assessments. This paper explores the challenge to English settings and professionals in understanding the pedagogical skills required to implement an effective curriculum which recognises the child as an active participant, who develops their interests and ways of learning at their own pace, drawing comparison with the perceptions and experiences of Swedish colleagues.

Keywords: pedagogy, practitioner beliefs, comparative, learning experiences

Children's Participation in Student Supervision

Yael Dayan

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Student supervision usually involves the supervisor, the student and sometimes the early childhood teacher. Although the main goal of teacher education is to ensure the best for children, they are rarely, if ever, asked about their views on the student's practice. One of the conclusions from a previous study on children's perspectives on early childhood teacher education (Dayan, 2006) was that children observe in a very attentive way the student's behavior and her responses to children and therefore they should be involved in the supervisory process.

In order to gain a better understanding of a supervisory process in which preschool children are involved, a case study was conducted. The aim was to clarify the influence of this process on the student, teacher and children as the teacher and student experienced it. Children were involved in a conversation dealing with a problem which was raised by the student: "What shall I do with a child who withdraws from competitive games because of the threat of losing?" The results highlight the contribution of the participation of children in the supervision conversation which is part of the preparation of early childhood students. It emphasizes the message that children should be listened to because they have new ideas and interesting perspectives; they offer alternative ways of seeing, understanding and acting in a given situation; and it enables the students to know them better, with their ideas, experiences and feelings.

The presentation will focus on children's ideas in the context of early childhood teacher preparation.

Keywords: children's perspectives, supervision, early childhood teacher preparation, competitive game

SYMPOSIUM III/7

ENVIRONMENT, PLAYGROUND, OUTDOOR II

Individual papers

CHAIR: CHRISTINE WOODROW

University of Western Sydney, Australia

My Ecological Self – Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Living

HANNE LUND-KRISTENSEN

Telemark University College, Norway

This lecture explores the philosophical, theoretical and practical aspects of the term *My Ecological Self* by drawing a picture of the basics in lifelong learning for sustainable living. Such a picture includes curricular reflections on how to educate the ecological literate person in early childhood institutions. In a Curriculum for Ecological Literacy, the challenges for children and grown-ups are the same: The holistic development of attitudes towards -, knowledge about -, and skills in living our lives as humans in a creative, ecological & ethical way. Therby aiming for the healthy interplay of nature – humans – cultures. Consequently the importance of deep feelings, rational thoughts and active behaviour is demonstrated at all levels;- from the professional (vision - strategy – action) to the personal (heart – head – hand). In this way the curriculum of ecology and the ecology of curriculum is based on the same principle: “Everything is interconnected and interdependent in the web of life and learning”. This approach is reflected in the Action Research Project taking place in the Kindergartens at Tjøme (Norway), - organized through Didactic Relation Thinking (Bjørndal & Lieberg), based on Ecosophy (Arne Næss) and inspired by The Muse Within (Jon-Roar Bjørnvold). The past, present and future of this long-term project (1999 – 2012) makes the main reference for the topics in this lecture, and integrates conference themes such as core values, children’s rights, active and responsible participation, professionalism and professional development, curriculum, learning through play, art and creativity.

Keywords: ecological literacy, curriculum, creativity, the teacher role

Integrating the Local and the Global: A Global Pedagogy of Place?

IRIS DUHN

The University of Auckland, New Zealand

The presentation explores the relevance of ‘place’ and ‘the local’ in the context of globalisation and early childhood education in AotearoaNew Zealand. The basis for my analysis is a current 2-year qualitative research project which focuses on the notion of care for self, other and the environment (titiro whakamuri, hoki whakamua) from indigenous and western perspectives in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In an attempt to re-think education as a site for broader social movements, Gruenewald (2008) argues for a ‘pedagogy of place’ as a connector across the local and the global. My intention is to analyse how a ‘pedagogy of place’ sits alongside arguments put forth by writers such as Haraway (2003), Braidotti (2004) and Hardt and Negri (2000) who stress that flexible hierarchies, hybrid identities and plural exchanges now structure social fields and cultural domains: the global is the ‘smooth space of capitalism’. The structural logic of globalisation produces new desires and new subjects; one example of this is the idea that ‘the local’ offers an alternative to globalisation and homogenisation.

Rather than romanticising concepts such as ‘community’, ‘place’ and the ‘local’, I explore how the global/local can be conceptualised as constituting each other, and how the local/global may be relevant to an ethic of care in bicultural early childhood education discourses in AotearoaNew Zealand. The research project is in its first stages; I anticipate that I will be able to illustrate some of my points with data from the project.

Keywords: pedagogy of place, global/local, globalization

The Preschool Child of Today – the World-citizen of Tomorrow?

EVA JOHANSSON

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

In society of today questions of sustainable development, globalization and the world-citizen are viewed a critical issue in politics, in media, and in everyday life. A basic principal in the discourses of sustainable development is that economical, social and environmental issues are interrelated. The core idea is based on intersubjectivity – we are as humans, part of and responsible for a common world. Indeed, the idea of sustainable development raises questions about justice, rights and caring for human beings and the world.

Attention to the role of education for sustainable development has increased during the last decades, however little attention has been directed to early education. Indeed the moral dimension in learning for sustainable development is evident but seldom discussed or analysed. The aim of this paper is to discuss moral issues in everyday interactions as one part of learning for sustainable development in preschool. What moral values are important in early learning for global citizenship and sustainable development? What competences do children need to develop today being a member of a global society of tomorrow? The base for the discussion is two investigations of morality among children (aged 1-6 years) in different day care contexts in Sweden. A theoretical framework is the theory about the life-world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and the analyses are hermeneutic. The data in consists of video-observed interactions between the teachers and children in preschool. From the analyses certain core values and competences are identified as tentative dimensions in early learning for global citizenship.

Keywords: learning, “sustainable development”, “global citizenship”, preschool-children

SYMPOSIUM III/8 LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

Individual papers

CHAIR: MANJULA WANIGANAYAKE

Macquarie University, Australia

‘How do Early Years Leaders and Managers experience the Process of Professionalisation in the Context of the Early Years Professional status initiative in England?’

PETRA LUCK

Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

This paper relates to the ‘Professionalism and challenges/demands for professional development’ strand of the 2008 EECERA conference. The paper charts a journey from a broad research question arising from the author’s professional involvement as a lecturer in Higher Education with early years leaders and managers in England to insights gained from an ongoing research study. It aims to link the researcher’s ontological and epistemological standpoint as a feminist to a framework that positions the research question within a Cartesian mind/body dualism. The paper initially explores literature in relation to professionalism and professionalisation in the education field generally and then analyses critiques and debates in relation to both concepts in the early years sector specifically. It will then attempt to undertake a feminist analysis of the social and political dimensions of identity formation in early years managers. The background to the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) initiative in England is outlined in depths as this provides the policy focus for this study. Following this outline, the paper will detail methodological debates, concerns and approaches and describe findings from a preliminary empirical study. The conclusion will explore further issues for relation to the main study in terms of target sample, data collection, data analysis as well as presenting the first key findings of the research.

Keywords: early years leadership, professionalisation, feminist methodology

In-service Teacher Training for Preschool Teacher's Professional Development in Assessment

CRISTINA PARENTE

University of Minho, Portugal

The systematic use of authentic assessment practices in childhood education is relatively recent in Portugal, as well as, in many countries around the world. In fact, children's assessment has been devalued and neglected in many early childhood education curricula majors, programs and educational research. Therefore the majority of preschool teachers have a lack of knowledge base in key competences such as observation and assessment required to implement authentic and alternative assessment practices.

Nonetheless, in the past years, early childhood professionals in many countries have been involved in innovative projects that use documentation to assess children's learning and progress (Carr, 2001). This supported the option to do an in-service teacher training on alternative assessment practices. The training aimed to support teachers to develop assessment skills through the use of portfolios.

The aim of this research was to understand, describe and interpret the assessment practices used by the group of teachers involved in the training and support them to reconstruct their assessment practices. The study was supported by the work of Childhood Project within childhood pedagogy (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2001). Using a case study (Stake, 1998), and gathering data through interviews, observations, informal conversations, collecting and analyzing artifacts allowed the researcher to write six cooperative learning journeys focus on alternative assessment practices. This paper describes the developmental stages of professional development experienced by the teachers and how the training supported them to go from traditional to alternative and authentic assessment practices. The paper also reports their understandings about the process of constructing a portfolio: namely, different methods, main difficulties experienced, strategies used to solve the problems encountered during the process. The study showed the relevance of a context based teacher training to develop assessment skills in childhood education.

Keywords: cooperative learning, alternative assessment practices, critical reflection.

Learning in Kindergarten and School - Does it make Any Difference?

ANITA BERGE

University of Stavanger, Norway

This presentation focus on how teachers in kindergarten and primary school understand learning and learning processes. The presentation is based on a research project where the main aim is to understand and interpret how teachers conceive the concept of learning and of how learning takes place in kindergartens and schools. Central questions are= how do teachers in kindergartens and primary schools interpret the concept of learning? How do teachers in kindergartens and primary schools understand their roles in these learning processes? In what ways do teachers in kindergartens and schools differ, and where do they match in their understandings of learning and the teacher roles in the learning processes?

Theoretical perspective in the study is based on a socio- cultural understanding of learning. How the teachers conceive the concept of learning and their own role can be seen as a function of the culture and aims in schools and kindergartens.

Methodology used is a qualitative approach to the field, and 10 teachers from kindergartens and schools were interviewed. The interviews are based upon teacher narratives about learning and their own role in the learning process in schools and kindergartens.

Keywords: learning, teacher role, school and kindergarten, coherens

SYMPOSIUM III/9 FAMILY AND ECE PROFESSIONALS

Individual papers

CHAIR: ANNE PETRIWSKYJ

Queensland University of Technology, School of Early Childhood, Australia

Norwegian Daycare Centers' Approach to Children and Families that Experience Divorce or Separation

INGUNN STØRKSEN

University of Stavanger, Norway

A large proportion of all Norwegian children attend "barnehagen" or Norwegian daycare centers. Thus, children from various family backgrounds are enrolled. As in many other western countries, divorce rates in Norway are high. It is expected that 24 percent of all marriages end in divorce as early as within the first 10 years of marriage. This indicates that many young children experience divorce. Also, increasing rates of cohabitation among parents of young children place the children at an even higher risk of experiencing parental separation, due to high dissolution rates among these couples. This means that Norwegian daycare centers relatively often have contact with children whose parents are moving apart. It is well known from the international literature that children of divorce are at an increased risk of both emotional and behavioral problems. Norwegian daycare centers are obliged to conduct individually tailored care for all children. In case of divorce or separation the daycare centers are challenged by various reactions and behavioral changes among children, and by potential conflict among adults. The main aim of this research project is to gain knowledge of how daycare centers can organize their work and care in order to meet special needs among children and families that experience divorce or separation. Qualitative studies will be conducted among various groups of informants, including parents, children, staff, and family therapists. This planned research project, accepted and financed by the Norwegian Research Council, will be presented.

Keywords: transition, divorce, individual care, professional development

Professional Developmental Schools and Early Childhood Education: Interactive Competencies of Students, Beginning and Veteran Teachers

SIMONE DE ROOS AND MONIQUE VAN DER HEIJDEN

INHOLLAND University, The Netherlands

The central core of this paper is a description of research on two professional development schools (PDS's) in the Netherlands attempting to improve the effects of early childhood education programmes. The two PDS's use the Kaleidoscoop (cf. High Scope) and Piramide approach for early childhood learning in which students and teachers of playgroups (children aged 2;6–4 years of age) and kindergartenclasses (4–6 years) collaborate. In both approaches young (disadvantaged) children gain access to quality education and appropriate care providing them a good start in life.

SYMPOSIUM
SET III

The professional developmental schools consist of a partnership between the elementary school and accompanying playgroup, teacher's training college (for primary education including kindergarten), intermediate vocational education (for playgroup teachers), and educational service agency. A main objective of the PDS is to improve education for students, beginning and practicing teachers, leading to high teacher efficacy and better achievements of the children.

Our research focusses on the quality of adult-child interaction during instruction. Students, new and veteran teachers learn from each other how to support and challenge children's language and reasoning skills by attending joint courses and observing each other in the classroom and giving feedback to each other. Videotapes of adult-child interactions are produced three times a year for all persons involved and are used as training materials. Rating scales of interactive competence were completed by the participants themselves and an observer.

We will show results of the learning process of students, beginning and practicing teachers, as well as on their evaluation of the interventions used.

Keywords: professionalism, collaboration, education in language and reasoning development

Towards an Understanding of Fathering Diversity: Including Father Primary Carers in Early Childhood Services

GUY ROBERTS-HOLMES

University of Swansea, Wales

This research focuses upon those minority of fathers variously termed as father primary carers, 'house husbands' or 'stay-at-home-dads'. More equal sharing of childcare between men and women of their own children has now become part of the ideological consensus (Owen, 2003). This initial exploratory work with father primary carers investigated the complex cultural and attitudinal barriers experienced by fathers in accessing early childhood services. This on-going research suggests possible ways forward in which early childhood services might more effectively engage with a particular group of fathers who care for their children. The fathers stated both the pleasures and the difficulties of being the main carers for their young children. Recent policy initiatives (HM Treasury/DFES, 2005 and 2007) state a desire for early childhood services to engage in a positive 'culture shift' towards attitudes towards fathers. This research suggests that for such a culture shift to occur requires early childhood services to reflect upon their levels of awareness of fathering diversity and to what extent they are 'father friendly'.

Keywords: fathers, parenting, inclusion, sure start, father development workers

SYMPOSIUM III/10

PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING

Individual papers

CHAIR: MEG WIELGOSZ

University of Melbourne and Mentone Grammar School, Australia

Teachers' Social Representations of Play And Learning

MARIA HELENA CORDEIRO AND ANDRESSA PACHECO

University of the Itajaí Valley, Brasil

In Brazil, ECE is still undermined by educational policy. Most Pedagogy courses offer the same curriculum for both ECE and Primary Education undergraduate students. As a result,

teachers in ECE programs either allow children to play without any kind of support or they keep them quiet, accomplishing school-like tasks. This suggests that changing the practices of ECE teachers requires more than just being aware of the importance of play for the development of the child. In order to understand the attitudes of teachers towards children's play, it was decided to use Social Representations Theory (Moscovici, 1964). Therefore, this research aimed to know the content, the structure and the dynamics of the social representation about Play and Learn of 82 ECE teachers who were also undergraduate students of Pedagogy courses. The words elicited by the stimulus PLAY and LEARN and the rationale that subjects used for grouping the words they evoked, as well as their mental images about play and learn were analyzed. It was observed that play and learn are placed on opposite poles. The representation of PLAY merges with the representation of CHILD/CHILDHOOD and is pictured as an image of a playground. The representation of LEARN is pictured as the traditional class, run by a teacher and making use of didactic materials. Learning is considered as something more serious than playing. The results suggest that changing routines and teachers' attitudes towards the children's games requires them to face themselves as the teachers that they are and as the children they once were.

Keywords: play, learning, social representations, teachers' development

Of Routine Consideration? Regulation and Resistance in Nursery Snack Times

DEBORAH ALBON

London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

Many early years' settings make provision for a mid-morning snack. This might be in the form of food and drink that children can help themselves to independently or as part of a set-time, when children and adults come together collectively for refreshment and possibly accompanying activities. Rather than focusing upon children's nutritional intake during snack times, my focus is on snack times as 'food events' (to use the term coined by Douglas and Nicod, 1974) and the disciplining of young children's bodies that accompanies this.

This paper, outlines a case study of a nursery class attached to a West London primary school, involving 24 observed morning sessions and interviews with the three practitioners that work in that setting. The paper considers the way that snack times are organised in this nursery and reflects on the way that this results in children and adults becoming subject to a high degree of regulation in relation to their bodies.

Despite the high level of regulation, there appear to be sites of resistance: In particular, I explore the ways that children, and occasionally adults, engage in playful, or what could be described as 'carnavalesque', behaviours (Bakhtin, 1984), which act to disrupt the 'well-ordered' snack time. I argue that these may be important moments in encouraging early childhood practitioners to look again at the taken for granted areas of their practice - here, snack-time. Snack-time is worthy of more than routine consideration – it deserves to be a carefully considered routine.

Keywords: routines, snack-times, regulation, playfulness

Narratives in Learning and Narratives about Learning

HARTMUT KUPFER

LebensWelt gGmbH, Germany

The author works with child care centres in an organisation providing services for immigrant families in Berlin. He was engaged in implementing the "Berliner Sprachlerntagebuch" as a tool for assessment of language development in diverse EC settings.

The paper presents some experiences from a continuing "learning journey" connecting two ideas:

- the “Berliner Sprachlerntagebuch” – a framework for documenting language development with all children in Berlin EC settings;
- the concept of socio-cultural assessment (CARR) making use of “learning stories”, focusing on “learning dispositions” as being ready, willing and able to participate in the cultural practices of a community of learners.

After firstly trying “top down” efforts to implement learning stories with a “paradigmatic” (BRUNER) approach, it turns out to be better to go “bottom up”. This meant initially making sure that narratives were appreciated as a cultural practice in the every day life of the early childhood setting.

The crucial point was not to “see” and to write stories (although this was also critical), but to narrate, listen to and live with them.

Working with the “Sprachlerntagebuch” can support the “learning journey” of the teachers moving from paradigmatic to narrative ways of documenting, and fostering discussions with children, families and teachers about learning. Listening to and telling stories turns out to be a very important part of strategies to enhance participation of families and children in the Early Childhood setting, introducing tools and traditions of “collective remembering” (WERTSCH), especially in the bicultural/bilingual learning milieus of immigrant families.

Keywords: assessment, language, narrative, professional development.

SYMPOSIUM III/11 FAMILIES AND ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: LIBBY LEE

Murdoch University, Australia

Unreasonable Expectations: the Dilemma for Pedagogues in Delivering Policy Objectives

MARY MOLONEY

Limerick city childcare Committee, Ireland

Early childcare policy developments are increasingly informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989. In the Irish context the importance of UNCRC was reflected in the National Children’s Strategy, 2000, espousing a “whole child perspective”. Following on from the NCS (2000) a number of landmark policy developments have established quality as a core principle of pedagogic practice within ECCE settings including: the revised Childcare (pre - school services); Regulations 2006, *Síolta*, the national Quality Framework (CECDE, 2006) and Towards a Framework for Early Learning (NCCA, 2004). These policy developments represent a major shift in emphasis from a predominant focus on structural characteristics to processes within childcare settings.

It is evident that childcare is now a central theme of Government policy, with a formal commitment within “Towards 2016: A ten year Social Partnership Framework. It is claimed that these services are particularly important for low income and disadvantaged families (NESF, 2001, 2005, Combat Poverty Agency, 2005). Well resourced ECCE can be a very significant “protective factor” helping children, parents, and other care givers cope with adversity (Woodhead, 2006:11). Absence of protective factors, for example, where children are deprived of ECCE opportunities may “amplify the risks to young children’s well - being” (ibid). This research paper, part of a doctoral thesis in education (in press), explores the impact of social, political and economic trajectories on concepts of childhood and childcare within the Irish context from the mid 1990s onwards. It questions staff ability to deliver on policy expectations in the absence of a mandatory training requirement.

Keywords policy, expectations, professionalism, training

Growing up in a Northern Finnish Village

MARIKAISA KONTIO-LOGJE, EILA ESTOLA AND AILA TIILIKKA

Oulu University, Finland

Our research focuses on mothers' stories of place and child rearing in a Northern Finnish village. We see place as a community of people and as a concrete experienced everyday environment. The key assumption is that mothers, in their everyday lives, do refer to places as an experienced context wherein they live and act. Sense of place, home, and identity develop in primary relationships, with parents, peers, relatives and teachers. Our research question is what Northern mothers do tell about their understanding of mothering and child rearing in the middle of globalization and localization. Research is needed on how this understanding is delivered to the next generation.

In socio-cultural theory learning is a mutual collaborative process between the individual and the social environment. The activities have a focus and they are mediated in the different ways. In everyday life activities the question is about sharing and shifting the responsibility.

We have adopted a narrative approach as a methodological tool for listening to various voices of mothers about place, past, present and future. We have done 12 interviews altogether. Interviews included both open autobiographical episodes and thematic discussions. The analysis consists of searching for plots and themes of the stories. The preliminary findings show that growing up in a Northern village is shaped by collaboration, children's expanded responsibility, the importance of nature as part of everyday life. It shows also mothers concern of the tension between local and global issues. These themes will be discussed more detailed in our paper.

Keywords: growing up, storied place, collaboration, responsibility

Developing Resilient Wellbeing from Birth to Three: Childminders and Children's Centre Perspectives

ROSEMARY ROBERTS AND CARON LUBIN

Oxfordshire County Council, United Kingdom

Using a new conceptual model of wellbeing generated by the literature and recent research in the UK on early companionship, a group of Childminders and a group of Children's Centre staff in Oxfordshire set out to test the usefulness of the model, and to address the following basic ECE questions. What situations and experiences support the youngest children's wellbeing, in homes and settings? And what makes a difference to practitioners' own wellbeing? This paper briefly describes the wellbeing model, before outlining methodology and findings. For the children's wellbeing, companionable attention made a difference; 'apprenticeship' mattered; going out was good; and the youngest children needed their own time and space. For the practitioners' own wellbeing, using the framework made sense of observations; it offered a way into integrated working; and action research with video cameras generated job satisfaction. Brief video clips will be used to illustrate the model itself, and the findings.

This paper raises a range of basic core value wellbeing issues including integrated services for young children and their families; rich play and learning situations and experiences for resilient wellbeing development; the active participation of the youngest children in companionship with practitioners; young children's 'apprenticeship'; professional development perspectives to support the key person approach; the use of the framework as a tool for analysing observations of the youngest children; and the framework as a basis for working with families.

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The paper will be of particular interest to people involved in Family Daycare / Childminding; and to Children's Centre staff.

Keywords: wellbeing, companionship, families, observations

SYMPOSIUM III/12 CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Individual papers

CHAIR: BERENICE NYLAND

RMIT University, Australia

The Role of Young Pupils' visual Representations in the Breach of Didactical Contract during Standard and Problematic Problem Solving

ELENI DELIYIANNI

University of Cyprus, Cyprus

The aim of this study is twofold, to compare the modes of representations used by kindergarteners and first graders while solving standard and problematic problems and to examine the influence of pupils' visual representations on standard and problematic problem solving so as to breach "didactical contract" rules. In the theoretical framework various researchers' findings about the role of visual representations in problem solving and "didactical contract" rules influence on the specific process is discussed. The sample of the study consisted of 38 kindergarteners (age 5-6) and 34 first graders (age 6-7). Two standard problems (addition and subtraction) and two problematic problems were given to the participants. The majority of kindergarteners used a variety of spontaneous visual representations in order to solve the standard and problematic problems. Contrary, first graders mainly used symbolic representations that arose matching the numbers mentioned in the problem text. Concerning, the breach of "didactical contract" rules in problematic problem solving the results suggested that the visual representations prevented kindergarteners to obey it. In fact, many kindergarteners restricted themselves mainly in drawing descriptive pictures about the problem's meaning. In contrary, first graders gave a symbolic or a numerical answer to the two problematic problems since they obey to "didactical contract" rule that every problem given to them has an answer. The present study provides a strong case about the role of spontaneous visual representations in standard and problematic problem solving.

CO-AUTHORS: ILIADA ELIA AND ANNITA MONOYIOU

Keywords: visual representations, symbolic representations, didactical contract, breach

Exploring Kindergarten Children's Understanding of Mathematics

ANDREA PETER-KOOP

University of Oldenburg, Germany

In their final year in kindergarten in Germany, children increasingly "grow" into the role of school children. They are considered as the "seniors" in their groups and in kindergarten as well as in their families they are exposed to explicit or rather implicit information on what to expect and what they will learn when they start school (Griebel & Niesel 2002).

In order to explore pre-schoolers understanding of mathematics and their expectation of mathematical classroom activities, 32 five-year-olds have been interviewed in their final year at kindergarten.

The interviews were conducted with a hand puppet who introduced herself as "Lucy" explaining that she would be starting school soon and that she was wondering what she will

learn in a subject called “mathematics”. Through this methodological approach the children were given the role of “experts”. This led them to try hard to give comprehensive explanations.

While half of the children demonstrated a realistic understanding of mathematics and mathematical activities, their knowledge and beliefs differed significantly across the whole group. Clear differences were also found between boys/girls and children with younger/older siblings. In the paper, details of the data collection and analysis will be shared and discussed in terms of implications for the transition from kindergarten to school.

Keywords: early numeracy, transition, knowledge and beliefs, gender

Transition to Primary School in Ireland - A Coherent Experience?

DEIRBHILE NIC CRAITH AND ANNE FAY

Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), Ireland

In Ireland children attend primary schools from age 4. An increasing number of children who start school in the Junior Infant classroom have had an experience of some form of pre-school. The transition to the primary school may be seamless for some children and problematic for others. Expectations of parents and teachers about the curriculum in Junior Infant classrooms vary and may at times cause tensions, where teachers seek to implement a play and activity-based curriculum and where parents may expect 'school' to be more formal. Transitions to new settings are strong emotional times for children and their parents (Fabian and Dunlop, 2002). School settings have their own culture reflecting the values, traditions and beliefs of the primary school, creating new experiences for children, which can impact on their behaviour and learning.

The INTO decided to seek the views of primary school teachers in Junior Infant classrooms regarding the challenges faced by pupils on transition to primary school. Questionnaires were issued to a random sample of primary schools, with SPSS being used for the analysis. Indications are that pupils' pre-school experiences impact on their transition to school and that there are different expectations regarding the curriculum in Junior Infant classrooms. It is proposed at EECERA to present the findings of this survey, with a particular focus on what teachers perceive to be the greatest challenges for their pupils and how these can be addressed from a school perspective. In addition, a case study describing the efforts of one primary school to enhance children's experience of transition to primary school will be presented.

Keywords: transitions, teacher perspectives, expectations, curriculum

SYMPOSIUM III/13 LEARNING PROCESSES

Individual papers

CHAIR: FRANCES ATHERTON

University of Chester, England

ICT: Making a Difference

WENDY LEE

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Roskill South Kindergarten in Auckland, New Zealand has a roll of 90 families (45 attending in the morning and 45 in the afternoon) with whom our three qualified teachers maintain relationships. At any one time there are about 17 home languages for the families. The kindergarten has recently completed a three year Centre of Innovation (COI) project, funded

by the Ministry of Education. The project was an action research project. Our project asked the following questions about the integration of information communication technologies (ICTs) into everyday learning and teaching in a kindergarten sited in a multicultural and multilingual community:

- What might integration of 'ICT' mean in this context?
- What difference did it make for children, families and teachers?
- How did the enhanced use of ICT in assessment assist teachers and children to reflect on and discuss work overtime, and suggest future steps?

This paper comments on some of the findings, setting out the way in which we came to see that ICT was one of many mediating tools in a mediation (support) network where the purpose was to implement the early childhood curriculum, Te Whariki (Ministry of Education, 1996) and will particularly comment on the assessment practices in this place. Activity theory has, for us illuminated the role of ICTs in teaching and learning, and assisted us to reflect on opportunities and constraints that can characterise both the new and the old communication technologies.

CO-AUTHORS: KAREN RAMSEY, MARGARET CARR, JACQUI STURM AND JANE BREEN

Keywords: assessment, curriculum, ICT, children as active participants

Scaffolding Skills by Using Assessments as Didactic Tools

ANKE KÖNIG

University Dortmund, Germany

Since 2004 there are general educational guidelines for pre-school education in Germany. Early childhood education in Germany has got a social pedagogy background (OECD 2004). With the new curricula, special subjects like language, math and science are getting high relevance. Last but not least with the hope for smooth transition in primary school and a good starting position for high school success.

Starting point to rise up such curricula was to look for activities in everyday life of the pre-schools, which are connected to these special subjects. In these curricula we could find a collection of activities linked to the subjects (language, math, science etc.).

These "collection of activities" are lacking a differentiated didactic way to scaffold the skills of the children (Vygotsky) and lose sight of what it mean to achieve subject knowledge in early years. Assessments (Carr, Lidz) could help to evaluate the learning competences of the children and could help the pre-school teacher to scaffold the learning processes in a appropriate way. At the moment we are acting with two differantiated assessments in German preschools. Assesements to evaluate learning processes (e.g. Learning stories) with socio-cultural focus and assessments to evaluate special competences (domain-specific knowledge) The challenge is how to combine both assessments as didactic tool.

The paper describes the starting point of a research study to elaborate the meaning of an appropriate didactic way to scaffold domain-specific knowledge in early years. An ethnographic approach was used for this research study.

Keywords: pre-school, curricula, didactic, assessment, teaching design and technology

Assessing Children's Wellbeing in Preschool

KRISTIN KARLSDOTTIR

Iceland University of Education, Iceland

This study explores the ways in which two distinctively different preschool curricula promote children's wellbeing and learning dispositions. Wellbeing refers to children's self-respect,

prestige, strength and esteem (Carr, 2001), while learning dispositions are cultivated by participation in social communities that value thinking and independent judgment, and are associated with children who are ready, willing and able to cope with change successfully: that is, to be powerful and effective learners (Carr, 2001). The study asks: How do children build up knowledge? while the sub questions address the contributions of the setting, the curriculum and the teacher's methods. The theoretical underpinning of the research is derived from both the post-modern perspective and from sociocultural theory. The former views the child as a competent, strong individual making knowledge in relationships with others (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999), while the latter views children's learning as mutually constitutive by the social context and the child's personal factors (Carr & Claxton, 2002; Wells & Claxton, 2002). Data take the form of children's learning stories which are narrative observations in everyday settings, designed to provide a cumulative series of written vignettes of individual children. The stories will be reviewed with children and teachers and scanned for narrative patterns displaying key learning dispositions (interest, involvement, persisting with difficulties, communicating with others and taking responsibility) (Carr, 2001). The study argues that assessing the process of children's knowledge building is as important as assessing the skills and knowledge which are acquired, and aims to contribute to preschool policy making.

Keywords: postmodern perspective, sociocultural theory, assessment, learning stories, wellbeing, learning dispositions

SYMPOSIUM III/14 LEARNING – TEACHER - PARENTS

Individual papers

CHAIR: DIANE HORM

University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, USA

The Supported Playgroup: Honouring Children's Rights through Supporting the Parenting Role

DIANNE JACKSON

University of Western Sydney and Connect Child and Family Services, Australia

The supported playgroup is a two-generational model applied widely in Australia to support the development and wellbeing of children and their parents together. Facilitated by early childhood teachers, the playgroups provide a unique mix of early childhood education and parent support and the model is gaining increased international attention. This paper presents the preliminary findings of doctoral research exploring issues relating to the design and implementation of this model, particularly in contexts characterised by disadvantaged and marginalised communities which are traditionally 'difficult to engage'. The aim of the research is to examine the place of supported playgroups within the early childhood education landscape and to identify how they contribute to and promote holistic, inclusive and collaborative practice where outcomes for children are valued. In particular, this research will pay attention to how supported playgroups appear to build parenting skills and knowledge related to child development and early learning environments. The research uses qualitative, collective case study methodology and the analysis is being guided by contemporary ecological, social capital and engagement theories. This paper will discuss early findings drawn from observations and interviews with key stakeholders. These findings indicate that supported playgroups provide quality early childhood learning experiences whilst assisting, supporting and educating parents. They also suggest that supported playgroups play an important role in promoting a seamless transition to other early childhood

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settings and school, whilst linking children and families to broader systems of support within their communities.

Keywords: Supported playgroup, parent support, early childhood education

The Status of Parent-child Learning Partnerships; a Study of Parent and Toddler Groups in the English West Midlands.

MARTIN NEEDHAM

University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Latest results from the Effective Provision of Preschool Education project (Sammons 2007) show that the home learning environment (HLE) for under 4's is a powerful predictor of successful participation in education at ages 5,7 and 10. Parent and toddler/ stay and play groups offer support to parents and children with opportunities for many of the activities associated with the identified elements of HLE, joint play activities, painting, reading, songs and rhymes. This paper reflects on the provision for parent and toddler groups in England in order to reflect on societal expectations of the parent-child learning partnership. It is argued that such groups are an underdeveloped and underestimated resource deserving greater financial and training support. The notion of children's rights to play and education are used to explore how a policy focus on childcare has drawn attention away from opportunities to promote play and empower parents as first educators.

The paper presents questionnaire findings from a sample of parent and toddler groups combined with reflection on selected case studies. Observations and interviews are used to explore the roles, relationships and expectations of related to adult-child learning interactions within parent and toddler groups.

Aspects of Sociocultural Activity Theory (Engestrom, Miettinen and Punamaki 1999, Heddegard 2001, Daniels 2002) are used to analyse the social context presented in case study parent and toddler groups. The findings highlight the difficulties of negotiating shared purposes the in groups, tensions about roles and the relative power of views of the child as an independent and social learner.

Keywords: parent, play, learning, sociocultural

Pre-school Teachers' views on Children's Learning in ECE Institutions (Kindergartens)

JON OLAF BERG

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This presentation will deal with ideas and conceptions of Children's learning in Norwegian ECE institutions (kindergartens). This would be a central theme regarding the conference's goal of "reconsidering ECE basics".

In Norwegian ECE tradition and pedagogy, it could be stated that the use of the concept of learning has not been predominant during the last decades. In the most recent official document, the national Framework Plan for Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (2006) however, learning has been put forward as a goal and central theme in many connections.

I have investigated how ECE pedagogues understand learning, and what consequences these understandings may have, for practical pedagogical activities. I have made qualitative interviews with 10 individual pre-school teachers, and asked them to try to articulate their understandings of what learning is, or should be in the contexts of ECE pedagogy.

The theoretical perspectives I apply in discussion of the findings, are mainly systems theory, with Bateson (1972, 1988) and Luhmann (1993,1995) as key figures, but also constructivist and social constructivist perspectives on learning. These perspectives and theories imply that learning takes place "in" the individual, i.e. is constructed by the individual, but in close interaction with its surroundings. However, more traditional and "instrumental" views,

implying that learning has to do with “transmitting” knowledge or insights, seem to be quite widespread. The analyses of the interviews show that both these perspectives can be found in the informants’ conceptions and understandings of children’s learning, and the role of the pedagogue in these processes.

Keywords: learning, conceptions

SYMPOSIUM III/15 EXPLORING THE PERSPECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PRACTITIONERS ON ADULT ENGAGEMENT AND CHILD ENGAGEMENT IN EXPERIENCES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: CATH ARNOLD

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Session overview

This symposium will look at three pieces of practitioner-based research. The first examines the value of contributions made by both practitioners and researchers working together and engaging in shared dialogue about practice in two countries. The second looks at whether practitioners conducting collaborative research with colleagues in other settings can produce 'added value' to services for families in ss a medium sized English industrial town. The third investigates the work of a practitioner-led research community to see if, when they are supported by a team of researchers, there is an enhancement in the accessibility and quality of services for families across an English county.

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Exploring the Perspectives of Early Childhood Practitioners on Adult Engagement and Child Engagement in Experiences in Early Childhood Settings in England and Ireland

CARMEL BRENNAN (1) AND CATH ARNOLD (2)

(1) IPPA - *The Early Childhood Organisation, Ireland*

(2) *Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom*

This paper reports on a small scale cross-cultural study of Early Years practice in an English and Irish setting. The study uses a polygonal ethnographic approach, pioneered by Tobin (Tobin, Wu and Davidson, 1989). Examples of practice in both settings were captured on video and shared in focused sessions with both staff groups as a discussion stimulator. The method is designed to value the contributions of practitioners and researchers as they engage in shared dialogue about practice and, in particular, to capture the perspectives of practicing early childhood practitioners in the analysis. Staff groups reflected on two video episodes from their own and the other setting. The reflections were framed by research questions such as: What do you perceive as the key engagement strategies practiced by children and adults in this setting? What do you perceive as the similarities and differences between practices in both settings? What can we learn from one another?

Researchers from an English and Irish early years organization facilitated focus groups in both countries and analyzed the discussion data using theories about schema (Athey, 2007; Arnold, 2007), guided participation (Rogoff, 1990), shared attention (Trevarthen, 1980) and involvement (Laevers, 1994). The outcome has implications for the enrichment of pedagogic reflection and practice in both settings and organizations.

Keywords: engagement, relationships, pedagogy, values

Can the Development of a Practitioner-led Research Community enhance the Quality of Services for Children and Families across an English County?

MARGY WHALLEY

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Supported by the Pen Green Research Base, leaders and practitioners in the nine Nursery Schools in Northamptonshire, England carried out research into areas of their practice and provision which they wanted to make more accessible and effective for children and families in their communities. The questions leaders and practitioners wanted answers to varied across the settings, including:

- How can we effectively plan for our nursery school and children's centre to move forward in meeting the needs of the priority and excluded families and groups in our community?
- How can we seek out multiple voices which honour learning at home and make it visible in our documentation?
- As a nursery school and children's centre, how can we identify and locate families and groups in our community as potential users of our provision and work effectively with our partner agencies to deliver the services they need?
- How does the provision of a free-flow outside area enhance the development of the holistic child from birth to 5?

Using a combination of complementary methodologies – including the Outcomes Based Accountability approach, parent-to-parent interviews and socio-spatial mapping – leaders and practitioners gathered data from information-rich cases which deepened their understanding of their practice and provision. In this paper leaders, practitioners and researchers present their findings and recommendations in reply to our generic question, 'Can the development of a practitioner-led research community enhance the quality of services for children and families across an English county?'

Keywords: research community, complementary methodologies, improved outcomes

Collaborating Across the Community - Adding Value?

EDDIE MCKINNON

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Children's Centres are at the heart of the UK government's national policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion. Responding at a local level, the Corby Children's Centres Consortium was formed to develop and provide high quality services which are accessible to all families in our town.

Funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council, the Pen Green Research Base supported Practitioner Led Research Projects in three children's centres in Corby. Practitioners and parents had identified families in their communities whom they wanted to work with more effectively. Using three complementary research methodologies - Mark Friedman's Outcomes Based Accountability approach, parent-to-parent interviews and socio-spatial mapping – they investigated how they could make their provision more attractive and accessible to priority and excluded families. Practitioners and parents attended Research Workshops and a Data Analysis Day at the Pen Green Research Base and presented their emerging findings at a national conference at Pen Green in February 2008.

This paper examines whether working together in this way supported the Consortium in achieving its objective of developing a town-wide offer of provision which meets the needs of priority and excluded families and groups in Corby. By using a combination of research methodologies we pose the question, 'Can we demonstrate that children's centres working

collaboratively produce outcomes with a measurable 'added value' for those families at greatest risk of social exclusion?' Eddie McKinnon from the Pen Green Research Base and Practitioner Researchers from the children's centres Ellen Burgess, Amanda McKenzie and Carol Reid, will present their findings and recommendations.

Keywords: practitioner-researchers, parent-researchers, evidence-based practice and provision

SYMPOSIUM III/16 FOR WEST LOTHIAN'S CHILDREN: A SCOTTISH AUTHORITY'S RESPONSE TO IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: JENNIFER SCOTT

West Lothian Council, Social Policy, Scotland

This symposium reports on a West Lothian initiative to improve the educational outcomes for Looked After Children. Children in care gain fewer qualifications and are more likely to be excluded from school. Responsibility for their care, well-being and education rests with the local authority as corporate parent.

The first paper describes the formation in 2004 of a West Lothian multi agency team for Looked After Children. No other local authority in Scotland has a co-located team such as this in place, and the partnership working leading to improved outcomes for these children was highly praised in recent Inspection Reports by Social Work and Education.

The second paper describes the LAC Pack, a training and resource pack for professionals and carers, developed by the educational psychologist in the LAC team. It explores the impact of care issues on behaviour in educational settings and gives positive strategies to use when a child's troubled behaviour begins to escalate. Its main theoretical underpinning is attachment theory.

The third paper focuses on early intervention, by helping parents, carers and early years staff to understand how to foster attachment and resilience, through improving their interactions with children. Models of adult learning and professional development are explored and evaluated. These range from the use of video as a reflective tool to the establishment of communities of practice. Theoretical roots are found in intersubjectivity, change theory, Knowles' model of andragogy, and double and single loop learning. The development and implementation of the LAC Pack training is considered in this context.

Keywords: looked after children, multi-agency provision, the LAC pack, video as a reflective tool

West Lothian Multi-agency Team for Looked After Children: Links to National and International Initiatives

JENNIFER SCOTT

West Lothian Council, Social Policy, Scotland

The team for Looked After Children serves the local authority in taking forward the role of the corporate parent, in aiming to achieve for our children in public care the same outcomes, life chances and aspirations as we wish for our own children.

The team comprises:

- 4 outreach teachers
- Senior educational psychologist

- Public health nurse
- 2 young people's development workers, responsible for improving mental health and well being and for the youth forum, Having Your Say,

All the staff are co-located and meets together formally, at an operational level on a monthly basis. The team comes under the management structure of social policy and is managed within that structure. They also each receive individual supervision and support from their own agency. Each agency manager also meets together at a strategic level on a monthly basis.

As well as direct work with young people, some members of the team also play a valuable role in multi agency training and raising awareness of the issues facing young people who have had to be removed from their families. This training targets staff in a variety of settings and is delivered across agencies which further achieves transfer of skills and knowledge.

The development of the LAC Pack has been highly acclaimed, locally and nationally. The work of the team will be evaluated in the context of local, national and international initiatives.

Keywords: Looked After Children, multi-agency provision, The LAC Pack, video as a reflective tool

The LAC Pack – development and implementation

JANET GUILD

West Lothian Council, Social Policy and West Lothian Council, Psychological Services, Scotland

The LAC Pack is a training resource for schools about the experiences and needs of children in the care of the local authority. It explores the impact of early negative care on a child's behaviour and progress in school, using Attachment theory as its main theoretical underpinning. This information has been shared with social care, health staff and foster carers. Pragmatic and positive strategies are given for school staff to use in supporting troubled children whose social and educational progress is impeded by the effect of care issues. A holistic, interagency approach is used. The LAC Pack was developed by the Senior LAC Psychologist for LAC (Looked After Children), whose post sits within a multi-agency team dedicated to children in care. It has been developed over four stages:

1. A needs analysis and identification of issues over a two year period of research, training, consultancy and casework. (2003 - 2005)
2. The writing, designing and launch of the materials. (2005 - 2006)
3. The training of 120 key school staff in the use of the materials and a further, more focused 'Training The Trainers' session to enable head teachers to cascade the information to colleagues.
4. The development of local school cluster 'LAC Forums' to encourage positive interagency practice within the school setting for children in care and to identify and address emergent issues impacting on their educational progress. A research team has designed a short term evaluation of the materials and measures have been identified for a longitudinal evaluation, to be concluded in summer 2009.

Delivering Early Intervention through Adult Learning and Professional Development

MIRIAM LANDOR

West Lothian Council, Psychological Services, Scotland

Early intervention is of prime importance in keeping children safe and nurtured, both in their birth families and in care settings. This can be achieved by helping parents, carers and early years staff to understand how to foster positive attachments, whether primary or secondary.

Children's resilience skills can also be improved by developing the interactions of key adults with them. Models of adult learning and professional development are explored and evaluated. These range from the use of video as a reflective tool to the establishment of communities of practice. Theoretical roots are found in intersubjectivity, change theory, Knowles' model of andragogy, and double and single loop learning. The development and implementation of the LAC Pack training is considered in this context.

Keywords: looked after children, multi-agency provision, the LAC pack, video as a reflective tool

SYMPOSIUM III/17 THE EARLY DIALOGUE

Self-organised symposium
CHAIR: URSULA HORSCH
University of Heidelberg, Germany

CO-CHAIR: AILI HELENIUS
University of Turku, Finland

Session overview

The topic of the session Early Dialogues between Infants and Parents deals with the possibilities of empirical research on development for pedagogical interventions, the children with special needs are included. Theory is needed to catch the essential results for pedagogical intervention. We need research which reveals the process-knowledge but only knowledge about the achieved states are given. We have to study transitions. In doing this we get information which differs from the qualitative characterizations of the achieved states. Presentations of this session are firstly micro- analytic studies, especially timing of mother-child interaction in the first months of the child's life after the delivery, secondly about differentiation of the child's self in the child's object activity, the leading activity in this period. Thirdly differences between different families are presented and intervention for the children of special needs highlighted.

Keywords: early dialogue, early education, development, handicapped infants

Early Dialogues between Infants and Parents

AILI HELENIUS
University of Turku, Finland

Research made much new knowledge about the Development of children from the first days of life possible and shed light to the early years. The question remains, how we can concretise this knowledge in forms available also to the pedagogues and parents of children. Furthermore it is of particular importance how we can explicate the knowledge in order to consider the education of handicapped children, too - who after all are first of all developing children and thereafter have problems with some handicaps.

The session of this proposal connects themes of early dialogues and research projects from two countries: Germany and :country-region Finland .

Project "Early" (Finland)

Preconditions of delayed imitation

Preconditions of the child's imaginative play, beginning with delayed imitation, are analysed in a multiple case-study with videotaped long-term follow-up of 12 mother-child-pairs (the children 6 months - 24 months of age) in the light of developmental systems theory (Fogel). The results highlight the sequence beginning with the self initiated movement causing the

change in the social situation of development (Vygotsky), beginnings of joint attention and consciousness concerning of the contradictory opposites: e.g. me - you, or action in the prevailing in contrast to an earlier situation, which could be called imaginative play.

The Early Dialogue in the Parent Infant Dyade

ANDREA SCHEELE

University of Heidelberg, Germany

Background and Aims: From the very first day of life parents get in a close contact with their child and introduce both - people and their world - to the newborn in a mutual dialogical way. Proceeding hand in hand they pass on basic dialogical competence. Our investigation "Dialogical Development of Infants" (Horsch et al. 2004 - 2007) addresses the broad dialogic development of parents and infants within the first 18 months of life. Our main object is to describe these early dialogues. Particular emphasis will be placed on these dialogic elements: vocalization of the infant, greeting behaviors, Motherese/Fatherese and dialogic echo of the parents.

Methods: The empirical data is derived from a long-term follow-up study in the first 12 months of the infant's life. The data is collected monthly by video taping in the natural setting. With this the dialogue development of Polish, American and German mother-child dyads is observed and documented. Participants (n=111 in Germany) are infants with normal hearing (n=73) and hearing loss (n=12) as well as "preemies" (n=18) and infants with Down Syndrome (n=8). Computerized analyses (interact Mangold international) are used for the evaluation of the data in order to study correlations among variables e.g. vocalization and dialogic echo of the parents.

Results: The results demonstrate a negative correlation of greeting behaviors with the dialogic echo ($r = -0.30$) and the infant's vocalizations ($r = -0.34$). Parents use more greeting behaviors and less dialogic echo when the infant vocalizes less. Furthermore the greeting behaviors correlate with the use of Motherese/Fatherese ($r = 0.87$). This correlation is highly significant ($p = 0.0051^{***}$). Another significant correlation exists between the infant's vocalization and the dialogic echo ($r = 0.82$; $p = 0.0126$).

Conclusions: Parents increase the amount of greeting behaviors to encourage the infant to enter into the dialogue. This conclusion stems from the highly significant correlation between greeting behaviors and the use of Motherese/Fatherese.

Early Dialogues in Context of Down Syndrome and Hearing Impairment

JULIA ROTH

University of Heidelberg, Germany

Background and Aims Researchers all over the world show a great interest in early education referring as well the theoretical as the practical aspects. The examinations of the topic lead to a consensus on the fact that education starts by birth, which shall – as a matter of course - also include the context of families with disabled children in the earliest processes. For more information please look at abstract A. Scheele.

Methods Please look at abstract A. Scheele.

Results The results of children mit Down Syndrome and their parents and children with hearing impairment highly significant differ from the results of families without disability. There are correlations between dialogic variables, too, but they are in sum not as high as the results of families without disability.

While correlations overall tend to be weaker towards children with Down Syndrome, they just don't seem to exist in significant ways in hearing impaired children.

Conclusions The results of families with a hearing impaired child are alarming. Hearing impairment seems to influence the parent-child-dialogue much more negativley than Down

Syndrome. This matter will be analysed in a bigger sample in our next international research program.

Early Communication, Development of Speech and Language

HANNA-SOFIA POUSSU-OLLI

University of Turku, Finland

The aim of this study is to monitor early communication, the development of speech and language from birth to the beginning of going to school, to define risk-factors hindering the development of communication, speech and language (and external factors) and to examine the gender-linked development of communication, speech and language.

The development of communication, speech and language are monitored on the background of the origins and diversification of the child's interaction in the family and other environments. The study analyzes early distinctive marks of communicative and linguistic disorders and the impact of various risk-factors on linguistic development. The necessary interventions are planned on these grounds. The subject group is formed of 56 children whose communicative and linguistic development is monitored from birth till their going to school. The research periods are: pregnancy, birth and the neonate phase, early infancy; the years from 1 to 4, preschool; from 5 to 6 years and the school-beginner phase.

The research methods include observations, video-recordings, sound-recordings, individual and group measurements. The statistical methods used for various analyses were distribution data, t-tests, Pearson's coefficient correlations, graphic figures and the reliability of the measurements was analyzed through the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. The study belongs to a more comprehensive international Early Dialogue-project, which is carried out in cooperation with Finland :country-region, Germany , Poland and the Baltic countries

Keywords: pregnancy and birth, risk factors, environments, development of communicative and linguistic abilities and disorders

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ROCKING THE CURRICULUM

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: HILLEVI LENZ TAGUCHI

Stockholm University, Sweden

All the students come to the university with unique life experience and backgrounds. How acknowledge this? A text and a lecture can be perceived in many ways depending on social and cultural background as well as educational. *Work-based early Childhood Education* was started in 2007 at Oslo College University. In the symposium, we give examples and results that show how curriculum can be changed into perspectives which contribute to different learning styles and incorporate the lived experiences of all students. During the last year we have seen that rethinking Early Childhood Education also is a matter of power. The project has been criticized from people within academia. We hope the symposium can contribute to discussions concerning teaching and learning environment, the process of teaching and learning, in a growing multicultural society. Inspired by universities in England, Canada and Australia we believe higher education in Norway have to "Rock the Curriculum" to acknowledge and value diversity. We would like to think that Worked-based early Childhood Education could be one way to start this process.

Cultural Diversity in Higher Education

METTE TOLLEFSRUD

Oslo University College, Norway

The pilot project *Work-based early Childhood Education* was started in 2007 in response to concerns about the lack of inclusive recruitment and practice in early childhood education. Research indicates that traditional curriculum design limits students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Moving the locus` of learning from the college to the workplace moves the balance of power and engenders new elements of autonomy amongst the participants.

We are trying to establish a learning environment with full participation and utilization of participants` inherent skills, values and discourses. Strategies provide the opportunity for students to relate curriculum to their lives as a basis for a critical understanding and theoretical analysis of the subject matter.

During this symposium we reconsider the curriculum in work with student texts, narratives and assessment processes. Our project also reconsiders the interface between the university college and the workplace in order to try for the renegotiation of current normativities which tend to stifle minority groups.

Keywords: cultural diversity, innovative curriculum, workplace-based early childhood education

Student Empowerment through Narrative Reflection

ANNE FURU AND MARIT GRANHOLT

Oslo University College, Norway

Our focus is how the multicultural group of pre-school teacher students reflect on narratives from practice to develop dimensions of professionalism through shared perspectives. Our choice of method, the dialog seminar, depends on the interplay between theory, practice and student narratives. Experiences sieved through various cultural backgrounds and years of experience from kindergartens, shape the base for developing knowledge. How can we focus these experiences into a point of departure for learning? Students write narratives from daily life in their kindergartens, which are discussed at dialogue seminars. The students read out their individual narratives, and the others respond with their own associations. We sum up the session with reflections on central aspects of the content in relation to theory. When students bring their individual stories into the group, learning processes occur. Thinking does not occur exclusively in the head of an individual, but takes place between people. According to our experiences, identity is created through working with language, offering the chance to observe ourselves from the outside. Only then we have a genuine meeting with ourselves. The students have previously worked with their life stories, and thus have experience work with narratives. The challenge with the dialogue seminars is to enable the development of professional identity and competence. Core terms here are intercultural fluency and curricular development. The outcomes are manifold. Results so far indicate that both the student group and the host organisations increase cultural capital and competence from such innovative practice.

Keywords: dialoge seminar, multicultural student group, reflection on narratives

Students' Approaches to Peer-response: Rethinking the Basics

KRISTIN HOLTE HAUG

Oslo University College, Norway

The paper questions how a group of multicultural students in Early Childhood Education approaches an assignment involving peer-response and how this method influences students' learning potential and learning outcome.

Our objectives are three-fold: to produce knowledge about introducing peer-response by its inclusion in a multicultural student group. Further, to generate knowledge about the implications peer-response might have on such diverse students' learning potential and outcome. Finally, to produce knowledge about how a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is utilized when students adopt such pro-active methods.

Our theoretical framework is "vygotskian" emphasizing the significance of cultural and social contexts. Data is gathered through observation and questionnaires and students' texts. We will focus on assignments containing three written parts: 1) an individual draft 2) a peer-response 3) an individual essay incorporating a peer's response.

Key findings are that peer-response, as taken into use in this study, was a positive element in the students' learning environment. The use of peer-response seemed to increase the students' engagement in the learning process. A majority of the students reported that peer-response had an impact on their learning outcome. We recognize students' need for practice and structured support during the process.

The interpretation of results so far has theoretical relevance as we reconsider the basics of Early Childhood Education regarding the potential of innovative assessment methods. The study also generates knowledge of practical relevance such as the development of proactive student methods that enhance learning outcomes.

Keywords: peer-response, student centered learning, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

SYMPOSIUM III/19 ASSESSMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY LEARNING - IRELAND'S NATIONAL EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: ARLENE FORSTER

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Ireland

Session Overview

One of the purposes of national curriculum frameworks is to bring greater connectedness and progression to children's experiences. In Ireland there are a number of early childhood curriculums and guidelines in use. However, there is no single curriculum framework to guide the whole early childhood period. To help redress this gap the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is developing the *Framework for Early Learning* to guide adults in planning and providing enriching and enjoyable learning opportunities for children under six. This framework is due to be launched in 2009.

This self-organised symposium focuses on assessment as presented in the *Framework for Early Learning*. This first paper provides an overview of the Framework and identifies the principles which underpin it. The paper then outlines the Framework's contents including its four themes - *Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, and Exploring and Thinking*. Collectively, these themes describe children's learning in terms of dispositions, skills, attitudes and values, and knowledge. The paper also discusses the Framework's guidelines on building partnerships with parents and families, interacting with children, learning through play, and supporting learning through assessment.

Paper 2 presents key messages about formative assessment which have informed guidelines to support practitioners' assessment practice with children from birth to six years. Paper 3 explores these guidelines focusing on gathering, documenting, reflecting on, and using assessment information. Finally, Paper 4 describes an initiative on reporting assessment information to parents of 4-6 year old children.

Keywords: assessment, curriculum, framework, national

Supporting Early Learning and Development through Formative Assessment: What the Literature Says

ELIZABETH DUNPHY

St. Patrick's College, Ireland

As part of the work of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in developing the *Framework for Early Learning*, the NCCA commissioned a series of background papers. One of these focused on formative assessment in early childhood. Reflecting national and international literature, the paper provides a rich theoretical base for using formative assessment to support children's learning and development from birth to six years. This presentation explores key messages in the background paper, *Supporting early learning and development through formative assessment* (2008) which was developed by Dr. Elizabeth Dunphy.

The paper presents formative assessment as a process. This process enables the practitioner to create a rich picture of children as young learners by gathering, documenting, reflecting on and using information about their learning for the purpose of supporting future learning. At the outset, the paper highlights the complexity of early learning and identifies the need to find creative ways of 'seeing' and recording the breadth and depth of children's learning and development. Moreover, assessment needs to happen over time in everyday activities and tasks that are meaningful, relevant and interesting to the child. The paper emphasises how the interactive and relational nature of children's learning necessitates an assessment process which is also interactive. Such a process provides opportunities to tune in to and capture the extent of children's learning including their dispositions, skills, attitudes and values, and knowledge. The paper concludes by drawing attention to the role of the professional, skilled practitioner in the assessment process. In doing this, the paper concludes that as an early childhood community, practitioners need to understand formative assessment as something that happens as learning is taking place rather than afterwards.

Keywords: formative, assessment, interactive, skills.

Supporting Early Learning and Development through Assessment: Guidelines for Practice

MARY DALY

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Ireland

This paper focuses on the assessment guidelines as part of the *Framework for Early Learning*. As noted in paper 2, these guidelines have been informed by an extensive review of literature some of which is presented in the background paper, *Supporting early learning and development through formative assessment* (Dunphy, 2008).

The purpose of the guidelines is to help adults in using assessment to support all children's early learning and development. In doing this, the guidelines prioritise the process of assessment which involves gathering, documenting, reflecting on and using assessment information about children's progress with learning and development. Informed by a socio-cultural understanding of assessment, the guidelines set out a collaborative, multi-method approach to gathering authentic information about each child and using this information in a constructive and reflective manner. This approach positions assessment as an interactive and social process—integral to teaching and learning. Such a position gives rise to certain challenges and dilemmas regarding appropriate methodology. The guidelines address these by presenting a continuum of methods for both gathering and documenting assessment information. The methods range from being child-led to practitioner-led. Through practical examples of assessment in action, the guidelines illustrate the importance of using a combination of methods in order to support breadth and depth in children's early learning and in a way which takes account of the socio-cultural nature of that learning. Using this

approach, the Framework's guidelines aim to support the further development of assessment literacy (theory and practice) within the early childhood sector, for the benefit of all children.
CO-AUTHORS: ARLENE FORSTER, SARAH FITZPATRICK, AVRIL SWEENEY

Keywords: assessment, process, multi-method, socio-cultural

Sharing Assessment Information with Parents using Report Card Templates

ARLENE FORSTER

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Ireland

In 2005, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) began work on developing national Report Card Templates (RCTs) for primary schools. The purpose of the RCTs was to support schools in sharing information with parents on their children's learning. As part of this work, the NCCA developed six draft templates for teachers of children aged 4-6 years. The templates were used by 29 primary schools in a developmental initiative during the 2006-2007 school year. This paper presents some of the key findings from that initiative.

Teachers and parents identified four shared priorities for reporting. These focused on the content of the information to be shared—*what* to report. Mirroring findings from a review of reporting practice internationally (NCCA, 2006) the priorities included reporting on the child's learning across the curriculum, the child's dispositions, and his/her social and personal development. A fourth priority concerned supporting parents in their role as educators. In contrast, there was a lack of consensus across teachers and parents regarding the process of reporting (recording and sharing information)—*how* to report. Informed by literature and good practice, the draft templates used narrative formats for sharing information with parents. Teachers' decision during the initiative to use more prescriptive templates involving tick-boxes indicated a range of perspectives on how best to report in the case of young children. Other challenges which arose centred on clarity and consistency of language, and 'shared' meanings for standards, scales and comments. The paper concludes by outlining the NCCA's response to these findings, and by highlighting the connections with and implications for the *Framework for Early Learning*.

CO-AUTHORS: SARAH FITZPATRICK, LORRAINE HARBISON, PAT NAUGHTON, CLÍONA O'KEEFFE, HAL O'NEILL

Keywords: assessment, home/school, parents, reporting

SYMPOSIUM III/20

RETHINKING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF TODDLERS IN CHILD CARE CENTERS

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: ELLY SINGER

Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Session overview

The symposium explores several aspects of toddlers' socio-emotional experiences and learning in the group settings characteristic of institutional early education contexts.

The three papers examine the effects of (a) the nature of social interaction (friendship, joint play, and conflicts), the effects of (b) the nature of the group context (stability), and the effects of (c) caregivers' training – on toddlers' social behaviour and competence.

All three papers are based on earlier studies of young children's social experiences and learning in group settings, and the effects of different aspects of that group context on their behaviour.

The first paper (Marie-Paule) examines the link between the focus of toddlers' interactions (the peer's body; an object; the peer's action), and conflicts. Toddlers' interactions are being analysed, comparing socio-emotional behaviours and socio-cognitive behaviours.

The second paper (Elly) examines the differential effect of group instability on friendship and joint play of younger and older toddlers, as well as on boys in comparison with girls.

The third paper (Miki) describes the training of caregivers in ways that facilitate toddlers' socio-emotional competence and positive social-learning experiences in the group settings. Research has shown the training to be effective in changing the behaviour of caregivers and of toddlers.

Keywords: toddlers' peer relations; teacher's training evaluation; socio-cognitive development; socio-emotional learning in group setting

From Socio-emotional Experiences to Socio-cognitive Construction: Relations and Conflicts between Peers.

MARIE PAULE THOLLON BEHAR

Lumière University Lyon 2, France

Interactions between peers can be studied from socio-emotional point of view. In particular, it's possible to study if the interactions are positive for the groups, if they further the consistency of the group or if they risk unsettling the group (Montagner 1978, Fontaine, Legendre, Singer). The observation of conflicts is interesting from this point of view.

From a socio-cognitive point of view, to interact with peers, young children have to construct others like partners. There are different levels of interaction between peers (Thollon Behar 2006) focused: on the body of the other (to touch him, to take his or her hand...), on the object (to take it in the hand of other, to ask it, to give it etc.) or on the action (to help, to invite or to cooperate). This last category of interactions is more elaborate because the child has to be conscious of the intention of his or her play mate.

The aim of his paper is to study the link between the focus of interactions and the conflicts. We hypothesize that conflicts are more frequent when interactions are focused on the body or on the object than on the action. We observe groups of young children from 27 months to 36 months old (video tape) and we analysis the interactions with a grid, to compare socio-emotional behaviors and socio-cognitive behaviors. The research is ongoing and the results will be known in June 2008.

Keywords: toddlers' peer relations, teacher's training evaluation, socio-cognitive development, socio-emotional learning in group setting

Group Stability, Friendships and Joint Play in 2- and 3-year Olds

ELLY SINGER

Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Continuity in teacher-child relationships is a well established characteristic of quality day care for young children. But continuity in child-child relationships is less established as characteristic of quality care. This study focuses on the effects of child-child relationships.

In the Netherlands most mothers work part-time, and their young children go one, two or three days per week to a day care centre. Therefore there is a low level of group stability. In one week 28 - 35 different children make use of a group of 14 child places.

In our study we compare three groups with low group stability and one group with high stability. We look at differences in friendship relationships and patterns of joint play. We also look at the effects in boys and girls and in 2- and 3-year olds. We hypothesize that the younger the children, the more depended they are on group stability; and that girls are more venerable for negative effects of low group stability then boys. These hypotheses are based on earlier studies of socio-cognitive functioning of young children and the role of shared

routines. Two-year olds are more depended on idiosyncratic routines than 3-year olds, whose mastery of spoken language permits more general communication and play. With regard to gender differences, gross motor activities like running around and biking (preferred by boys) are easier to coordinate in an instable group then pretend play (preferred by girls).

Keywords: toddlers' peer relations; teacher's training evaluation; socio-cognitive development; socio-emotional learning in group setting

"Learning to Live Together". Fostering Socio-emotional Competence of Toddlers in Group Care

MIRIAM K. ROSENTHAL AND LIHI GATT

Hebrew University, Israel

The paper describes a training program that facilitates preschool teachers' abilities to support children's socio-emotional development. Certain teachers' interventions during social and emotional events in the group were shown by our research to facilitate pro-social behavior among peers, joint play and conflict resolution skills among very young children.

The training has three major goals: (a) to sensitize teachers to very young children's daily experiences in the peer group context that present opportunities for social and emotional learning, (b) to teach intervention skills that promote socio-emotional understanding, expressiveness and regulation, and (c) to clarify common attitudes and expectations regarding young children's social behavior.

The training focuses on 4 major topics: (1) The Group Experience – social interaction in group settings; (2) Toddlers Learn Empathy ("audience phenomena"); (3) Toddlers Learn to Play Together (joint play, imitation; entry skills), and (4) Toddlers Learn to Resolve Conflicts.

The methods of training include: Active learning – based on group experiences of the participants; Observations of children's behavior in a group; Teachers' reports on their experiences while trying out new "interventions"; On-site video-aided supervision.

The paper concludes with a discussion of (a) the relevance of this program to research on the effects of "quality care & education" on children's socio-emotional development, and (b) a study of the effectiveness of this program in low-quality daycare centers.

Keywords: toddlers' peer relations, teacher's training evaluation, socio-cognitive development, socio-emotional learning in group setting

SYMPOSIUM III/21

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: JOANNE BROWNLEE

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Session overview

In this symposium we investigate early childhood teachers' beliefs about learning and participation in two countries: Sweden and Australia. The Swedish study investigates preschool teachers' and preschool students' beliefs and notes that there are similarities between these two groups. The Australian study explores what child care teachers and child care students think about children's learning and shows that teachers and students hold a range of beliefs about their own and children's learning which are linked to how they interact with children.

Learning and Participation are two Interrelated Key-concepts in the Preschool

INGE JOHANSSON (1) AND ANETTE SANDBERG (2)

(1)Stockholm University, Sweden

(2)Mälardalen University, Sweden

Learning and Participation are two Interrelated Key-concepts in the Preschool

INGE JOHANSSON (1) AND ANETTE SANDBERG (2)

(1)Stockholm University, Sweden

(2)Mälardalen University, Sweden

Learning and participation are two interrelated key-concepts in the preschool.

Learning takes place in interaction that can be symbolic and/or practical in its nature. It means a change of state of how an individual or group experiences, interprets and understands various aspects of the surrounding world and the relation to it. Participation means to relate to others in an activity/or activities. This relation implicit to relate goals in the setting and how they are interpreted. Participation also means mental involvement, many times in an emotional way.

In this study a sample of 55 preschool teachers and 58 preschool teacher students were asked about how they perceive these concepts and also the relation between learning and participation. They also were asked to describe a learning-situation from their own experience in the preschool work. Data was sampled by questionnaires. The questions were constructed in a critical incident mode to give the informant opportunity to connect the general concepts learning and participation to real situations in their preschool practice. The results consist of a mix of qualitative and quantitative data and are analysed in relation to sociocultural theories and professional competence in the preschool. The preliminary results show that preschool teachers and students define the content of learning and participation in a similar way. There are some differences in describing the content depending on the age of the preschool teachers.

Keywords: learning, participation, beliefs about children's learning, epistemological beliefs

Beliefs about Learning and Knowing in Child Care in Australia

ANGELA EDWARDS AND JOANNE BROWNLEE

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

The quality of child care is of social and economic significance worldwide. The beliefs that child care workers hold about knowing and knowledge (epistemological beliefs) influence the quality of their professional work. However, attention to such beliefs is rarely a focus in child care. The research reported in this presentation explored how child care workers and child care students enrolled in vocational education programs viewed learning in their practice. We observed students and workers in child care for up to 90 minutes and took digital photographs of their interactions with children during regular and routine activities (e.g., individual or small group activities, transitions, snack and mealtimes). These photos were then used to stimulate thinking about their beliefs about learning and actions evident in the photos. The preliminary results suggest that child care workers and students hold a range of beliefs about their own and children's learning which are linked to how they interact with children. Implications for professional development and vocational education will be discussed.

CO-AUTHORS: DONNA BERTHELTSEN & GILLIAN BOULTON-LEWIS

Keywords: personal epistemology, child care practice, beliefs about children's learning

SYMPOSIUM III/22

PLAYFULNESS, ACTIVITY AND RISK TAKING IN CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PLAY

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: ELLEN BEATE H. SANDSETER

Queen Maud's College for Early Childhood Education, Norway

Session overview

This self-organized symposium includes three paper presentations: 1. Helen Little, Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; 2. Ellen Beate H. Sandseter, Queen Maud's College for Early Childhood Education, Norway; 3. Shirley Wyver, Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. The symposium will focus on children's (4-5 and 5-7 years old) play outdoors. In the first two presentations the issue of interest is risk taking in children's play, the first presenting results on Australian children's requirements of the possibility to do risky and challenging play, and the second presenting results on Norwegian children's expressions of their emotional experiences while performing risky play. In the third and last presentation, the focus is on how the introduction of unstructured construction materials in a playground influences children's play regarding playfulness, activity level and risk taking.

Thrills (and Spills?) in the Playground: 4-5 year Old Children's Physical Risk-taking in Early Childhood Environments

HELEN LITTLE, SHIRLEY WYVER AND FRANCES GIBSON

Macquarie University, Australia

The term risk-taking often has negative connotations particularly in many modern urban societies in which parents and Early Childhood policy are taking an increasingly overprotective approach to children's safety. Yet many aspects of our daily lives involve an element of risk. Indeed learning new skills and moving beyond our current capabilities requires a willingness to accept challenges and take risks. The research presented in this paper investigates the risk-taking behaviour of 4 to 5 year old children during outdoor play within the context of current approaches to playground safety. Using a mixed methods design, the research analyzes factors associated with children's engagement in risky play in early childhood environments in Sydney, Australia. Video recordings of children's play at their early childhood centre and at local playgrounds were coded according to the level of risk involved in relation to the child's ability and possible outcomes. Qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with the children's teachers explored (i) attitudes to risk taking; (ii) provision for risk taking; and, (iii) their responses to the current regulations. The findings of this research support the notion that children require access to a wide range of stimulating and challenging physical outdoor play activities in order to experience managed risks through which they can learn new skills, test the limits of their capabilities and learn to appraise the risks associated with both the play environment and their own behaviour. However, the current regulatory environment imposes constraints on teachers' ability to provide sufficiently challenging outdoor play experiences for the children in their care.

SYMPOSIUM
SET III

Children's Expressions of Exhilaration and Fear in Risky Play

ELLEN BEATE H. SANDSETER

Queen Maud's College for Early Childhood Education, Norway

This presentation focuses on how children experience different kinds of risky play. Children naturally seek and conduct exciting forms of play that involve a risk of physical injury (risky play) (Ball, 2002; Readdick & Park, 1998; Smith, 1998; Stephenson, 2003; Stine, 1997). They are intrinsically motivated by the exhilarating pleasure of heightened arousal, which includes the experience of fear and anxiety as possible outcomes (Aldis, 1975; Apter 1992). The study presented has a phenomenological interpretive approach to children's experiences in risky play. The research aim to explore, describe and interpret the structure and essence of children's versatile experiences during the phenomenon of risky play (Grbich, 2007; Patton, 1990, 2002)

The results from video observations of children's risky play in two Norwegian preschools

reveal that children show several emotional expressions, bodily, facially, and verbally, while engaging in risky play. Their experiences include both pure exhilaration and pure fear, and quite often both emotions are present at the same time. The study also reveals findings indicating that one of the main aspects of risky play is to keep the exhilaration bordered on the feeling of pure fear; but if pure fear occurs, the play ends with withdrawal.

Suggested implications of the study are that risk-taking should be acknowledged as an important part of children's play, and that children should be able to engage in challenging play adjusted to their individual sense of risk and urge for exhilaration.

Use of Unstructured Materials to Promote Playfulness, Activity and Risk Taking in a School Playground

SHIRLEY WYVER (1), ANITA BUNDY (2), TIM LUCKETT (2), GERALDINE NAUGHTON (3), PAUL TRANTER (4), JO RAGEN (2), EMMA SINGLETON (2), GRETA SPIES (3)

(1) *Macquarie University, Australia*

(2) *University of Sydney, Australia*

(3) *Australian Catholic University*

(4) *University of New South Wales, Australia*

We report on an 11-week intervention in which we observed an increase in activity levels and play (social and creative) of 20 children aged 5 to 7 years following the introduction of unstructured construction materials on a school playground. The playground was the primary outdoor area of a mainstream primary school in Western Sydney, Australia. Unstructured materials were large, familiar items such as hay bales and car tyres. Videorecordings of children's play were coded using the Test of Playfulness that operationalises intrinsic motivation, internal control, freedom from unnecessary constraints of reality, and giving and reading of social cues. Actigraph accelerometers were used to measure changes in activity levels. Results indicate that there was a significant increase in the mean scores for the 20 children on the Test of Playfulness and for 12 children on activity level. Some teachers reported concerns about the risks involved for children when engaging with these unstructured materials, raising conflicts about their need to provide a challenging environment and their duty of care. Nonetheless, all equipment met Australian standards for use in playgrounds and no children were injured. Importantly, all teachers reported that children were more social, creative and resilient during the intervention.

SYMPOSIUM III/23

MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PLAY, LEARNING, AND MOTIVATION

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: OLE FREDRIK LILLEMUR

Queen Maud's College for Early Childhood Education, Norway

Session overview

In all aspects of development, children's sense of relatedness is important for development of cultural identity, referring to social aspects of motivation and learning. Relatedness and development of social competence are also central aspects. Accordingly, attitudes towards learning and inclusion in the culture will affect sense of relatedness and motivation, and subsequently school achievements.

Drawing upon these theories Lillemyr and Marder are presenting results from a cross-cultural research study including six different cultural groups of 3-5 grade primary school students. The intention of the study was to uncover cultural profiles in interests of play and learning,

aspects of self-concept, and motivational orientation, applying scales and interviews. Findings show different cultural profiles among Indigenous students (Aboriginal Australian, Navajo Indian, and Sámi) and non-Indigenous (majority) students (Anglo Australian, Anglo American, and ethnic Norwegians) in the focused areas. Drawing upon results from the same research study, Søbstad presents results concerning the relation between Self-Concept and Humor in regard of socio-cultural profiles. In majority cultures humoristic self is related to interest in free play, learning and local activities, not so within Indigenous cultures. Gender differences in humor self was clearly indicated, although not significantly in Indigenous groups.

Finally, based upon motivational goal theory and instruments developed in this tradition, Flowerday presents and discusses characteristic findings in her longitudinal study of 3-5 grade elementary students. She documents significant main effects in the motivational areas of Caring, Community responsibility, Rewards, and Praise. The responses indicated a statistically significant main effect for ethnicity in some areas.

Keywords: relatedness, play, learning, self-concept, motivation

A Multicultural Perspective on Play, Learning, and Self-Concept in Primary School

OLE FREDRIK LILLEMUR (1) AND KURT MARDER (2)

(1) *Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway*

(2) *University of Western Sydney, Australia*

In the school's conception of learning, the cultural aspect of children's play has often been lacking. Recently school reforms emphasize play as important for learning, and argue for a broad perspective of learning, and play is an important arena for social learning as well. Recent research has focused social aspects and friendship as fundamental elements for engagement in learning activities. Sense of relatedness to culture is strongly tied to aspects of self-determination, respect and sense of competence. This is essential to promote motivation for further education, among all students, for Indigenous students in particular.

In a cross-cultural research study, the intention was to uncover cultural profiles on interests in play, learning preference, self-concept and motivational orientation, applying scales and interviews. Similarities and differences were documented among Aboriginal, Navajo and Sámi students, and on the other hand non-Indigenous students, in interest in free vs. directed play and learning, aspects of self-concept and motivation. A tendency of Indigenous students to favour a more traditional, teacher-directed concept of learning was found, compared to non-Indigenous students. Further, Indigenous students had significantly lower Self-concept, were stronger performance oriented in school motivation, compared to non-Indigenous students. In Norway teachers of Indigenous students applied play to a lesser degree than teachers of majority students. Teachers in Arizona and Australia seldom used play in the classroom. All countries included still have challenges to be met in terms of the equality of education, independent of cultural background. Certainly, motivation for school learning is a key issue in this concern.

Humor and Self-Concept: A Multicultural Perspective

FRODE SØBSTAD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Humor and play have many features in common, both of which are important aspects in children's lives. In this part of the project *A socio-cultural perspective on play and learning* the aim was to focus on the relationship between different aspects of children's self-concept, including their humoristic self-concept, and interest in learning, play and local cultural activities. Participants in this study were drawn from primary schools in Australia, Norway and the United States. The students in the sample were 8, 9 and 10 years old and were

recruited from the majority culture and from Indigenous groups in the three countries. Results from rating scales and interviews show interesting relationships between the humor self-concept and gender. More boys than girls describe themselves as funny. In the majority culture humoristic self concept seems to be related to interest in free play, learning and local activities. In the Indigenous groups these relations were insignificant. There are reasons to consider most of the documented differences to be caused by dissimilarities between cultures, school systems, and how representatives of ethnic groups perceive and think about upbringing and education. In particular, the gender differences found calls for further research.

Keywords: relatedness, play, humor, learning, self concept.

Motivation of Elementary School Students in Grades 3-5: A Multicultural, Longitudinal Study

TERRI FLOWERDAY (1) AND KURT MARDER (2)

(1) *University of New Mexico, USA*

(2) *University of Western Sydney, Australia*

Based on motivation theory, there are many variables that may influence a student's willingness to exert effort, maintain effort in the face of difficulty, and ultimately achieve his/her goals in school. We wanted to determine which of these motivators were the most influential for elementary school children. Also, we were interested in any differences that may exist for age, gender, and ethnicity.

In this three year longitudinal study, motivation for academics was measured using a modified version of McInerney's Inventory of School Motivation. This scale consists of 53 Likert Scale items that form nine subscales related to major motivational constructs: Future Goals, Cooperation, Competition, Caring, Community Responsibility, Rewards, Praise, Mastery and Interest. Data were collected from 146 (72 male and 74 female) elementary school children, grades 3, 4, 5, ages 8-10. Ethnicities were 42 Anglo-American, 86 Hispanic, 10 Native American, and 8 other or mixed. Schools were located in the southwestern United States.

We found a significant main effect across time in the areas of Caring, Community Responsibility, and Rewards, with Grade 3 higher than Grade 5. Praise was significantly more motivating for Grade 3 than for Grade 4, and Grade 4 more than Grade 5. Responses indicated a significant main effect for ethnicity in the areas of Interest and Cooperation with Native American children higher than Anglo-Americans. For gender, we found no significant main effect or interaction with age.

Results from this study may be used to inform decisions that influence school structure, curriculum, and instruction in elementary schools.

Keywords: relatedness, motivation, learning, interest.

FRIDAY 5th SEPTEMBER
SYMPOSIUM SET IV
14:15 – 15.45

SYMPOSIUM IV/1
PARENTS IN ECE CONTEXT

Individual papers

CHAIR: GUY ROBERTS-HOLMES

University of Swansea, Wales

Parent Support and Early Childhood Education in the Social Investment State

MICHEL VANDENBROECK

Gent University, Belgium

Many scholars have documented that early childhood has historically been considered as an area of state intervention in the family in order to save the child and the nation through the child. After a decennium mainly characterized by welfare cuts and increasing social exclusion and poverty, the 1990's saw the birth of the social investment state: a welfare state that does not compensate for failure, but invests in future success. Social inclusion is now defined in the first place by employability and a growing focus on risk-management, individual responsibility and a discourse of "no rights without duties". These changes also affect the relationships between families and the state and constructions of "parental support" programmes in the early years. We will illustrate this with examples from different countries.

An action research conducted in Brussels combined the creation of a dialogical space between practitioners, policy and researchers with survey on the parenting conditions of 350 parents. The study is based on earlier research in Italy (Musatti, 2007; Rullo & Musatti, 2005) and is an attempt to give a voice to "becoming" mothers of diverse backgrounds and to document "normality". The results of the study suggest that dominant constructions of "parental insecurity", "parental stress" and individual programmes based on expert advice may be troubled from the parents' perspectives. This paper can also be considered as a plea for dialogue across paradigmatic divides. In this paper I propose to elaborate this analysis of early socialisation as a new emerging salvation theme. We propose some possibilities for reconstructing parent support as social support, drawing on the concept of "relational citizenship" (Pols, 2006).

Keywords: parent support, citizenship, values, governmentality

Parents' Evaluations and Quality Improvement of Infant-toddlers Day-care Centres

TULLIA MUSATTI

Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies, Italy

The important role of the parents' perspectives in the definition and evaluation of the quality of day-care centres has been largely recognized since the seminal document issued by the European Commission Childcare network in 1991. However, with concern to the parents' evaluation of day-care centres several issues still remain unexplored. What are the main dimensions of the centre's quality perceived by the parents? How can the parents' point of view be integrated into an evaluation system aimed at improving the centre's quality? In order to investigate the first question, we developed a questionnaire through which parents were induced to consider a variety of specific features of the service, the experience made in the service by their child, their own experience as parents, and their overall satisfaction. In a

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two-year assessment, the questionnaire was filled in by 3609 parents whose child attended an infant-toddler day-care centre in Rome. Six dimensions of parents' evaluation emerged. Two separate regressions analyses were performed in order to get the best predictors of the overall satisfaction in children and parents' experience. The factors "Children's social and cognitive experience" and "Parent's participation" emerged as the best predictors of satisfaction in children and parents' experience, respectively. With reference to the second question, we designed a specific procedure to integrate the parents' judgments with the evaluations made by teachers and day-care centre managers within an evaluation system based on participation and aiming at the improvement of the centre quality.

CO-AUTHOR MASSIMILIANO SCOPELLITI

Keywords: quality, parents' evaluation, participation, daycare

Transition Resilience from Birth to School

ROSEMARY ROBERTS

Centre for Research in Early Childhood, United Kingdom

This paper examines the meaning and attributes of transition resilience in early childhood, including an ecological view of transition perspectives. It explores the basic needs of young children in transition situations, proposing strategies for developing transition resilience based on the literature, and on recent research into the early development of resilient wellbeing, including interviews with mothers of young children. Strategies were perceived as divisible into those that are important over time, from birth; and those that are specific to preparing for conventional transition experiences such as starting school. These strategies underline the importance of the role of the key person.

The application of resilient wellbeing constructs - of agency, belonging and boundaries, communication and the physical dimension - in practitioners' thinking about supporting children's transitions throughout the early years, was illuminating. Experiences of greetings and separations are discussed, emphasizing the importance of trust between the children and their companions; and the kinds of knowledge that children need for transition resilience are identified, together with a range of positive transition experiences. The importance of 'apprenticeship' experiences is illustrated, in which children and companions together contribute to everyday real-life routines and tasks. The paper ends with a range of basic early childhood education and care principles for practitioners in relation to supporting young children through challenging transition experiences.

Keywords: transition, resilience, wellbeing, agency

SYMPOSIUM IV/2

ACTUAL DIVERSITY

Individual papers

CHAIR: CAROLE GOODCHILD

University of Teeside, United Kingdom

Gendered Practices in Child Care

HEGE EGGEN BØRVE, BERIT VERSTAD AND ANNE LISE VOLD

Nord-Trøndelag University College, Norway

This paper focuses on how constructions of gender influence workers practices in child care by analysing practices in kinder gardens as gendered. We take as our point of departure a case study carried out among female and men employees working in kinder gardens located in Norway and question: What impact has gender on workers practices? In particular we

intend to elaborate on how the design of kinder gardens is founded on implicit gendered ideas and what impact this have on employee's practices.

Norway and the Nordic countries are usually seen as pioneers concerning gender equality in work life. In the last few years gender equality in the kinder garden has been given special attention to the government introduction of an action programme for gender equality in kinder garden. The two goals of the program are to recruit more men into the sector and to put emphasise on equality opportunities for girls and boys. In this paper we understand gender as socially constructed (Kvande, 2007).

Keywords: kinder garden, gender, gender equality, practices

Reconsidering a Core Value in Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care: Juxtaposing 'Recognition' with Cultural Diversity

MONA-LISA ANGELL-JACOBSEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

The proposed session will be based on my Master thesis which is about recognition of cultural diversity in early childhood education and care (ECEC). In a Norwegian context of ECEC Bae's (1996, 2004) psychological concept of 'recognition' (*anerkjennelse*) has a dominant position as a core value in policy, theory and practice. So while planning the thesis I had her concept in mind. But after working with the project for some time I was able to 'see' that Bae's concept of *anerkjennelse* is put to work in relation to linguistic and cultural diversity (Gjervan 2006) even though Bae (1996, 2004) does not write about diversity issues. I also learned that there are several other concepts of 'recognition' besides the psychological one, and that some of them have been used extensively in discussions on 'multiculturalism'. This led me to reconsider what 'recognition' could mean in a Norwegian ECEC context, and to suggest that a reconceptualization of 'recognition' could be useful. The reconceptualization is done through auto ethnography following Denzin (2003), and rhizoanalyses following MacNaughton (2005). In my reconceptualization of 'recognition' I do not intent to reject or replace Bae's psychological concept. The aim of the Master thesis is to open up to more diversity regarding what 'recognition' could mean in ECEC practices, theories and policies. The proposed session will address the concept 'recognition' in relation to cultural diversity. I will focus mainly on possible ways of reading and doing 'recognition' when the concept is juxtaposed with cultural diversity.

Keywords: reconsidering, recognition, cultural diversity

Working towards the De-essentialization of Identity Categories in Conflict and Post-conflict Societies: Israel, Cyprus, and Northern Ireland

ZVI BEKERMAN (1), MICHALINOS ZEMBYLAS (2) AND CLAIRE MCGLYNN (3)

(1) Hebrew University, Israel

(2) Open University, Cyprus

(3) Queens University, Northern Ireland

In this paper we explore what can be learned from paying attention to children's perspectives in three different settings (Cyprus, Israel, and Northern Ireland), by attempting to understand the ways educators involved in educational initiatives, geared towards peace, co-existence and/or conflict resolution, work towards these goals and what could be achieved if such initiatives would take further consideration of the children's perspectives. The structure of the paper is the following: firstly, we offer short descriptions of the educational initiatives under examination and the socio-political contexts within which they have evolved. We then share with the reader's vignettes from the considerable amount of data gathered, to exemplify the spheres in which identity makes its appearance and the ways educational staff and

participants attend to and construe it. We then present an interpretation of these issues in light of modernist/positivist perspectives and critically consider why poststructuralist/constructivist theories fall short of offering a solution to the essentializing practices unveiled. Lastly we build on postpositivist realism which, while acknowledging the social/discursive conditioning/construction of self and identity, can also acknowledge its real/concrete/historical existence. We argue that this perspective has much to offer in the way of bettering the chances of educational labor to sooth the conditions which support situations of intractable conflict. There are also important implications in terms of forming an alternative response to the perennial question: unity or difference?

Keywords: ethnic identity, conflict, peace education, majority minority relations

SYMPOSIUM IV/3

ICT IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: KNUT STEINAR ENGELSEN

Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

Early Childhood Designs for Multiliterate Techno Tikes

SANDRA HESTERMAN

Murdoch University, Australia

In 1996, the New London Group presented their manifesto, *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures*, advocating change in literacy teaching for the 21st century. The authors claimed that if students are to be equipped with skills necessary to meet the challenging and diverse demands of different forms of communication brought about by the introduction of new technologies, then a broader definition of literacy was required. As debate on information and communication technology (ICT) integration and literacy definition intensifies, a more hotly contested topic engaging early childhood teachers is how they will accommodate these changes. How will early childhood education (ECE) facilitate young children's use of ICT to support Multiliteracies learning? What will new literacies look like in their teaching programs? How will young students use ICT to learn in different ways? This study investigated how, a decade after the published manifesto, six West Australian teachers integrated ICT in ECE to support Multiliteracies learning. Six case studies, constructed over a nine-month period and employing ethnographic methodology with postmodern perspective, illustrated how different ECE curricular, pedagogical and classroom designs impact on the quality of students' learning. A cross case analysis of five themes common to all cases: definition, resources, support, pedagogy and program, provided insight to the challenges of integrating ICT and Multiliteracies learning in ECE. Principles of Action facilitating integration processes were established. Research findings confirmed that students' ICT and Multiliteracies experiences were intrinsically entwined with teacher pedagogy and school culture.

Keywords: multiliteracies, information and communication technology, pedagogy

The Role of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) in the Professional Development of Early Years Practitioners

GILL GOODLIFF

The Open University, United Kingdom

Elements of e-learning are now encountered by all early years practitioners who embark on degree-level study towards professional qualifications or status in England (HEFCE, 2005). Government policy has identified the importance of the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) skills for all practitioners involved in the delivery of children's services (DfES, 2006; DfES, 2007). Practitioners in the early years workforce need to be able to support children in using a range of ICT resources (CWDC, 2006; DfES, 2007). Students on the Open University Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree in Early Years (FDEY) study by distance learning. The work-based learning courses have mandatory CMC elements and students require regular and frequent access to a computer with Internet access.

In this paper I discuss the way CMC is used in the work-based learning courses to support the development of ICT skills and to promote reflective professional and academic dialogue. The research described here is part of a wider survey in 2007 of the first cohort of FDEY graduates, which explored students' perceptions of the impact of their study on aspects of their professional role.

Socio-cultural theory underpins the research locating the students' learning and professional development through social participation and interactions in communities of practitioners (Rogoff, 1998; Wenger, 1998). The study is interpretative. Methods of data collection include questionnaire and interview data from students, an analysis of electronic conferencing contributions and their final written assignments. Findings suggest that the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue through CMC can be a powerful tool in reflective practice and for developing communities of practitioners.

Keywords: professional development, ICT, communities of practice

Promoting Professionalism in School Age Care

JENNIFER CARTMEL

Griffith University, Australia

This session will report on a recent Australian study investigating the circumstances of workers in school age care services that are located on school sites. The critical ethnography used the tools of participant observation and interviews to collect data about the staff in services. The perceptions about the professional role of school age care workers and school staff were explored using Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action. The findings illuminated the struggle by school age care workers to retain a professional identity in circumstances that made them feel alienated, lacking legitimation and without a collective identity. The session will conclude with recommendations for promoting the role of the professional in school-age care services

Keywords: school age care, child care workers

SYMPOSIUM IV/4

ADULT - CHILD RELATIONS

Individual papers

CHAIR: MARJATTA KALLIALA

University of Helsinki, Finland

Little Spaces: The Learner and the Child, the Educator and the Practitioner Promoting and Exploring the Relationships between Learners and Teacher/Practitioners; Progress towards Making a Difference

ANDREW SANDERS, RUBY OATES AND VAL WOOD

University of Derby, United Kingdom

This paper outlines how one UK Higher Education institution is working towards the above with practical application based on the approach of relational pedagogy. It highlights the challenges presented to Early Childhood Studies academics when working with a diverse student cohort many of whom have no direct experience of working with children. The paper then goes on to explore the concept of 'little spaces' as a driver for this particular academic programme and the reasons why the academic team have chosen to promote and explore the relationships between learners and teacher/practitioners. The 'little spaces', arguably, for us exist in two different places; between the practitioner and the child(ren) and between us (as lecturers) and the students. Contextually and in direct contrast to the majority of European countries, the UK equates qualified Early Years practitioner status to holders of a vocational diploma gained through the Further as opposed to Higher (Graduate) Education sector; this presents as a diverse student cohort. We look, therefore, at a range of interpretations and manifestations of 'relational pedagogy'; the paths towards this as a multidisciplinary approach are examined. These were consolidated at our recent Revalidation and some learning, teaching and assessment developments and thoughts from there are described. Furthermore, dimensions are explored; there are 'themes and threads' academically and also the emerging skills which are linked with practice parts of the qualification. This includes an analysis of the rationale and a continuing consideration of 'little spaces' as a key driver. Finally, there is an exploration of our journey as a team of lecturers illustrating ongoing dilemmas and contradictions against the background of current UK early years directives.

Keywords: relational pedagogy, learning, teaching, spaces

Reconsidering the Basics: Professional Development for Teachers of Infants and Toddlers

DIANE HORM

University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, USA

This presentation will address the broad topic of early childhood professional development and associated challenges and demands. In the U.S. there have been increased calls for higher levels of professional preparation for teachers of young children, including those who staff the growing number of publicly-funded programs for infants and toddlers. Together, these pressures have created a shortage of qualified personnel. In addition, the need to enhance the qualifications of staff currently working in the field has become paramount. The addition of newer programs for younger children has also raised questions about the adequacy of traditional early childhood teacher preparation for preparing staff capable of planning and delivering high-quality programs for the youngest children. One issue is inclusion of content related to the care and education of infants and toddlers. A second issue is cultivation of deep understanding of how to translate this knowledge into high quality programs for infants and toddlers. This presentation will discuss one higher education model that strives to address these issues. A community college and university have been working together to design, implement, research, and disseminate a robust early childhood teacher professional development path leading to the bachelor's degree and teacher certification. This initiative has aligned curriculum between the two institutions, providing a coordinated linkage for the transition of students from one level of education to the next. A unique feature of this model is increased focus on infant and toddler development and care. The model is based on national and state standards and accountability guidelines.

CO-AUTHOR: CARLA GOBLE, *TULSA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, USA*

Keywords: professional development, infant and toddler care, professionalism

Training Teaching Students to Promote Social Competence in their Daily Activities - a Case Study

CLODIE TAL

Levinsky College of Education, Israel

This presentation shows how pre-service teaching students implemented values, attitudes, knowledge and competencies developed in a "Social Competence" course in their field work assignments in kindergartens. Using a case study, the presentation also highlights the students' reflections following their fieldwork interventions. This course was based on an ecological approach which states that both optimal and non-optimal social development as well as the process of remediation of social and behavioral difficulties, are attained through a complex interplay between an active child and the several social contexts (family, school relationships) that surround and interact with him (Bronfenbrenner, 1978; Pianta, 1999). Some of the intervention principles reflected in the students' reflections included: a. teachers/students should form "good" relationships with the children whose social competence they wish to enhance; they need to promote self-efficacy perceptions related to their ability to have a positive impact on the children's social competence; b. the definition of the social "problem" should take into consideration the child as well as the nature of his interactions with educators and peers; c. teachers/students should deal with the child's difficulty within the small group activities and they should sustain from expulsion from the group; d. teachers/students should reinforce pro-social behavior in groups and guide exchanges among children in-group so that egalitarian interactions among children are ensured; e. discreet discussions with children following transgressions are required so that children understand relationships among their actions and their outcomes; f. collaboration between students and their field-work mentors is very important.

Keywords: social competence, teachers' pre training, violence prevention, ecological approach

SYMPOSIUM IV/5 CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: EDDIE MCKINNON

Pen Green Research Base, United Kingdom

Challenges and Possibilities for Professionalism in a Distributed Organization

LEENA HALTTUNEN

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The aim of the study is to describe leadership and day care work in a distributed organization. Distributed organizations are quite new but an increasing way to organize day care units in Finland. In this study a distributed organization means an organization where a single director leads at least two day care units. In a distributed organization the day care units are situated physically apart and they may offer different kind of day care services (day care, family day care and open day care).

The study is a qualitative case study and it was carried out in two distributed day care organizations. These organizations included four and five day care units. The data collection methods were observation, group and individual interviews and a questionnaire. The subjects of the study were two centre directors and the other members of the staff in their organizations. The data were analyzed using data driven content analysis.

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Findings that are discussed here are based on the interviews with the staff members about challenges and possibilities regarding their work in a distributed organization. Early findings indicate that in an organization like this, it was necessary to work more independently and self-regulation was emphasized. Working more independently for example forced the members of the staff to make decisions by themselves. However, the staff members described professional development and job-satisfaction while having more responsibility by them.

Keywords: distributed organization, professionalism, day care work, leadership

Building Early Intervention Supervision Competencies

PAULA SANTOS

University of Aveiro, Portugal

Early Intervention (EI) is a family centred process, having as ultimate desired outcome, the development and well being of 0-3 year-old children at risk of developmental delay (due to established, biological or environmental factors). Its success depends on the processes lived by their families, in their strive to become capable, empowered and in control of their own lives. In order to help families to acquire the strengths that make them families, the role played by professionals capable of being sensitive, stimulating and promoting family autonomy is crucial. Scaffolding these professionals, we've implemented a coordinating, training, supervision and evaluation structure. Considering the specificity of supervision on EI – supervising early childhood educators, doctors, nurses, psychologists and social workers from different community agencies, making efforts to develop a transdisciplinary approach to families, children and communities - we developed, in an action-research project held from 2002 to 2005, a Supervision Competencies Profile. Departing from this instrument, and aiming to develop a dynamics of EI supervision competencies building, we're now starting a new action-research project, by applying the Video Home Training / Video Interaction Guidance (VHT/VIG) method, included in The International Initiative, created in The Netherlands, in the last century 80's. Aiming to support healthy interactions between families and children, and professionals working with them, among their core values, we can distinguish "to build on strengths rather than emphasizing problems, focussing on the possibilities and resources of all persons involved". In the conference, we'll present this project.

Keywords: early intervention, supervision, competencies video interaction guidance.

Creating Multifunctional Center Promoting Early Childhood Development

CARMEN ANGHELESCU

Centre for Education and Professional Development, Romania

General Objective of the program is focused on creating the service "Multifunctional Center" (CM), a quality service for children until 3-4 years old, irrespective of their social status, income, ethnic and religion, through a convergent approach of the child and parents involvement.

Specific Objectives

- 80 children will receive adequate education and care at the end of the programme.
- Building multidisciplinary teams (pediatrician, midwife, nurse, educator, psychologist, resource persons for the group)
- Increase in the professionals' competences for integrated care of the child. The CM professionals will experience another vision towards the child; by putting into practice the concept of child centered education.
- The increase in parental competences of the mothers for their children care.

- Consolidation of this service prestige within the community where it was implemented.
- Developed Activities
- Organizing an adequate learning space (explore and experiment) for the children.
 - Training courses for professionals involved, regarding early child development philosophy and implicitly the value of childhood and of the child.
 - Training of personnel for “child centered” education, that grants the child harmonious development.
 - Training courses for future mothers and parents starting from prenatal period in order to assume their parental responsibilities.
 - Training courses for parents – young mothers – in the same philosophy including developing daily life organizing abilities for the family.
 - Selection of women (young mothers), initially as volunteers for children care and education, and later, for obtaining a professional competence in child care (babysitting). Based on this, within the Multifunctional Center a correct adult :children rate will be obtained.
 - Developing a resource group within the community.
- The two Multifunctional Centers were set up and work

Keywords: creating multifunctional center promoting early childhood development

SYMPOSIUM IV/6 TEACHER EDUCATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: JENNY RITCHIE

Unitec Institute of Technology, New Zealand

Best Practices in Early Childhood Teacher Education: A Good Question

ÅSE AKSLEN (1), REBECCA NEW (2) AND METTE TRÆLAND (1)

(1) *NLA College of Teacher Education, Norway*

(2) *University of North Carolina, USA*

This presentation considers changing perspectives on early childhood teacher education in Norway. Norwegian frameworks focus on the ability of preschools and teacher colleges to change and develop. This goal of adult learning has been translated into specific practices in preservice teacher education. For example, at NLA College of Teacher Education in Norway, preschool students have traditionally written their individual bachelors theses during their sixth semester based on literature studies and field work. As a pilot study this year, students designed research questions for their thesis in cooperation with the teaching staff during the student’s practicum experience. Data drawn from interviews with the teaching staff and the students were used not only as part of an improved field research for the student’s thesis. On a longer term they suggest ways to improve systems for R&D in the community. This modest change in the traditional student research assignment has powerful theoretical and practical implications, i.e. the theoretical importance of context, the changing demographics of classrooms, and the need for teachers to know how to learn about the children they teach. The discussion highlights potentials for such collaborative inquiry to establish more successful means and best practices for cooperation between the Teachers College and preschools. Results of this study will be considered in light of recent observations in the US of a closer link between teacher education and practicum experience, thereby allowing a deeper examination of early childhood education and teacher education in diverse cultural contexts. This project has the potential to inspire new research on cultural interpretations of developmentally appropriate practices in teacher education and in the classroom.

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Keywords: R&D, students, teacher education, preschools

Living a Project not Learning a Project: An Action Research Study of Preservice Teacher Education

EUNJU YUN

Catholic University of Daegu, South Korea

Discrepancy between theory and practice has been one of nagging issues in early childhood teacher education. A variety of efforts have been made to solve this problem in order to enhance prospective teachers' professionalism. Unfortunately, it is still in process and recently becomes the most urgent matter to teacher educators: what is the best way to educate student teachers to become qualified teachers? Research purpose is to present an alternative to train prospective teachers to be authentic teachers that combine both theory and practice, instead of only providing "inert knowledge" (Whitehead, 1929). The assumption is that they could be well trained by "living theories" rather than "learning" theories: specifically, living the Project Approach rather than learning the Project Approach. They develop professionalism by going through the learning process that they want to occur in the context of children's learning. Based upon this belief, I conducted research to provide student teachers an opportunity of living projects or "projectizing" like "mathematizing(Freudenthal, 1971)" according to their own interest in the same way that children carry out projects. Research questions are as follows: What is the main difference between "living project" and "learning project?" What helps student teachers become wholeheartedly purposeful in learning? Thirty eight undergraduates in the southern Korea participated in the study. The discussion leads to the conclusion that living theories on the part of prospective teachers is the major *raison d'être* of pre-service teacher education program.

Keywords: living, teacher education, project

The Effects of Thinking Skills Education on the Critical, Creative and Problem Solving Skills of Preschool Teacher Candidates

MUZEYYEN SEVINC AND EMEL TOK

Marmara University, Turkey

In the 21.Century with the abundance of information easily accessible to people one primarily needs to know how to reach useful information and how to use it effectively to fulfill desired goals. In this respect it is vital to start educating teachers in training who will be responsible for educating the young generation.

The goal of our study was to test for the effects of our Thinking Skills Training Program on the preschool teacher candidates who were all 4th year students at Marmara University. The training program inspired by Sternberg's Successful Intelligence was prepared by the researchers which lasted for twelve weeks. The program included inquiry based exercises on the critical, creative and problem solving thinking skills. A quasi-experimental design was executed with three samples of students: 34 in each group; a) training group, b) group presentation and c) control group.

Data was collected by Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Test, Torrance Creative Thinking Test and Problem Solving Inventory. The Total scores obtained from the post-tests indicate significant results in critical thinking which are in abstraction, awareness of assumptions, divergent thinking, evaluation of conflicting ideas. In creative thinking skills the following were significant: verbal fluency, verbal flexibility, verbal originality, elaboration, emotional expressions, unusual visualization, and fantasy elaboration. A significant improvement was also found in the perceptions of problem solving skills.

Keywords: thinking skills, teacher training program

SYMPOSIUM IV/7 ORGANISATIONS OF ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: BRIDGET EGAN

University of Winchester, United Kingdom

“Schatzsuche”: Searching for Treasures in Kindergarten – a Healthy and Active Program based on a Resource-oriented and Systemic Approach

SONJA QUANTE AND INES EISENBARTH

University Bayreuth, Germany

Healthy and active programs which help children to become strong and self-confident personalities – that’s what we would like to see as status quo in Germany. In fact, one of the most discussed problems is the lack of physical activity with consequences on children’s health. Identifying the issue is vital to show the need for effective programs in this sector. However a deficit-oriented perspective won’t help to solve the problem. Therefore we should concentrate on developing the children’s resources needed for life. This change of perspective from problems/deficits to the child’s resources, strengths and abilities has great impact not only on the interaction between child and educator but also on team development, institutional structures and problem solving as well as the climate in between all persons involved in Kindergarten.

“Schatzsuche” means “hunting” for treasures. Systemic beliefs form the basis for this idea which the Department of Physical Education and Sports translated into a longterm blended-learning-seminar. To date, three year-long runs of “Schatzsuche im Kindergarten” have taken place involving about thirty institutions in total.

We would like to present some essentials of systemic thinking and how these ideas can help develop kindergarten to be a healthy, active and positive thinking institution where everybody’s potentials are seen and used positively (including staff, parents and children). Besides classical empirical research methods, we also applied ideas of systemic research to the evaluation process. The results of this research and consequences for the design and implementation of further “Schatzsuche” – seminars will be presented.

Keywords: e-learning, kindergarten, health, physical activity, systemic approach

Helping Early Years Students to Understand Social Exclusion

KAREN ARGENT

Newman University College, United Kingdom

This paper will discuss how legislation and policy that promotes inclusive practice is conveyed through the initial training of Early Years practitioners in England.

It will reflect on the power of the visual image in picture books in helping to transmit ideology, culture and values in young children. A case study of a particular module on an Early Years Education Studies undergraduate degree will be used to examine how knowledge and understanding of the needs and rights of a variety of socially excluded groups can be addressed. These include children with disabilities, children of prisoners and children of refugees and asylum seekers.

It will explore how working with materials published by relevant campaigning voluntary organisations eg Scope, Action for Prisoner’s Families and The Refugee Council can add a valuable ‘insider’ dimension to the student’s understanding of the rights perspective.

Practitioners make political choices in their selection of resources. They need knowledge and confidence about how to select those that can act as a vehicle for exploring social issues because their own understanding of this subject may, in itself, contribute to perpetuating negative stereotypes. It is important to explore whether professional training allows these attitudes to be challenged and constructed from an informed position.

Knowledgeable Early Years practitioners are more likely to request continuing professional development and training on social issues. They may also request better resources and perhaps influence production of these materials thereby translating legislation and policy into practice more effectively.

Keywords: training, social exclusion, children's rights and stereotypes

SYMPOSIUM IV/8 CHILDHOODS IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: SALLY PETERS

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Active Participation and Professional Development

MARIT BØE

Telemark University College, Norway

As a result of globalization we have information to other research cultures which gives us knowledge about research questions and critical issues related to early childhood education. We will argue that global connections can open new possibilities for research methodologies in kindergarten. We will point to new constructions of action research as a methodology useful to professionalism and the early childhood education field.

One of the challenges in the early childhood education field today is how neo liberal tendencies pushes power and affect local possibilities of agency. This can have large impacts on practitioner research were action research could be limited to problem-solving, following a rational for change. This is however in contrast to the intentions in the Norwegian national curriculum who offers critical reflection as a way to professional development. Professional development is recently strongly influenced by *'pedagogical documentation'* as a tool for change. Our study combines *'pedagogical documentation'* and *action research*, and opens up to study professional development trough action and agency. For us, it meant acting as social and political constructors, participating in *fourth generation action research* (Mac Naughton, 2001, 2005) working against discourses of power. Art works were used in the action research process when engaging in a feminist post structural framework. The study argues that reconceptualizing theories can have a great impact on participation in kindergarten, and that critical voices is necessary to study and create change in kindergarten.

Keywords: participation, action research, political practice, professional development

Narratives from the Nursery: Deconstructing 'Childhood' Discourses to Better understand 'Professional' Practice

JAYNE OSGOOD

London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

Through an analysis of qualitative life history data, collected from 27 nursery workers in England, I explore the various discourses of childhood that are drawn upon, rejected, negotiated and created from personal experiences of being a child to professional

encounters with children and the political locatedness within a particular workforce reform agenda. The nursery workers in this study are located within, and contribute to, a complex and contradictory discursive landscape; the training that they participate in, the curricula that they implement, the professional code(s) of conduct within which they operate, not to mention their own subject position (as a consequence of their life history), all act to determine the ways in which they look at the world, make judgements and interact with others. By attending to a deconstruction and problematisation of the notion of childhood (as a discursive construction) my aim is to demonstrate the power of various discourses, and the ways in which practitioners wrestle with different discourses at different times and to what effect. My intention is to tease out hegemonic constructions of childhood, practice and professionalism and to identify the implications of such discourses for practitioners working in nurseries.

Keywords: childhood, professionalism/professional development, life history

Empowering Early Childhood Educators' Professional Development by a Maieutic Approach

ANNA BONDIOLI

University of Pavia, Italy

The acquisition of some forms of reflecting thinking, that is the capacity of meaning making from one's own educational experience (goals, values, practices), is one of the most important aspects of professional development in a community of educators in order to elicit shared awareness on "what we do, why we do what we do it and how we do it better than before".

The contribution presents an approach, used in in-service early childhood educators' training experiences, based on maieutic abilities from the part of a professional trainer, the explicitation of educational values and ideas on the part of educators and the co-construction of educational meanings between trainer and trainees. Two experiences will be presented in order to show the characteristics of the approach. The former aimed to help caregivers of different day-care centres of the same town to reflect on their own educational practices and values in order to develop professional educational guidelines expressing the pedagogical orientation of the territorial service. The latter led to the elaboration of criteria and standards to evaluate the play quality making of day care centres educators more aware of their own educational orientations, helping them to reflect on their own play practices and to project play environment conditions which can elicit children's developed play behaviours. The presentation will focus particularly on: the pedagogical assumptions of the approach, the different phases of the empowerment process, the main strategies used by the trainer; the role of mirroring, confronting and discussing in promoting self awareness and educational identity.

CO-AUTHOR: DONATELLA SAVIO, *UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA*

Keywords: reflective thinking, maieutic strategies, in-service pre-school educators' professional training, co-constructing pedagogical identity.

SYMPOSIUM IV/9 PROFESSIONALISM

Individual papers

CHAIR: MIKE GASPER

Amber Publications and Training (APT)

The Practitioners as 'Actors of Change' in the Process of Professionalization in the Early Years: a Study of Video Narratives from the Seventies Until now

JAN PEETERS

Ghent University, Belgium

The professions for the early years are going through a process of professionalization in most of the European countries, but little is known about the practitioner's view on this emerging role transformation (Oberhuemer, 2000). In this study 30 hours of video narratives of practitioners' views on their profession from the end of seventies until now were analysed. These 'little narratives' were recorded in a period of 30 years in the context of action research projects at the Ghent University and they are documenting the important role that 'actors of change' have played in the process of professionalization in the services for zero to threes in Flanders (Belgium). Through these video narratives a professional practice is made visible and hence subject to interpretation and reflection. The study also tries to determine which factors make from a childcare worker an 'actor of change'. Another part of the study is documenting the role of the researcher in action research projects that work in close collaboration with those actors of change. In the case of Flanders the best results for increasing the professionalism of the activities have been obtained in 'communicative spaces' where researchers and practitioners and policy makers worked together. But the study concludes on the other hand that the close collaboration between researchers and practitioners had also a negative effect on the professionalisation of the organisations (qualification requirements) in Flanders.

Keywords: professionalism, early years, little narratives, actors of change

Team Coaching as the Best Means for Promoting Professional Development? - Methodological and Practical Issues

GESINE NEBE

Bildung: elementar, Germany

Team coaching as the best means for promoting professional development? - methodological and practical issues

At Institut bildung:elementar a special, and in Germany in many ways unique concept of "Coaching" ECEC teams was developed and implemented. Two main issues this coaching concept is taking care of is (1) the specific East German background and (2) the fact of professionals in ECEC having to deal with uncertainty.

(1) ECEC in East Germany has experienced a time with a detailed and elaborated curriculum (1950s until 1989), a time lacking any curriculum or guidelines (1989 until 2003/2004) and recently a time of implementing new curricula in the Länder. This history has strong impacts on ECEC practice.

(2) The communicative process of creating meaning and co-constructing knowledge as such – and especially within the field of ECEC - is stringently open in terms of its outcome. Thus a practitioner must be able to deal with surprising situations, to contribute to the children's activities. More than that: an ECEC practitioner should be able to contribute to this uncertainty in a professional manner.

At Institut bildung:elementar we can already look back at many coaching processes that were conducted by our academic staff. Key questions and issues that arose within these processes and which we would like to expose, discuss and try to answer in our individual paper presentation are:

- Is promoting/developing professionalism one (perhaps: the best) way for promoting quality?
- Is team coaching the best way for promoting practitioners' professional development?
- What are the main aspects of team coaching? How does it work? What is a coach?
- What knowledge is essential for ECEC practitioners to deal with structural uncertainty in every day work?
- (How) does the specific (curriculum) history in East Germany influence practice in the field?
- How can biographical influences be included, and actually made a fruitful condition for developing professionalism?

Keywords: professionalism, in-service -team-coaching, (curriculum) history in East Germany, dealing with uncertainty

Ten Years Beyond the Examination – How Preschool Teachers Experience their Educational Work and Professional Knowledge

INGER HENSVOLD

Stockholm University, Sweden

The aim of this study is to describe how preschool teachers experience their educational work and professional knowledge – ten years beyond the examination.

The study is a follow up of my PhD, where I have interviewed 15 preschool teachers four years after they obtained their teaching degree. The interviews have been conducted in an open way with semi-structured questions to cover the interviewees' own way of thinking and to delimit the phenomena under study. The idea has been to capture a content that is not readily visible or verbalized.

The follow up study has just started and is constructed in the same way. Preliminary results from the interviews will be presented at the conference.

A life-world phenomenological approach has been the point of departure for me in the construction of this study, the reading of the empirical facts as well as in the analysis and presentation of the results. The phenomenological question is about discovering the unique meaning of a phenomenon, the meaning the lack of which would deprive the phenomenon of its identity.

Keywords: preschool teacher, preschool pedagogy, the teaching profession, experience, learning, teacher's beliefs and attitudes, phenomenology, life-world, tacit knowledge

SYMPOSIUM IV/10

CHILDREN'S LEARNING I

Individual papers

CHAIR: INGRID PRAMLING SAMUELSSON

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

SYMPOSIUM
SET IV

Rethinking Learning: Portraits, Pedagogies and Pathways

LIBBY LEE

Murdoch University, Australia

Pedagogies for multiliteracies offer teachers of young children a practical means to address popular concerns regarding children's acquisition of alphabetic or 'print' literacy. In this paper, practitioner research conducted in twelve early childhood education sites across three Australian states will be reported. The sites were selected based on their classification as having a high proportion of 'disadvantaged' students. Case stories documented longitudinally with focus children and their teachers over a three-year period will be presented. A collective inquiry approach to this research led to the creation of a framework for practitioners to generate 'portraits' of their students, reflect on appropriate pedagogies to support them and to identify pathways forward in a responsive early learning environment.

There will be brief discussion regarding the innovative project methodology and industry research funding partnerships. There will be more detailed discussion of the framework that was designed, trialled and implemented by practitioners. The aim of this framework is to cater for children's multimodal ways of learning and communicating and to enable teachers to assess and develop curriculum grounded in principles of multiliteracies pedagogy. The framework was considered by teacher participants in this research as particularly useful for students who did not engage with traditional approaches to literacy acquisition.

Keywords: pedagogy, multiliteracies, disadvantage, longitudinal

Exploring Links between Gender Differences in Early Learning Competence and Children's Classroom Behaviours: An Australian Study

SUE WALKER

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Gender differences in children's early learning competence have been examined primarily through cross-sectional studies. Explanations for girls' apparent advantage include earlier physical maturation and different social expectations placed on girls and boys from an early age. In analyses presented in this paper, differences in classroom behaviours (e.g., attentiveness and task persistence) are hypothesised as explaining gender differences in early academic outcomes. Data are drawn from Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian children (LSAC). LSAC is a cross-sequential cohort study funded by the Australian Government. Biennial data collection has been funded from 2004 (Wave 1) to 2010 (Wave 4). In these analyses, Wave 1 (2004) and Wave 2 (2006) data for 4464 children in the Kindergarten Cohort are used. Children, at Wave 2, were in the early years of formal school. They had a mean age of 6.8 years ($SD= 0.24$). Teachers rated children's literacy and mathematical understandings on academic rating scales for literacy and language competence and mathematical thinking. Measures of classroom behaviour included a 6-item measure of approaches to learning and teaching ratings on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Regression analyses take account of children's receptive language competence and emergent literacy skills at age 4 (LSAC Wave 1 data). Girls were found to have better learning outcomes, in particular, literacy and language outcomes that were significantly related to more positive classroom behaviours. Results are discussed with respect to the influence of children's early classroom behaviours on academic learning at the beginning of formal schooling.

CO-AUTHOR: DONNA BERTHELSEN

Keywords: gender differences, classroom behaviour, early learning

Exploring Curriculum Implications of Multimodal Discourse in an Early Childhood Setting: Research Conversations from a New Zealand Kindergarten

MAGGIE HAGGERTY (1), LINDA MITCHELL (2)

(1) *Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand*

(2) *University of Waikato, New Zealand*

Multimodal discourse highlights a plethora of semiotic modes in which meaning is represented and communicated and through which learning happens (Kress & Jewitt, 2003). Te Whāriki, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, emphasises that communicative competence in young children is not only verbal, but includes: "an increasingly elaborate repertoire" of non verbal forms of communication e.g. the language of images, art, dance, drama, mathematics, movement, rhythm and music (Ministry of Education, 2006, p.72). Investigating children's use of different modes or literacies and the interplay between different literacies, is the focus of our three year action research project at Wadestown Kindergarten, a Ministry of Education designated Centre of Innovation.

We are investigating the idea that different modes, such as gesture or drawing, may offer different capacities or affordances (Kress, 2000) to facilitate various kinds of communication or learning. These different capacities may make different modes better suited to some tasks than to others. How do the material properties of a mode link to the capacities they offer? What are some of the social, cultural and historical dimensions that help define how affordances are constructed?

This paper draws on analysis of recordings of curriculum episodes to explore how modes shape what is represented, and how learners and learning are changed and shaped by the differences in mode and modal combinations. We discuss how some of the affordances of a

mode may be specific to an individual child. We also discuss the key roles played by peers, teachers, and family in mediating preferred modes or literacies.

Keywords: multimodal, affordances, early childhood curriculum

SYMPOSIUM IV/11 ASSESSMENT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: TRISHA MAYNARD

Swansea University, United Kingdom

Needs Assessment of Kindergarten Teachers' In-service Training on Integrating Digital Archives into Thematic Curriculum

CHING-CHING CHENG AND KUO-HUNG HUANG

Providence University, Taiwan

This article describes part of the results of a project, sponsored by the National Science Council of Taiwan, aimed to assist kindergarten teachers to learn how to integrate digital archives into thematic curriculum. The purpose of this study is to assess the needs of the kindergarten teachers' in-service training on integrating digital archives into thematic curriculum. Eighteen teachers were selected from kindergartens claiming adoption of a thematic curriculum model. By in-depth interviewing with these teachers, the researchers gathered the pertinent information of the teachers' perspectives and potential problems about integrating digital archives resources into thematic curriculum. Furthermore, in order to collect information for the implementation of integrating digital archives into thematic curriculum, classroom observation and documentation analyzing were also conducted.

The main findings include:

1. Teachers expressed positive attitudes toward integrating digital archives resources into thematic curriculum in spite of they did not comprehend the associated theories and strategies.
2. Although teachers were confident of their abilities to implement thematic curriculum, there exists huge gaps between the teachers' planned curriculum and the implementation. Most of the teachers could not elaborate the theories of thematic approaches clearly, but they insisted they had planned "correct" thematic curriculum.
3. Having been using digital resources on the internet as teaching materials, the kindergarten teachers were not familiar with the digital archives resources created by the government.
4. The needs of kindergarten teachers' in-service training on integrating digital archives into thematic curriculum includes introduction of the digital archives resources, step-by-step demonstration of how to integrate digital archives resources into thematic curriculum, and instruction about the theoretical frameworks and practical issues of thematic curriculum model.

Keywords: thematic curriculum, in-service teacher training, digital archives, early childhood education

Developing Evaluation Strategies and Training for Early Childhood Education in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Finland

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University of Helsinki, Finland

The Development Unit of Early Childhood Education in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (Espoo, Helsinki, Kauniainen, Vantaa) of Finland was established in autumn 2007. The area encompasses over 10 000 employees, about 38 000 children and 450 day care centres and

preschools. The University of Helsinki is responsible for the area's research and developmental activities.

The aim of the project is to plan the organizational structure and operational principles for The Development Unit of Early Childhood Education in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Its other task is to plan research-based co-operation between the municipal officers and university actors in day care centres and preschools. The project will also strengthen the dialogue between the researchers and field workers in these facilities.

In January 2008 a survey was carried out in all communal day care centre teams of (N=1800, Response rate 90.6%). The aim of the survey was to obtain information about the existing evaluation practices and in-service training needs.

This paper presents preliminary results of the survey.

Keywords: early childhood education, evaluation

Science Teacher Training Contexts and Teacher Competence on Inquiry Based Teaching

MARGARIDA AFONSO, DOLORES ALVEIRINHO AND HELENA TOMÁS

University of Lisbon, Portugal

The investigation involved seventeen teachers in a teacher training course. The training involved different teaching units. Although the scientific content that was explored was different, the pedagogical principles (STS, constructivism and sociology of learning based on Bernstein' theory) that guided all the investigation were similar. The teaching units developed in the teacher training were later implemented by the teachers in their classrooms. The transfer of pedagogical and scientific knowledge and skills (investigative skills like predicting, communicating) and attitudes (like perseverance, interrogative attitude) promoted in the training context was the object of analysis/observation in the context of application (classroom) and allowed identifying the main difficulties of teachers to implement effective pedagogical practices that lead their children to high levels of scientific literacy. In methodological terms, data of quantitative and qualitative nature was obtained in the analysis of the content of documents related to the experimental teaching of science and from the analysis of the training condition and from the lessons of the teachers that were observed by the trainers. The results revealed that teachers had some difficulties in implementing high levels of science learning but the characteristics of teacher training context play an important role on professional development. Finally, we would like to highlight that the way we conceive teachers' education definitely regulates the investments in their formation. We also consider important that teachers' formers contemplate the integration of scientific and pedagogical principles, knowledge, skills and attitudes. With this investigation we expect to contribute to a better conceptualization in teachers' education.

Keywords: pedagogical practice, professional development, scientific development, teacher training

SYMPOSIUM IV/12

MULTICULTURAL LEARNING

Individual papers

CHAIR: OLE FREDRIK LILLEMUR

Queen Maud's College for Early Childhood Education, Norway

Promoting Early Foreign Language Learning in a Play-based Context

RENA SIVROPOULOU, ELENI GRIVA AND SOFIA EFREMIDOU

University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Early foreign language learning has been promoted across Europe, as nowadays children need to be motivated for learning languages as early as possible. For this reason, an intervention for teaching English language to Greek pre-schoolers was introduced in a supportive and stimulating environment. It is worth mentioning that in the Greek educational context English is taught as a compulsory foreign language from the third grade of public primary school. The project was piloted in 3 state pre-school classes with a total of 38 children, aged 4-6. Its purpose was to develop children's oral skills through participating in creative activities, such as games and puzzles, and interacting in small groups. The intervention, extended in a period of an academic year, was coordinated in two phases. In the first, 'warm-up', phase (October – December 2007), following a visual approach, children were presented with words in meaningful contexts and were encouraged to play with these 'words'. The second phase (January – May 2008) included twelve interventions of relevant thematic areas, carried out in four steps. Language is used in games and simulations providing preschoolers with opportunities to develop vocabulary and language functions by 'working' with materials in a variety of ways. In order to examine the effectiveness of the intervention, evaluation project is conducted with children tests, as well as field notes from non-participant observations and teacher interviews. The first analysis of the data indicated the positive effects of the intervention on early foreign language learning, as its advantages outweigh the negative aspects.

Keywords: play, foreign language, learning, intervention

Preschool Teachers' Reflections on Teaching and Learning Natural Science in Norwegian and Chinese Kindergartens

ÅSTA BIRKELAND AND ANNE S. E. HAMMER

Bergen University College

Our study is a cooperation project between two teachers from Bergen University College and one from East China Normal University. Also involved are preschool teachers from both countries.

The project will focus on natural science in kindergartens. The intention is to develop knowledge about teaching and learning discourses expressed by Norwegian and Chinese preschool teachers. Important research questions are: What do preschool teachers think are important goals in natural science in kindergarten? How do the teachers think children learn natural science? What is the teachers' role concerning children's learning?

Our study is within a social constructivist paradigm. We use concepts from Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Foucault and Fairclough.

The project is a case study with an ethnographic approach. We, researchers and preschool teachers, have taken videos of learning situations in kindergartens in Norway and in China. The videotapes are used as starting point for semi-structured interviews with the preschool teachers. Our method is inspired by the "Preschool in three cultures method" described by Tobin et. al. The method can contribute to a polyvocal approach and to make the unknown more familiar and the obvious less taken for granted.

We have found Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Glenda Mac Naughton's mapping of meaning in the classroom as fruitful approaches to discourse analysis. In this paper we will present some of the findings from analysing the Norwegian preschool teachers' reflections.

Our study will hopefully contribute to increased consciousness about teaching and learning in kindergartens in general and specifically in natural science.

Keywords: teaching, learning, natural science, comparative, discourse analysis

SYMPOSIUM IV/13 MATHEMATICS I

Individual papers

CHAIR: JANNE FAUSKANGER

University of Stavanger, Norway

Insights into Seven and Eight Year Olds' Knowledge of Place Value: Implications for Primary Grades Mathematics Teaching and Learning

TRACY L. JOHNSON

Univeristy of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA

Reconsidering the basics in early childhood mathematics education entails emphasizing foundational concepts, including decomposing and recomposing number, learning number combinations, developing strategies for addition and subtraction problems, using ten as a composite unit, and understanding algorithmic procedures. The purpose of this study is to provide insights about seven and eight year olds' knowledge of place value, which includes the aforementioned foundational concepts, and its application in solving two- and three-digit addition and subtraction problems. Twenty-two students in two schools in the same district in rural North Carolina, USA were interviewed using a qualitative, structured, task-based interview. The tasks addressed number combinations, use of ten as a composite unit, conservation of quantity for grouped objects, incrementing on and off the decade by tens with and without physical representations of quantities, two- and three-digit addition and subtraction problems, and understanding of algorithmic procedures. The findings of this study indicate that students' strategy selection is largely algorithm-dependent, and students appear to have stronger procedural knowledge than conceptual understanding of the standard algorithm. Students had more difficulty procedurally and conceptually with subtraction than addition. This study also found that students' highest known number combination may relate to their overall level of base-ten knowledge. Implications for teaching include increasing focus on composing and decomposing numbers, counting off the decade, incrementing without physical representations, and conservation of quantity while grouping. Additional implications are improving teacher use of language to explain procedures in algorithms and facilitating students' development of multiple, flexible computational strategies.

Keywords: mathematics, place value, standard algorithm, computation

Teacher Evaluations on The Skills of Mathematics in Children from 6 to 10 years of Age

HELLE SIKKA

University of Tallinn, Estonia

Among many other aims of mathematics, the national curriculum for general education schools stresses the importance of developing creativity built on intuition and logical thinking, retaining interest and positive attitude towards mathematics, etc. Mathematics is not simply calculating and practicing problem solving. Our interest was focused on the constituent skills of mathematics that are used to realize the aims of the curriculum. How do teachers assess the mathematical skills in children from 6 to 10 years of age, how sustainable is their development in learning mathematics?

Methodology. We studied the teacher evaluations on accomplishing the aims of mathematics in children from 6 to 10 years of age in Tallinn and in the surrounding areas. Evaluations were given to 117 children; the evaluation questionnaires included 27 indicators of mathematics.

It became evident that teachers assessed pupils' study results in mathematics rather high. Kindergarten teachers held especially important the aspects of acquiring the basic mathematical concepts (e.g. number), learning the numbers, etc. At school the following aspects were highly assessed: pupils are eager to understand and solve mathematical problems, they are able to reason their solutions orally and in a written form, they are able to find similarities and differences, etc. Shortcomings were witnessed in measuring skills and also in knowing the basic shapes. Thus the study provides teachers with necessary information on teaching mathematics.

Keywords: child's development, constituent skills of mathematics, aims of mathematics, curriculum

Using Powerful Mathematical Ideas and Developmental Outcomes to Enhance Young Children's Mathematical Learning: An Australian Experience

BOB PERRY AND SUE DOCKETT

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Young children can be powerful mathematical learners. This paper reports work done with preschool educators in South Australia in which powerful ideas in mathematics were identified, linked to the Developmental Learning Outcomes in the mandated South Australian curriculum, and celebrated and extended through narrative assessment.. It emphasises the processes involved in building the educators' confidence and competence in the observation, development, implementation and assessment of meaningful mathematical learning for young children and suggests ways in which this approach can improve the mathematics education of these children without weakening the strongly held traditional principles of sound early childhood practice.

The key construct in this project is a numeracy matrix—a 56-cell table linking the powerful mathematical ideas with the Developmental Learning Outcomes through pedagogical inquiry questions. These questions are designed to ask preschool educators about their practice and how it relates to their children's mathematics learning. Using this matrix, preschool and first year of school educators have devised and begun to trial a detailed assessment process through which they can access children's powerful mathematical ideas, show progress as these ideas grow, and answer planning questions for each child as to what would be the most appropriate next instructional step.

The value of the paper is that it illustrates how work undertaken at the preschool level can inform similar work undertaken in the first year of school and it provides educators at both levels with an innovative way for considering the mathematics education of young children in both preschool and school.

Keywords: mathematics, learning, assessment, pedagogy

SYMPOSIUM IV/14 CREATIVITY IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: WEI-YING HSIAO

Southern Utah University, USA

Creative Catalysts: Unlocking the Potential Power of Visual Art to Inspire Creative Pedagogies across Early Years Education

MEG WIELGOSZ

University of Melbourne and Mentone Grammar School, Australia

In a contemporary early years education context, there is a vast discrepancy between policy and practice in regards to developing children's creativity. As a potential means of engaging and motivating children, the importance of creativity cannot be overestimated. This study arose out of a need for rich, authentic, teacher-relevant research into creativity nurture and transfer. The research is a qualitative, arts-based inquiry that was ethnographically influenced. This comprised case studies of visual art teachers, incorporating observation and interviewing. The main questions addressed in this research are:

- To what extent and in what ways does the early years visual art curriculum facilitate creative development?
- To what extent and in what ways can visual art be used to inspire creative pedagogies across the curriculum?
- To what extent and in what ways can creativity be used as a tool for motivating and engaging children?

Although conducted in an Australian context, the relevance of this research is not confined to any specific country, given that we live in an increasingly international community where the best way to develop practice and policy that nurtures the creative potential of our children is to foster a spirit of cross-cultural collaboration, cooperation and communication.

The key findings of this research are briefly outlined below. They constitute a potentially invaluable precursor to the development and implementation of policies and practices across the early years curriculum that emphasise the effective and ongoing fostering of those creative capacities or tendencies that all children innately possess.

- Visual art in early years education does foster children's creative tool-kit development.
- Visual art can be used to inspire creative pedagogies across all areas of early years education, based on the above key features. However, this is currently not effectively occurring in anything more than superficial ways.
- Creativity can be a tool for motivating and engaging children.

Keywords: Creativity, visual art, intelligences, student motivation

Engaging our Millennials

OLE C. BRUDVIK

Macquarie University, Australia

"...today we are in the middle of a new media revolution – the shift of all culture to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution, and communication. This new revolution is arguably more profound than the previous ones, and we are just beginning to register its initial effects....the printing press affected only one stage of cultural communication – the distribution of media.... photography affected only one type of cultural communication– still images....the computer media revolution affects all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also affects all types media – texts, still images, moving images, sound, and spatial constructions."

Introduction

There is a gap between how our learners need to be equipped to deal with the future and how we are preparing them for it. The world around us is changing, and becoming smaller. Communication and media are changing, and becoming more universal and global. Our youth are at the vanguard of these changes, and in countries around the world, researchers and educators are realizing that the current models of education are failing to attract and energise younger learners. In countries as diverse as the United States, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and across Europe, attention is beginning to turn to how to take advantage of the new skills and abilities common to today's youth, and how to maximize their potential. We have an interesting paradox. We have industry commentators saying that, for a successful future, we need people who think, are creative and innovative, and yet our education systems seem to be working against this (Buzan 2006).

Learners come to school equipped to learn at many levels, use multiple pathways and draw on multiple intelligences. Today's curricula do not meet always their needs and too often formal schooling is the least engaging part of a learner's day. Schools do their learners a disservice when they fail to teach literacy in the expressive new language that their learners have already begun to use before they even arrive (Prensky, 2005). Younger learners naturally gravitate into the daily world of sounds, layered images, and simultaneous events. It is a sensory world and it is up-close, technological, connected, visually rich, emotional, and immediate.

Often described as digital natives, these learners have grown up with computers, video games, the Internet, and cell phones. Such devices have always been a part of their lives, and these tools are as natural and familiar to them as radio and television has been to previous generations.

The ease with which learners use and apply them is fundamentally different from the way their older counterparts approach using the same tools. The Internet has been a powerful leveller for this generation, providing immediate and broad access to opinions, ideas, music, visual information, and more. This is where pop culture lives and where the senses and the imagination drive creative thinking... outside the box. There is a need to rethink what we teach and how we come to know about our world.

Keywords: millennials, learning tasks engaging, creativity

SYMPOSIUM IV/15 THE LEARNING CHILD – THE STAVANGER PROJECT

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: ANN-MARI KNIVSBERG

University of Stavanger, Norway

Session overview

The study is multidisciplinary, longitudinal and has two main sections. Stage 1 focuses language, mathematics, movement and social skills during early years. Development in these areas influences each other, and research on and between the areas is needed. Data is collected through interaction, in natural surroundings, the latter also an area in need of further exploration. Stage 2 focuses reading, writing and mathematics. The aim is, in addition to the above mentioned, to identify early developmental aspects important for the later acquisition of reading, writing and mathematics, and to increase educational professionals' competence on early identification of children at risk. Knowledge translation from research to practice is central, and done through dialogue conferences, a reference group, and cooperation with day care staff regarding courses and material. It is estimated that 1500 to 2000 children in day care centres will participate. They will be assessed at the age of 2½, 4½, 7½ and 9½.

Keywords: observation, daily life activities, skills.

The Learning Child – The Stavanger Project, Observing Children During Play and Daily Life Activities. Methodological Issues

ELIN REIKERÅS AND SYNNØVE IVERSEN

University of Stavanger, Norway

The study has a fixed non-experimental design. Stage 1 will be presented here. The younger children's development and what the children master during a three months' period, from they are 2½ and 4½ years old, is to be registered. Participant observation and structured observations are used. Observation schemes for the four developmental areas are filled in by the preschool teachers. The schemes were constructed and piloted outside the project. The method is as a nonintrusive way of collecting information about the children's competence, demonstrated in their daily life activities. Their skills are registered by people they know. No testing is carried out. The teachers know each child. The teachers were prior to the data collection given courses in observations and registrations of the items in the observation schemes. The project is in line with national guidelines for day care centre work. It is a low cost project that enables the staff to be more aware of how to observe development in daily life. All the children in the day care centres will probably benefit from this, and especially vulnerable children in need of extra stimuli. The study will provide ecological valid data on normal development in and between various developmental areas, but not in depth details related to eventual problems. The data is collected by a large number of teachers. Written explanations of items and registrations are given, but observers' biases are possible.

Keywords: observation, observations schemes, daily life activities

The Learning Child – The Stavanger Project (Stage 1)

Presentation of Observation Schemes Covering Aspects of Language, Mathematics, Movement and Social Skills

INGER KRISTINE LØGE AND ELSA KALTVEDT

University of Stavanger, Norway

In the Stavanger project developmental aspects of language, mathematics, movement and social skills are in focus. The main research questions within each of the developmental areas in Stage 1 are related to which competences children possess in respectively language, mathematics, movement and social and emotional functioning. What characterises children's performance at different achievement levels within each of the developmental areas will also be examined. The following observations schemes are used in the study: Tidlig registrering av språkutvikling (TRAS) (Early Registration of Language Development) (Espenakk et al., 2003), Matematikken, individet, omgivelsene (MIO) (Mathematics, Individual, Environment) (Davidsen et al., 2008), Early Years Movement Skills Checklist (EYMSC) (Chambers & Sugden, 2006), and Alle Med – All Included (Løge et al., 2006). The observation schemes for language, mathematics, and social skills have been constructed and piloted in Norway, the movement observation scheme in England. The schemes have from 12 to 24 items at each age level. They are constructed to be used by the pedagogical staff in day care centres to serve various purposes; monitoring the child's early development, creating stimulating educational settings for all children, early identification of children at risk, cooperation with parents and community health and educational services. In the Stavanger project information from these schemes will be collected and analysed at age 2½ and 4½. Examples of various developmental aspects, illustrated by items from the observations schemes, will be presented.

Keywords: observation schemes, developmental areas.

The Learning Child – The Stavanger Project. Inter-connective Aspects of the Development of Language, Mathematics, Movement and Social Skills

ELIN REIKERÅS AND SYNNOVE IVERSEN

University of Stavanger, Norway

Research on development has traditionally been divided into specific areas like those previously presented. This has been and is necessary for in-depth knowledge. Children's development and learning are based on complex interaction between environmental and biological factors. The development in the various areas is reciprocally influenced by each other. So far multidisciplinary studies within the field of early childhood education are limited. In order to capture the development of the active child in natural and variable settings, the methodological approach chosen in the Stavanger Project is multidisciplinary.

Research questions raised are in which way development of skills/competences in language, mathematics, movement and social skills are related. Which parts of the skills that are connected, will be examined. Are for example skills in word production related to counting skills? Are precise movements related to play competencies etc.? The study also investigates if any of the specific skills or a combination of skills is more important than others for positive development in the various areas and in the longitudinal aspect – for achievement of reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

The observation schemes chosen provide the possibilities of observing inter-connective aspects of the development of language, mathematics, movement and social skills. Various examples from each of the observation schemes will be presented to illustrate this inter-connectivity.

Keywords: observations, developmental areas.

SYMPOSIUM IV/16

YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE MEDIATED LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: LIV GJEMS

Vestfold University College, Norway

Session overview

In this symposium we will focus on different aspects of language: language as mediating factor in all kinds of learning. We will present a study of what children may experience when they express their points of view in kindergarten, and how preschool-teachers, and peers attend to such utterances. We will then present an interviewstudy with preschool teachers. This study focus on the language that teachers use when they describe children's everyday functioning to parents, what they emphasize and whether they adjust their language to the educational level of the parents.

Keywords: language, democracy, preschool teachers, parents.

Teacher Talk: Promoting Learning through Invitations to Negotiate Meaning in Conversations between Teachers and Children in Kindergarten

LIV GJEMS

Vestfold University College, Norway

SYMPOSIUM
SET IV

The purpose of this study is to explore everyday conversations where children in interactions with adults learn to talk and talk to learn, involving dialogue and negotiation of meaning. In kindergarten children will learn both from listening to language and when they use language, but we have few studies of the qualities of children's language experiences. And we know little of what kind of teacher talk that might promote children's language learning, encourage cognitive development, literacy, and learning of social understanding, as well as expanding their knowledge about the environment. This study is based on social cultural perspectives and theories of language learning and language as mediator of culture and knowledge. In my study I observe how teachers invite children to talk, for instance to share events, thinking aloud or arguing for a point of view. The children are aged from three to five years of age. The conversations are videotaped during free play time, when the children spontaneously are gathered in an activity with a teacher. The observations are conducted in small-group activities, consisting of three to six participants, and observations are transcribed. In this presentation I will discuss the challenges I find that teachers may have when they invite children of different ages and language competences to share and explore an event, an experience, or to talk about a theme they are engaged in.

Keywords: language learning, participation, everyday-conversation, mediation.

Aesthetic Approach to Language Learning in Early Childhood Education

BILJANA C. FREDRIKSEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

The research presented here reveals that dialog between a preschool teacher and a child during creative play with materials is extremely important for the child's development of verbal and "aesthetic languages". My research question is: What are the characteristics of supporting relationship between children and teachers, and what characterize stimulating learning atmosphere during visual arts activities? The main aim of the study is to identify and analyse the supportive dialogs, and learn about the role of preschool teacher in children's language development during art activities. Used methods are video observations and teacher interviews.

Breslas and Thompson (2003) say that "...purpose of arts experiences in the lives of children seem to remain puzzling and problematic to those most directly involved in teaching the young ...". Connections between arts and language learning has been an interesting issue over the years, but still not thoroughly examined. Vygotskij has been interested in relations between language and creative activities. Others have seen importance in learning through contacts with concrete objects and materials (Säljö, Trageton). In a socio-cultural perspective on learning one gives a large importance to tools that mediate learning (both language and art materials are such tools), as well as to cultural settings and communication. The study of this interdisciplinary topic involves both children's language learning through arts, and their artistic development through verbal language. The results of the study will hopefully show correlations between children's arts experiences and learning.

Keywords: visual arts, language development, creativity, preschools teachers' skills

Learning about the World! The Importance of Taxonomies in Language Development

NORUNN ASKELAND

Vestfold University College, Norway

Learning about the world! The importance of taxonomies in language development
In this paper we want to present and discuss the importance of taxonomies in the language development of young children. Taxonomies are in this context a notion for the way we

linguistically organize the world through hierarchies, subordination and relationships between a unity and part of the unity, including categories, which can be fuzzy and overlapping. When children learn about and explore the world the need for notions organizing phenomena which belong together is of great importance. Our presentation will build on experiences from an ongoing research project where children's development of a beginning subject oriented language is focused. Our examples will be taken from children's work with the Christmas Gospel and topics in natural science, from conversations in kindergarten and from children's books. The project is based on and inspired by the new framework plan for kindergartens in Norway (2006) where seven subject areas for the first time are introduced in kindergarten. As we see it the subject areas give rich possibilities for language development towards linguistic nuances and preciseness. Theoretically we build on social semiotics and discourse and metaphor analysis. Our research methods are observations through video and logs, and conversations with children and adults in kindergartens.

CO-AUTHOR: EVA MAAGEROE, VESTFOLD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NORWAY

Keywords: language, learning, participation, subject matters

SYMPOSIUM IV/17 CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE CONSIDERING HEALTH AND OUTDOOR PLAY

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: KARI-ANNE JØRGENSEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

Session overview

In this symposium we will focus on children's play and learning in an institutional context. Our point of departure will be the subject area of the Norwegian Framework Plan for Kindergarten: *Body, movement and health*. We will focus on the use of the outdoor areas in the kindergarten and children's development and learning according to motoric skills, health and body. All the presentations will emphasize the potential of the outdoor arena in children's play and learning.

Keywords: play and learning in the kindergarten, body, movement, health

Children's Play and Learning in the Context of the Poetic Landscapes

KARI-ANNE JØRGENSEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

The physical environment and Children's perspective on their environmentally surroundings are important due to the Children's rights and the focus we have in Norway on the importance of the physical environment as a part of the pedagogy.

The study is based on observations in kindergartens of the places children's choose as their favorites for imaginative play, and how their experiences of the landscape influence on their imagination and communicative development. I do partly use some of the findings in a project that has been going for two years about how to create good playground areas, taking the children in as active participants in the planning process. From this study it appeared a lack of perspectives on the experienced qualities of landscapes.

Seeing landscapes as poetic is a way of reflecting the qualities not by measuring effects but by

Observing, listening to the children own stories and images as one way of understanding children's approaches that may not so easy be considered. The theory is based on phenomenology and on language theory.

Methods

Mapping and observations of children's play on the playground belonging to the kindergarten and in kindergartens using the natural environment outside the kindergartens territory.

Children's Images of their environment based on narratives.

Photos taken by the children of children's places

Findings

The children's preferences choice of places is much connected with their experiences of excitement and possibilities for imaginative play. They do tell about their preferences by the stories they are telling through their choice of places and what they are doing there.

Using observations, children's narratives and photos I do have a material that challenges our way of seeing the values of landscapes for play and learning. Interesting is it that the values of different landscapes for children often are communicated through aesthetics, their stories and their imaginative play.

Keywords: poetic landscapes, phenomenology, play, experience based learning

How do Parents and Preschool Teachers Understand and Reflect on Topics Related to Health Care?

KATHRINE BJØRGEN

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Studies indicate that establishing good health- and nutritional- habits in early childhood is important for later health status. Nordic children have one of the world's best health statistics. Still, trends indicate that children's nutrition and lifestyle will be important future challenges even for the Norwegian society (Norwegians Health institute, 2007).

Children's knowledge about health care is influenced by the way significant adults think and act on health care issues. In this view, collaboration between home and kindergarten on health care attitudes and practices is probably an important factor for children's learning and understanding on the issue.

The aim of this study was to investigate possible challenges in health care development in Norwegian kindergartens. How do parents and preschool teachers understand and reflect on topics related to health care? A questionnaire was distributed to and answered by 225 parents and 130 preschool teachers in 12 Norwegian kindergartens.

In this paper the preliminary analysis of the data material will be presented. Reflections on some of the results as well as experiences and challenges in relation to literature in this topic will also be presented.

Keywords: health care, nutrition habits in early childhood

Preschool Children's Intensity in Outdoor Physical Active Play Related to Preschool Outdoor Environments

RUNE STORLI AND TROND LØGE HAGEN

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

76.2 % of children in Norway between 1 – 5 years attending day care centers (SSB, 2008) and this setting present an ideal opportunity to promote physical activity and early development of healthy behaviors (Bower et.al. 2008). Norwegian children spend average 2 hours daily outdoors in preschools, which means outdoor activities are given great emphasize all-year-round.

Aims of the research: This presentation will focus on the relationship between the physical outdoor environments in pre-schools and children's level of physical activity in outdoor play.

Do different affordances in the preschool outdoor environment affect the level of physical activity, and are there any gender-determined differences according to these factors?

The method consisted of exploring the outdoor environment in 2 (3) preschools in Trondheim, Norway. The activity level was measured by using accelerometers, which is an electronic instrument giving indicators on activity level. Simultaneously observations took place to describe what kind of activity going on, and in what kind of environment the children made use of.

So far data show that the different affordances in the environment impact both, type of physical active play and activity level. Considering gender differences the data is not yet been analyzed, but will be presented at the conference

Keywords: outdoor, physical activity, gender differences, affordances

SYMPOSIUM IV/18

LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT – CHALLENGES FOR EMERGENT PROFESSIONALS IN FIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: PAULETTE LUFF

Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

Session overview

Learning and teaching in higher education present a wide range of issues and challenges and these are particularly significant for those who are educating teachers who will work with young children.

Our previous research has shown that there is a potential conflict between theoretical models that underpin our teaching and assessment methods and has revealed some incompatibility between students' previous learning experience and expectations and their experience in higher education. There is some evidence that these tensions may affect the depth and level of student involvement with their studies. This may be significant, as future teachers' levels of intellectual engagement could have an impact upon on the positive dispositions for learning of young children in their care. As a response to these concerns, we have begun to undertake a research study considering students' perceptions and experiences of their studies, on early childhood programmes and courses, in different European countries. The initial stages and first findings from this project will be considered and discussed in this symposium.

SYMPOSIUM
SET IV

Learning and Assessment – Challenges for Emergent Professionals in five European Countries – an Introduction to the Project

LUDO HEYLEN

Catholic University Leuven, Belgium

This paper will introduce the symposium, discussing the researchers' common interests and concerns and explaining how these underpin and inform their shared research. The aim is to: outline the study, which involves respondents from five European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Finland and Greece); explain the use of a questionnaire, designed to elicit student teachers' perceptions and experiences of their learning and assessment; report the preliminary findings from each of the countries; begin a discussion about the learning and assessment of student teachers' in higher education institutions, in Europe; and discuss the possible development and expansion of this research. It is hoped that the responses to the questionnaires can help us to understand students' vision of learning and will tell us something about their deeper representation of teaching and learning and the role

assessment can play in it. The findings will be linked with the theories of deep learning (Marton and Saljo, 1976; Biggs, 1999; Entwistle, 1988; Ramsden, 1992) and of deep level learning (Laevers, 1993; Laevers, 1998). The use of forms of assessment, including portfolios designed to demonstrate developing expertise, will also be discussed.

CO-AUTHORS: JALE BALEBAN-SALI; ROZALINA ENGELS; PAULETTE LUFF; ANNELI NIIKKO AND THEODORA PAPTAEODOROU

Keywords: teacher education, deep learning.

Creating a Questionnaire for Cross-cultural Comparative Research: Some Methodological Challenges

THEODORA PAPTAEODOROU

Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

In this paper, we discuss the development of the questionnaire used for our cross-cultural comparative study. designed to investigate and compare the conceptions and experiences of students attending pre-school teacher education and preparation programmes. The questionnaire was developed in the light of key concepts underpinning social-constructivism that inform our teaching and learning strategies. Our previous research, conducted independently and within the context of our own countries, demonstrated that common themes and concerns have been emerging despite the contextual diversity and differences (e.g. structure of qualifications, length and format of education and training, competencies-outcomes based approaches etc). As a result a common questionnaire was developed to establish similarities and differences between the five countries. Some researchers argue that in principle there is no difference between comparative cross-cultural research and research conducted in a single society (Holt & Turner 1970). Perhaps this is the case when the research methodology is established and the instruments used have been negotiated and developed. Before that, however, there is a complex process that needs to be untangled in order to create an instrument that reflects negotiated and shared meanings and yet is culturally relevant in all countries. Consistent with social-constructivism, language is a cultural tool whose power and impact cannot be underestimated; language represents and reflects a whole world of negotiated concepts and ideas that have evolved historically. Using English (non-native language for four out of the five researchers) as the medium of communication and the language in which the instrument was first developed, every sentence and term and their underlying concepts had to be interrogated and elaborated by all of us in order to reach consensus in our understanding. Yet, concerns still exist as to (i) whether the translation of the questionnaire from English into the three native languages fully reflects our negotiated and shared meaning and (ii) whether the respondents understand the meanings of the questions in the same ways. These concerns form the basis for discussion in this paper.

CO-AUTHORS: JALE BALEBAN-SALI; ROSALINA ENGELS; LUDO HEYLEN; PAULETTE LUFF AND ANNELI NIIKKO

Keywords: cross-cultural, comparative study, questionnaire, methodology.

Pre-school Student Teachers' Conceptions and Experiences of their Learning

ANNELI NIIKKO

University of Joensuu, Finland

Nowadays students' learning presents a major challenge for universities and teacher education departments. There are many reasons: courses are studied using blended learning methods; time for teaching has radically reduced; and there are less contact hours to study together in authentic situations with students. Basically students have to study more

independently, self-directedly and alone. Their teachers have difficulties to assess students' pedagogical content knowledge and their learning attitudes and styles and to find suitable strategies in order to help student's learning and support their motivation to learn. Further, whilst some students have significant experiences from working life others have none at all. Usually students' study groups are large and heterogenic during lessons and seminar discussions. It is a challenge for teachers to organize teaching methods and material in order to meet each student's learning needs. Also many students want to hasten their study and complete individual learning assignments in order to finish their study as soon as possible. However, before we have skills to response for these challenges and solve these issues it is necessary to research what pre-school student teachers themselves think. This study has looked for answers for following questions: What kind of conceptions and experiences do pre-school student teachers have of their own role as learners at university? What kind of conceptions and experiences do pre-school student teachers have of their own learning and study? And how do they understand the meaning of portfolio and other forms of assessment for their learning? This paper will discuss some common and contrasting ideas on these issues, arising from initial analysis and interpretation of findings from a questionnaire, developed and administered by researchers from five countries, highlighting perceptions / conceptions of learning and assessment and some implications for teacher education.
CO-AUTHORS: JALE BALEBAN-SALI; ROSALINA ENGELS; LUDO HEYLEN; PAULETTE LUFF AND THEODORA PAPATHEODOROU

Keywords: learning and assessment, teacher education.

SYMPOSIUM IV/19

CLASS: ACTIVE LEARNING

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: JACQUELINE HENRY

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Session overview

This self organised symposium draws from a research project 'CLASS: Active Learning Project'. Mrs. Anne Smith, who commissioned the project on behalf of a Scottish local education authority, will Chair the session. This one year project explored the perceptions held by teachers, parents and children of the development of an active learning approach in 29 primary schools in one local authority in Scotland. A range of approaches to the research were used including both quantitative and qualitative methods. We present three papers which focus on some key indicative findings of our study and reflect on the ways in which fundamental changes to learning and teaching approaches can be supported and developed.

CLASS: Active Learning - Design and Main Indicative Findings

JACQUELINE HENRY

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

This paper provides an overview of the design and main indicative findings of a study focused on a project to introduce active learning in the early years of Scottish primary schools. The project provided high quality professional development sessions and individual school support visits over the course of a school year to 80 teachers of children aged 4.5 – 7 years in 29 schools in one education authority area. Taking a social constructivist perspective, the action research component of the project sought to identify the extent to which teaching approaches changed over the course of the project and the perceptions of active learning amongst children, parents and teachers. Researchers examined the impact on learning environments and teachers' practice. It tracked children's well-being and

involvement and explored teachers' perceptions of the impact on children's learning. The voice of children and parents was also sought. The study focused on a sample of 6 schools and included teachers as researchers. Well-being and Involvement Scales (Leuven, 1994) and ECERS –R (Harms, Clifford and Dyer, 1998,) and selected themes of ECERS –E (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2003) were used. Focus groups of parents and children, teachers' reflective journals, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were included. Main results are presented in relation to the nature of the changes in learning environments and teaching approaches and to perceptions of stakeholders. Key factors in supporting teachers to change practice and the impact of the project on children's learning are also reported. Some comparisons are made to previous studies.

CO-AUTHORS: SHARON DOBBIE, JENNIFER LOGUE

Keywords: active learning, early years, primary school, teachers' practice

CLASS: Active Learning –Changing Perceptions of Teachers, Children and Parents

SHARON DOBBIE

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Current educational discourse concerning appropriate pedagogies to suit the learning needs of young children focuses on purposeful play and active learning (MacNaughton, 2004; Wood and Attfield, 2005; Moyles 2005; Whitehead, 2007; Fisher, 2007). The new Scottish curriculum for children aged 3 – 18 years, A Curriculum for Excellence, emphasises the need for active learning, choice and challenge and enjoyment for all children and a greater alignment of practice and pedagogic approach between nursery and early stages of primary school. The active learning project sought to provide teachers of young children aged 4.5 years – 7 years in one local education authority area in Scotland with professional development in this approach. Researchers used quantitative and qualitative measures to investigate whether the perceptions of active learning and its impact on children's learning held by teachers, parents and children changed as the programme developed. Teachers were trained in the use of reflective journals (Moon, 1999) and provided reflective accounts for analysis. Reflective accounts from training providers were also used. Semi – structured interviews were held with Head Teachers in the 6 schools and key individuals within the local authority. Focus groups of children and parents met with researchers on two occasions over the academic year in each of the six schools. Evaluations of training sessions and questionnaire returns from teachers in the wider project also inform the results of the study. Main indicative findings are reported. The views of teachers, children and parents towards active learning and changes in traditional classroom practice are presented and discussed.

CO-AUTHORS JACKIE HENRY AND JENNIFER LOGUE

Keywords: active learning, primary

An Effective CPD Model for Active Learning

JENNIFER LOGUE

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

This paper addresses issues related to effective CPD and draws upon the work of Reeves et al (2002), Boyd (2004) and Hargreaves (2007) in examining models of effective CPD.

The year long project focused on the provision of CPD on Active Learning for 80 teachers of children aged 4.5 – 7 years in 29 schools in one education authority area.

University and LA staff met to design a CPD framework based on model of Supportive Social Learning Contexts from Reeves et al. (2002)

The purposes of the research were to ascertain participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the CPD model in supporting them in making radical changes to their practices in Active

Learning at the early years in Primary schools and to modify the model of CPD to increase its effectiveness in future CPD in Active Learning.

The study sought the views of all participants including DHTs, a sample of Head Teachers of the participating schools, key individual staff in the LA and course tutors through a combination of questionnaires, evaluations, reflective journals and pen portraits, adapted from Moon (2004) and Hustler (2003) and linked to tasks undertaken on the course. The key elements of the CPD model that produced changes in teachers' practice in Active Learning are presented and discussed and their implications for increasing the effectiveness of CPD are considered.

CO-AUTHOR: ELEANOR GAVIENAS

SYMPOSIUM IV/20

YOUNG CHILDREN AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN INSTITUTIONS

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: GUNILLA HALLDÉN

Linköping University, Sweden

Session overview

Oslo University College and NOVA (Norwegian Social Research) are engaged in the research project "Norwegian day-care centers as a link in the chain of care for children under the age of three". The project is funded by The Research Council of Norway and Oslo University College. Head of the project is Professor Jan-Erik Johansson.

The research group at Oslo University College studies everyday life in nine kindergartens in Norway. Through multiple methodological qualitative approaches, we intend to contribute to the knowledge of the multifaceted and complex life in pedagogical institutions for children under the age of three. We study routines, activities and relations; everyday life as it is experienced from different positions. The project is in progress and our presentations will be based on preliminary analyses of the material.

Methodological and Ethical Challenges Related to Research in Small Children's Daily Lives in Day-care Centers

NINA WINGER

Oslo University College, Norway

In this paper I will discuss some methodological and ethical challenges related to an ongoing qualitative research project within nine day-care centers in Norway. Our intention with this project is to contribute to increased knowledge of the daily life of young children and their care-takers in day-care centers. Through multiple methodological approaches we focus on "everyday life" with its institutional routines, specific agencies, various relations and experiences. Due to a strong focus on children's positions, rights and perspectives, listening to children and "giving them voices" have become central themes in child research and educational practice. Searching for knowledge from children's points of view is a complex matter. We approach this methodological challenge by letting the very young children "guide" us throughout the day. The material consists of video-observations and field notes. We also search for perspectives of teachers and assistants on their tasks as professional care-takers through focus-interviews.

Researching institutional life raises several methodological questions, especially when young children are involved. The research process requires high ethical standards, skills and awareness of asymmetry and power dimensions. What we see, hear and describe is related to our positions as "visiting" researchers with specific frames of reference, experiences and perspectives. I will discuss some challenges related to our research process in light of existing theory on research methodology. A central challenge is how to obtain knowledge of

institutional daily lives without disturbing or “intervening” participant’s activities to a large extent. The presentation will be illuminated with examples from focus interviews with staff and dialogs with fellow researchers about their experiences from the different phases in the research process.

Keywords: children`s voices, daily life, qualitative methodologies, ethics

“Back to the Puddle”

BRIT JOHANNE EIDE

Oslo University College, Norway

In this presentation, I focus children’s participation in day care centres. My purpose is to get information about the children’s everyday life in the institutions. A main research question is: “What activities are toddlers engaged in during the day?”

Observational data from nine day care centres is presented. In each context one child was chosen as a guide who led the observer through daily life. Field notes were taken throughout the whole day, focusing the activities of the children. Nine children between 18 and 26 months were observed. Since the approach is inspired by ethnographical methodologies, theoretical perspectives are elaborated during the fieldwork. Perspectives concerning individual children’s participation within the pedagogical structure are central in the analyses. During the day all participants were engaged in everyday activities like washing hands, eating, sleeping, and participating in circle-time, and “free play”, outdoors and indoors; all according to the day schedule of the institutions. Since these activities were common for all the day care centres, they can be seen as collective framings for everyday life. Despite this, it seems as if each child has her/his own way of dealing with these daily routines.

The participants also seemed to shift activities very often. Even though, some of the children repeatedly returned to the very same activity over and over again, like the girl who discovered a small puddle, looked at it, touched it, went away, and returned several times. These shifting focuses seemed to be self initiated by the children.

Keywords: participation, self initiated activities, routines, observation.

Teachers’ Mediation of Peer-relations Between Children under The Age of Three

ELLEN OS

Oslo University College, Norway

During the last years ideas of competent and participating children have been emphasized. These are parts of the core curriculum for Norwegian day care.

Competences needed for participation in peer-groups are abilities to relate to peers. Even children under three seem to express social competence in interactions with peers. But not all children are included. A current discourse states that teachers through involvement in peer-relations between toddlers might disturb peer-play and interactions. Hence, research often is decontextualized, leaving out influences teachers might have on toddlers’ inclusion and participation in peer-groups.

Peer-relations in the context of day care focusing teachers’ mediation of peer-relations between toddlers, is the research question. Theoretical approaches concerning adults as mediators of culture through organizing children’s everyday life and child rearing practices are inspired by social-cultural perspectives. Based on video-data from nine day care groups, qualitative analyses of staffs’ mediation of peer-relations are accomplished. Are teachers initiating or supporting activities that include groups of children? What are the content and the form of the mediation? How are teachers acting in peer conflicts? Is the pedagogical

approach individual or group oriented? The analyses recognize that the consequences of the meditating process, might facilitate, as well as disturb, peer-relations.

Given asymmetric relationships between children and teachers, the opportunities for the very young to participate in peer-groups, might be related to opportunities given by teachers. Further, participation in peer-groups might be related to children's participation in general.

Keywords: peer-relations, mediation, inclusion, participation

SYMPOSIUM IV/21 SHIFTING THE PARADIGM FROM NATURE STUDY TO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES FROM DOWN UNDER

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: SUE ELLIOTT

RMIT University, Australia

Session overview

Climate change is no longer a scientific issue, it is a political, human rights and equity issue of global significance. Sustainable development requires a shift in understandings about human rights and equity that reaches beyond the present to future generations. It also requires a shift to systemic thinking about the embeddedness of humans in the environment and the uptake of biocentric rather than anthropocentric worldviews. How will future generations live sustainably if this shift does not occur in all spheres of human endeavour, including early childhood education?

Science orientated nature study is a common focus in early childhood curricula and the pedagogy is well understood. However, a paradigm shift to integrate the social, economic and environmental parameters of sustainability is urgently needed in early childhood education. This symposium will draw on three studies that demonstrate how young children, early childhood educators and parents are actively engaging in such a paradigm shift in Australasia:

- Case study in a New Zealand kindergarten investigating how young children initiate 'ripples of action for sustainability';
- Participatory action research in Australia exploring how educators and parents promote education for sustainability when creating natural outdoor playspaces; and,
- Case study in an Australian childcare centre exploring the change processes that embed a culture of sustainability.

Collectively, these studies illustrate the power of early childhood education for sustainability and reinforce early childhood education for sustainability as a legitimate paradigm to be urgently embraced by all early childhood educators.

Keywords: sustainability, child participation, children as agents of change, biocentrism

'Ripples of Action': A Case Study in a Kindergarten that Investigates Young Children's Contribution to Environmental Sustainability

SUE VAEALIKI

New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand

Education for Sustainability encourages a focus on transformative pedagogy where communities of learners share joint actions for addressing social and environmental issues. Much of the research has been conducted in school settings and so there is still limited literature to inform this educational approach in the early childhood sector. This presentation reports some findings from a case study conducted in a New Zealand kindergarten where

teachers, young children and their families participate in shared actions for the environment in the context of their early childhood centre. The metaphor of a ripple is used to illustrate the idea that the small actions and responses of children can lead to shifts in environmental consciousness and commitment by the adults (teachers and parents) who care for them. During the focus groups both teachers and parents identified the pivotal role that young children had in motivating and influencing the environmental curriculum, the environmental actions and solutions generated in the kindergarten and home. The findings indicate that young children who experience a rich environmental curriculum may develop attributes such as a belief in their influence, a desire to impart environmental knowledge and confidence to voice opinions about environmental solutions. In relation to these aspects three themes will be discussed about how young children: increase teachers' commitment to environmental curriculum; motivate and monitor family actions; cooperate with their peers to explore environmental ideas and actions.

Keywords: sustainability, environmental curriculum, case study, action competence.

Natural Outdoor Play Spaces as Contexts for Early Childhood Education for Sustainability

SUE ELLIOTT

RMIT University, Australia

Natural outdoor playspaces are often noted as a key element in the promotion of early childhood education for sustainability. A review of the documented United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development principles in conjunction with pilot case studies of natural playspaces prepared for publication has revealed the significant potential for education for sustainability in natural playspaces. The pilot case studies of natural playspaces incorporating logs, rocks and trees concealed a deeper sense of education for sustainability principles, embedded both in the process of natural play space development and the play space itself. Themes emerged not only about connections with Nature for children, educators and families, but also about collective action, collaborative processes and a sense of ownership of and identity with the play space. The links identified between natural play spaces and education for sustainability principles are now being explored further in a doctoral research study entitled 'Sustainable outdoor playspaces in early childhood centres: Investigating perceptions, facilitating change and generating theory'. In this interim research report the focus will be on a critical participatory action research approach to facilitating outdoor playspace change with three early childhood centres. A negotiated outdoor playspace action priority has been implemented with educators and parents in two of the three centres and transformative change is anticipated. It is intended that this study will contribute to the meagre research base in early childhood education for sustainability and promote change in values and perceptions about outdoor playspaces, thus supporting a paradigm shift to education for sustainability.

Keywords: sustainability, outdoor playspaces, participatory action research.

Education for Sustainability in a Childcare Centre: Investigating Educational Leadership and Change

JULIE M. DAVIS

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Education for sustainability is a newly emerging field for early childhood educators. It is much more than nature education or the provision of outdoor play opportunities for children. While important, these are not sufficient, as sustainability goes to the core of how humans think and act. Creating cultural change for sustainability is no easy task. It requires a radical

reassessment of 'our place in nature'. It also requires new educative practices – that encourage learners (and teachers) to critique what they do regarding the environment, to problem-solve, and to become active participants and agents of change for sustainability. It also necessitates new ways of leading change within an organization. This paper reports on a case study in an Australian childcare centre that has had a 'Sustainable Planet Project' for nearly a decade. The study found that the leadership approach of the director played a significant role in creating the conditions that enabled the project to develop. Essentially, this was a collaborative capacity-building approach that valued the staff inputs, that put children's interests and capabilities at the centre of the curriculum, and that recognized parents and the community as integral to the centre's 'life world'. In essence, the centre became a 'learning community' where the complex issue of sustainability was taken seriously because it was recognized that young children have the most to lose from current unsustainable practices. The result has been a cultural shift in the way the centre operates, such that sustainability is now at the core of everyday practice.

Keywords: sustainability, educational leadership, cultural change, learning communities

SYMPOSIUM IV/22

OPENING WINDOWS BY ENGAGING PARENTS IN INCLUSIVE AND OPEN DIALOGUES: WORKING FROM RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: CHRISTINE PASCAL

Centre for Research in Early Childhood, St. Thomas Centre, United Kingdom

CO-CHAIR: TONY BERTRAM

Centre for Research in Early Childhood, St. Thomas Centre, United Kingdom

Session overview

This self organised symposium links to themes 1.5 and 6. The challenge for those involved in research is to ensure and findings are disseminated and that and the knowledge generated through the research process feeds into professional practice and public policy. This self organised symposium aims to explore the process of working from research findings into professional practice in order to ensure impact and transfer of knowledge. This symposium aims to explore the processes involved in knowledge transfer and we believe has a relevance to all those who seek to ensure maximum impact of their investigations.

Opening Windows by Engaging Parents in Inclusive and Open Dialogues: Working from Research into Practice

CHRISTINE PASCAL AND TONY BERTRAM

Centre for Research in Early Childhood, St. Thomas Centre, United Kingdom

We shall use as an exemplar of the knowledge transfer process the Opening Windows Project, which is led from the Centre for Research in Early Childhood in Birmingham, England. This English project is linked to the Children Crossing Borders research (Tobin et al, 2007, <http://www.childrencrossingborders.org/index.html>), a project which is examining the practices, values and expectations of preschool practitioners, and the aspirations, expectations and views of parents from 'immigrant' communities, in multicultural cities in five countries, with the intention of producing training materials aimed at improving the quality of preschool experiences for these children. The focus is on the children of those families whose presence in the host country is new, whose status is vulnerable, and who face the difficulties of overcoming cultural, linguistic, and sometimes racial and religious differences, between their home and host culture. It is these immigrants who are the subject of intense political and social debate in the UK and other EU countries, and in the US, and whose

voices are most rarely heard. The Project aims to give voice to those who are which seeks to develop materials to encourage open interaction and dialogue between the children, parents and practitioners in our richly diverse communities.

The title of the English 'Opening Windows' Programme comes from a quote by Mahatma Gandhi, which we hope captures the principles of the programme:

'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides, and my windows to be closed. Instead, I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.'

In this symposium, we will explore how we are developing professional training material and practices from the research methodology and findings which we hope will support democratic, equalising and participative encounters within English Children's Centres for practitioners, parents and children using a Freire (1978) 'cultural circle' approach.

This first presentation will focus on exploring how we are attempting to co-construct practical opportunities and forums for dialogue, debate, discussion and deliberation with parents. Other studies have also demonstrated the value of parent participation in ECEC programmes and pointed to the need for better communication between practitioners and parents who do not share a common cultural background or language (for example, Hayden, De Goia, and Hadley, 2003; Moll et.al, 2001; Gonzalez et. al. 2005). The Opening Windows Programme will be outlined and a rationale for its construction will be offered derived from the early research findings and exploration of how early childhood settings might adopt a liberating pedagogy which is directed at parents as well as children. Much of this work is inspired by Freire's dialogic and reflexive action in a 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (1978).

Keywords: parent voice; parent participation; cultural negotiation; professional development.

Opening Windows by Engaging Parents in Inclusive and Open Dialogues: Working From Research into Practice

DALVIR GILL

Centre for Research in Early Childhood, United Kingdom

In this second presentation the processes by which we are working with parents will be outlined and exemplified through the use of transcripts and video footage. The program aims to engage particularly those who are 'domesticated' or 'silenced' with the clear aim of 'liberation'. The first step is consciousness raising and the development of selfhood in the oppressed with the intention of helping them to name their world and begin to shape it, i.e. empowerment approach. This work is supported through 'cultural circles' in which symmetrical and reflexive dialogues occur between parents and practitioners. Dialogues are developed through the introduction of 'cultural artifacts' which generate emergent themes from which further action can flow. We are working with a group Children's Centers and nurseries drawn from a large English metropolitan city, over a period of several months and covering several meetings of the same groups, to develop and trial an intervention. A 'treasure basket' of stimuli or 'cultural artifacts' drawn from the research outputs, including videotaped extracts, focus group dialogues, photographs, vignettes of practice and also increasingly items introduced by the participants themselves to stimulate the dialogue have been developed. The artifacts are introduced into the circle through a 'framing session' and an open response is encouraged from participants. We are co-constructing cultural circles of parents and practitioners in a range of settings who meet together with the express aim of achieving more symmetrical dialogues between themselves. We have trained senior practitioners in techniques of group facilitation and active listening approaches that are initially modeled by the research team, but increasingly practitioners and parents are encouraged to take over this role within their circle. The process is being fully documented,

and participants are encouraged to keep journals. This session will present an evaluation of one such intervention.

Keywords: parent voice; parent participation; cultural negotiation; professional development

Equitable and Inclusive Education in the Early Years

MAUREEN SAUNDERS

Centre for research in early childhood, United Kingdom

This presentation will explore how the results of the practice trials are used to transfer the learning into a fully developed program which can be used for wider scale training and organizational improvement. It will analyze how the participants responded to the trial program, what learning was generated, and how this knowledge is used to create a program which is accessible, realistic and manageable and also links to current Government policy initiatives. The embeddings of the program enhances the potential of the program to be taken on widely and so enhances impact. Exemplar materials will be shared and a review process will be modeled within the symposium.

Keywords: parent participation; cultural negotiation; professional development

FRIDAY 5th SEPTEMBER
SYMPOSIUM SET V
16:15 – 17.45

SYMPOSIUM V/1
LEARNING

Individual papers

CHAIR: ANETTE SANDBERG

Mälardalen University, Sweden

Turned on to Learning? 'Active Learning' at the Start of Primary School

CHRISTINE STEPHEN

University of Stirling, United Kingdom

The initial phase of this project (part of the Applied Educational Research Scheme, Scotland) explored children's ideas about engagement in learning during the first year at primary and secondary school. The children's accounts suggested that doing or making 'things', playing and being with friends were the most engaging activities and that adults had a less central place in their perspectives on learning than teachers and parents might expect. In this paper we will give a brief account of the findings from the initial stage then explore the evidence from phase two which looks in detail at experiences during the first year of primary school in five classrooms that have adopted a pedagogical approach usually described as 'Active Learning'. Our evidence comes from interviews with teachers, school managers and parents, repeated periods of systematic observation in the classrooms and structured conversations with the young learners (five-year olds). Although apparently adopting the same pedagogical approach, practice varied across the classrooms, as did children's experiences of 'activity' or 'play'. From our evidence we will problematise the concepts of activity and play, consider the interplay of core, and possibly contradictory, ideas about the role of the teacher, authority and choice and raise questions about the outcomes and dispositions expected or achieved through active learning (Carr, 2001). Centred on a socio-cultural understanding of the learning experience (e.g. Rogoff, 1990) our study takes up the conference theme of looking again at early childhood learning to address questions related to children's play and learning in institutional contexts.

CO-AUTHORS: JENNIFER ELLIS, UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND AND
JOAN MARTLEW UNIVERSITY STRATCHCLYDE, UK

Keywords: play, learning, pedagogy, children's perspectives

A Case Study of Learning Dispositions and Learning Architecture

ANNE SMITH

University of Otago, New Zealand

Learning dispositions are coping strategies or habits of mind, and tendencies to respond to, edit and select from situations in specific ways. They involve noticing, recognizing and becoming involved with people, places and things. This New Zealand case study analyses the learning dispositions of resilience, reciprocity and imagination - and their 'learning architecture'. Sociocultural environments constrain or afford learning dispositions through learning architecture - opportunities for mutual engagement, power-sharing, positioning and making connections. Lisa simultaneously attended two early childhood centres during Phase

1 of the study (at 4 years). At Phase 2 (at nearly 5 years) she attended one centre, and by Phase 3 (at 5 years and 3 months) she had made the transition to primary school. Through observations of Lisa's activities and interactions, transcripts of her conversations, interviews with Lisa, her parents and her teachers during the 3 phases of the study, the paper examines the kind of self which was being created for Lisa within the discourses and practices of the different settings. Subject positions were created for her by her parents, teachers and peers, and she achieved varying degree of trust and shared understanding with others, amidst different routines, structures and relationships at her early childhood centres and school. Her learning dispositions towards reciprocity, resilience and imagination were both supported and constrained within these settings. Lisa moved from being a 'shy' child and a peripheral participant at four, towards engaging with people, places and things confidently and powerfully at five. Implications for early years learning settings are discussed.

Keywords: learning dispositions, architecture, ethnography

"I Play a Lot:" Children's Perceptions of Their Child Care Experiences

DEBORAH CEGLOWSKI

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

This two-year descriptive study of purposefully selected Minnesota families included interviews with 94 children who either were currently enrolled in or had attended child care programs. Children from 1 to 18 years old recalled playmates, daily activities, schedules, discipline methods, special events, bullies, and characteristics of well-liked and unpopular staff members. Children drew pictures and wrote about activities, child care friends, and child care staff. Children enjoyed playing with friends, responsive and involved staff, and a range of indoor and outdoor activities. Children in all forms of care described widespread viewing of videos and use of video games. Younger children described storytelling, and some, but not all, school-age children had access to literacy activities and materials. This study contributes additional insights to the limited literature on children's perceptions of child care.

Keywords: qualitative research; children's perceptions; child care; quality child care

SYMPOSIUM V/2

PLAY, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Individual papers

ALEX MORGAN

Swansea University, United Kingdom

Connections for Learning : The Role of Supported Playgroups in Supporting Transitions to School

CHRISTINE WOODROW (1) AND DIANNE JACKSON (2)

(1) University of Western Sydney, Australia

(2) Connect Child and Family Services, Blue Mountains, Australia

This paper reports on research investigating multiple stakeholder perspectives on a new Australian initiative involving children and parent's participation in teacher -structured 'supported playgroups' in the year before school commencement. This initiative responds to increasing evidence base about the importance of effective transitions to school for young children in providing a basis for subsequent school success, especially for those children who have not attended early childhood programs prior to school commencement and for children living in families experiencing social and material disadvantage. The program was

implemented in 16 sites across outer western Sydney and aimed to involve those children and their families not participating in other early childhood services.

The research aimed to identify critical success factors germane to the program. Using a case study methodology, data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with participating parents, teacher-facilitators, and the school principal in one successful site in the outer Sydney area. . An additional round of data collection involved interviews with school principals in the 16 sites in western Sydney, where the play groups were established as a pilot program. This paper outlines the rationale for the supported playgroup model and explores the kinds and character of the cross sectorial (eg school-community agencies) and parent-school relationships that developed from this approach to supporting children's transition to school. The analysis of the research findings provides an opportunity in this paper to explore how these relationships contribute to the building of social and cultural capital for children and families and to interrogate the meanings and orthodoxy of these concepts of 'capital' in discourses of schooling. The paper concludes by formulating some policy recommendations about effective transition program informed by the research findings.

Keywords: school transitions, cultural capital, early childhood , cross-sectorial relationships

'Strong and Ready for School by Physical Activity' – Successful Transition Practices

INA THIEME

University of Bayreuth, Germany

The subject of the program "strong and ready for school by physical activity" concerns the transition from kindergarten to school. It focuses on the aspects movement and self-esteem. Transition can be looked at by children in a positive way, if they can see changes as opportunities and if they accept them as a challenge. When children trust in their strength and in their own skills, approach actively to others and feel challenged by difficulties they show a positive self-esteem.

Physical activity plays an important role in early development and learning processes. Studies show a correlation between movement and self-esteem. That is why children's self-esteem should be strengthened by positive, self-determined experiences in physical activities.

The aim of this transition-program is to enable preschool-children discovering their strengths and skills together with first-graders by resource-oriented and strength-based physical activities at school. This collaboration of preschool and school teachers shall benefit new entrant children to cope with personal, social and structural conditions of school.

I would like to discuss in which way this transition-program – based on physical activity and resources - can help to facilitate children's transition to school in the German educational system. I want to deliver an insight into the pedagogical practices of preschool and school teachers in "Strong and ready for school by physical activity " as well as present the first results of my research concerning the self-esteem of preschool-children and their image of school.

Keywords: transition to school, self-esteem, physical activity, collaboration

SYMPOSIUM V/3

RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTACHMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: TIM WALLER

University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

“Early Childhood Educators as Partners with Parents in Interventions with High Risk Families”

KAYE COLMER

Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Australia

Application of attachment theory in early childhood settings can challenge traditional understanding of the role of educators and early childhood practice. An attachment approach can highlight the importance of promoting secure attachment relationships between children, parents and educators. This research draws on the ‘Circle of Security’ graphic (Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin and Powell, 2000) which promotes the importance of a secure base for children and provides educators with a tool for interpreting children’s cues and communication.

A three year early intervention parenting program has been trialed in 5 child care centres across Australia, adopting a participatory action research approach to evaluation. The research established the effectiveness of locating early intervention within a ‘normalised’ setting of a child care centre and facilitated a multi-disciplinary team approach to support high risk families. Educators and social workers in partnership supported parents to develop more secure relationships with their children. This improved parents’ capacity to provide a nurturing environment for their children, thereby safeguarding children’s rights.

Parents reported improvements in their own state of mind, gained insights into their relationship difficulties with their child and reported significant improvements in their relationship with their child. Educators also achieved significant gains in improved child wellbeing and engagement in learning experiences. This intervention demonstrates the suitability of early childhood settings and the capacity of educators in supporting children’s attachment relationships. It highlights the effectiveness of educators as partners with parents to deliver parenting interventions utilizing attachment theory as the theoretical framework.

Keywords: attachment theory, partnerships, multi-disciplinary teams

To What Extent do Childcare Providers Provide for and Support Children’s Emotional Development and How can They be Supported in This.

MÁIRE CORBETT

National Children's Nurseries Association, Ireland

In childcare services much attention is paid to supporting the physical and cognitive needs of children. Colwyn Trevarthen (2003) asserts that “emotion is the motor of cognition.” This aspect of children’s development and its importance in supporting the holistic development of the child is often neglected and unsupported.

In the presentation the author will address the conference strand relating to Core values in policy, theory and practice by asserting that supporting emotional development needs to be regarded as a core value.

The aim is to identify how policy in Ireland considers the issues around emotional development and attachment. The paper will describe the action research which was carried out in a childcare setting in Ireland with the aim of supporting staff towards a greater understanding of attachment and to enable them to provide effectively for the emotional needs of the children in their care.

The author worked with two staff working with children from twelve to eighteen months. The staff observed the children and discussed their observation with the author. They discussed theories such as Bowlby’s (1969) “Attachment”; Bion’s (1962) “Containment”; and Winnicott’s (1974) “Transitional Object.” In addition Laevers (1997) Scales of Well-Being and Involvement were considered and through the discussions all participants developed a good

awareness of why children's emotions need to be supported in order to better provide for the cognitive development of children.

The conclusions from the study will be discussed and these included:

Reducing the number of moves a child needs to make in the childcare service, ensuring consistency of care, providing and ensuring immediate, meaningful responses to children's emotional needs and developing real relationships with parents.

Keywords: attachment, containment, emotions

Perspectives on the Role and Value of Parent and Toddler Groups

MARION BRENNAN AND IRENE GUNNING

IPPA The Early Childhood Organisation, Ireland

IPPA as a member organisation represents parent and toddler groups nationally. Recent funding initiatives have energised the sector and increased the number of services and demand for support. This has also created a space to reconsider the role and value of parent and toddler groups in a changing social context.

This research aims to understand the value and role of parent and toddler groups to parents, children and communities. The study will draw on multiple perspectives from member groups and other key stakeholders using questionnaires and focussed interviews.

It is underpinned by theoretical concepts about:

- the importance of peer parental support in light of the demise of the extended family and breakdown of community support systems
- a shift to a socio cultural understanding of children's learning and development that focuses on children's participation in community and the appropriation of the values and practices of community (Rogoff 1990)
- "the concept of community of learners" Bruner 1996

Within an Irish Policy context it is informed by such reports as Best Health for Children (2001) Strengthening Families for Life (1998) NESF Report (2005) OECD Thematic Review (2001). The research suggests that parent and toddler groups play a significant role in alleviating family isolation. In addition it appears that parent and a toddler group serve to strengthen parents, communities and creates a stimulating social environment for children, This research has implications for policy and practice in terms of resources and in providing a structured framework for ongoing support at practice level.

Keywords: parent & toddler, community, support, family isolation

SYMPOSIUM V/4

THE QUESTION OF POWER II

Individual papers

CHAIR: KYLIE ANNE SMITH

University of Melbourne, Australia

Children as Participants in Early Childhood Education. How Does that Influence the Adults?

TOVE LAFTON

Oslo University College, Norway

Through the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, children all over the world have been granted rights which are stated in writing and accepted by governments. This challenges both practitioners and researchers in the field to investigate and review their thoughts and beliefs about what and who a child is and in which ways children can participate. Children's

agency must therefore be seen in relation to what values the adults who spends their days together with the children bring to their professional practice.

In my research project I focus on perspectives from critical theory and postmodernism to challenge theories regarding children and adults in preschools. I have, together with a group of 13 preschool teachers and assistants, tried to go deeper into the challenges this group meets in their work with children's participation. The study is organized as an action research project, where the participants have given me access to their diaries and their thoughts in reflecting groups. We have also used a video camera to try to see if our lived discourses is in compliance with our written and spoken discourses. In this project I have been doing research as an insider in the field, which has given me the opportunities to reconsider my own values and ideas about what and who a child is and what a child can do. The paper discusses such terms as power, discourses (after Foucault), children as participants, children in danger and dangerous children. The terms will be open to discussion.

Keywords: power, children as participants, values, ways to look at childhood, roles of the caretaker

Language and Ethnic Diversity. A Problematizing of Discourses and Power in Early Childhood Education

INGEBORG SÆBØE HOLTEN

Oslo University College, Norway

Several preschools (*barnehager*) in contemporary Norway have a high percentage of children with two or more verbal (spoken) languages. Relatedly the terms diversity (*mangfold*) and multicultural (*flerkulturell*) have also struck the field of early childhood education. My arguments are that the terms diverse and multicultural preschools should involve more than the physical placement of children with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These terminologies are loaded with complexities and hence needs our critical reconsideration. In Curriculum frameworks for preschools, 2006 (*Rammepplan for barnehager*), language is an important issue of commitment. One of my questions concerning the 'basics' of early childhood education and the matters of ethnicities and languages is: To what extent do children's own home languages become important within preschools?

In my Master's degree project I focus on postmodern perspectives to challenge theories and discourses regarding children who speak two or more languages in Norwegian preschools. I do so because this allows me to work with the complexities I point to here. Throughout my fieldwork I am reading written documents from preschool teachers (*førskolelærere*) concerning language and children with minority backgrounds. The documents from preschool teachers include an inquiry they have sent to Centre of Educational Profession (*Pedagogisk Fagsenter*) where they are asking for help with 'problems' concerning language. I am problematizing specifically the descriptions of the children in these forms, and how these relate to discourses and power. These discourses often favour one home language (*ettspråkighet*) as the most usual or normalized practice. I submit that to recognize dominant discourses concerning children's multilingual realities, is a crucial part in reconsidering the field of early childhood education.

Keywords: Languages, multicultural, power, hegemony

Reconsidering the Basics in Collecting Data for Childhood Research: Giving Children Active Roles in a Research Project

PIA SUNDVALL

Oslo University College, Norway

SYMPOSIUM
SET V

The methodological approaches used by researchers within the field of Norwegian early childhood education follow to a large extent a traditional research culture, often following other disciplines. In this paper I critically ask whether research strategies in contemporary research within education and childhood are adjusting or not adjusting to children's evolving realities. Further, does the field of research consider children's diverse backgrounds? Moreover, how can I do research with fellow human beings in a barnehage (Norwegian preschool) in an ethical and inclusive way? Though it is claimed that core values like inclusion have a predominant place in Norwegian barnehager, I have experienced that this does not always happen in practice and within research strategies.

In working with my Master's degree project, I am therefore challenging mainstream methodology and research strategies. Throughout my fieldwork I have been reconsidering the power balance between the children and myself, allowing them, in an inclusive way, to become co-constructors and co-owners of this part of my work. The focus here is to give the children the opportunities to construct the data for my study. Relatedly, postcolonial and critical theory play a crucial part here. Further, building on postmodern ideas, which opens up for new and diverse possibilities, I aim to make my work one example of a possible way of doing research within early childhood. In this way the children's participation together with my theoretical frame, this might contribute to reconsideration of the constructed 'basics knowledge' within early childhood education.

Keywords: research strategies, children's participation, power balance, postcolonial theory

SYMPOSIUM V/5 CULTURE, MIGRATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: IRIS DUHN

The University of Auckland, New Zealand

Culturally Relevant Character Education through Mythicism and Legends for Indigenous Children in Taiwan

CHUN-WEN LIN

National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan

The foregoing character education in Taiwan was full of reciting rules, apothegm, and examination. In contemporary school, teaching and learning character education still have convention derived from practices of Confucian ethos on which dominant Han's culture is based. Unfortunately, Confucianism with deference is quite antithetic when compared with indigenous cosmology and epistemology with spiritualism. Thus, the styles and materials of the present mainstream character education were unsuitable for aboriginal children in teaching values and methodology. Based on the above, the main purpose of this study is to explore innovative teaching resources about character education appropriate for indigenous children through aboriginal myths and legends. Methods of this study were literature review for realizing all-important characters for aboriginal children and document analysis of myths and legends for sorting out applicable teaching materials. The findings that emerged from document analysis were classified into categories representing (a) myths and legends inspiring fortitude, (b) myths and legends arousing temperance and (c) myths and legends encourage responsibility. Finally, the results of this study show enforced character elements essential for indigenous children and which myths and legends could contribute to teaching materials and the implications will be discussed.

Keywords: character education, early childhood education, indigenous education

A Study on Parent-teacher Communication with Those Mothers who are New Immigrants - Example of Preschool.

HSUEH-SHAN CHANG (1) AND FANG-HIS CHIU (2)

(1) *Providence university, Taiwan*

(2) *Yyuda technology college, Taiwan*

“Immigrant marriage” is becoming very popular in Taiwan last couples of years. The issues about “foreign spouse” or “new immigrant” are rising significantly and generates some important phenomena in Taiwan. Education is one of the issues. With the increase of population of foreign spouse by last couples of years, “next generation from those foreign marriages” is also increasing significantly. Until 2003, 14 of 100 new-born are from those families. The population percentage of those families increase each year and are playing more important roles in Taiwan society. Those new-born children from those families have started to enter pre-school and elementary school. The effects on between students from those families and education system should be understood and pay more attention by education organization.

This research is to investigate how new immigrant spouse participate in and, more, involve in parent-teacher communication. In education system, parent-teacher communication plays a very important role. After survey of researches about parent-teacher communication, most studies on parent-teacher communication fail to show much concern about the process of new female immigrants’ participation. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the cognition and the experience of the parent-teacher role of the preschool teachers and the parents who are new female immigrants. To find out the point of view of the preschool teachers and the foreign spouses on the way of the parent-teacher-communication, the difficulties and the influential factors in parent-teacher-communication, the experiences and the feelings they have within the process of the parent-teacher-communication and the expectations and suggestions of parents and teachers for parent-teacher-communication.

The questions of this research are:

- (1) What are the ways and contents of the parent-teacher communication with those parents who are new female immigrants.
- (2) What are the difficulties and the influential factors in parent-teacher-communication with those parents who are new female immigrants.
- (3) What are the experiences and the feelings parents who are new female immigrants and teachers have within the process of parent-teacher-communication.
- (4) What are the expectations and suggestions of parents who are new female immigrants and teachers for parent-teacher-communication.

To accomplish the above objectives, first, it is going to collect and study the related papers. Second, a semi-structural depth interview is going to be constructed. Third, the semi-structural depth interview is used to collect data and understand the cognition and the experience of the parent-teacher role of the preschool teachers and the parents who are New female Immigrants.

The preschool teachers and parents who are New female Immigrants at a public kindergarten in Taichung County will be considered as the sample source. Ten volunteers from the sample are invited to participate this research. All of them will go through depth interview.

The open coding method is used to analyze the interview recording. The above-analysed data is to be categorized and to be used to understand the point of view of the preschool teachers and the parents who are New female Immigrants on the way of the parent-teacher-communication, the difficulties and the influential factors in parent-teacher-communication, the experiences and the feelings they have within the process of the parent-teacher-communication and the expectations and suggestions of parents and teachers for parent-teacher-communication.

Expected outcomes:

1. Collect and integrate articles about the new female immigrants and parent-teacher-communication.
2. Initial study of on parent-teacher communication with those mothers who are New Immigrants in preschool.
3. To understand the ways and contents of the parent-teacher communication with those parents who are new female immigrants.

Keywords: foreign spouse, parent-teacher communication

Life Space of Small Children with Severe Disabilities as Visible in Their Homes

LIYA KALINNIKOVA

Pomor State University named after M.V.Lomonosov, Archangelsk, Russia

An investigation of a child's "life space" or life world has to be based on careful studies of the elements of children's daily life. A child's life space is built upon the environmental created by the social and physical realities around the specific child. One of the important realities of a child's "life space" (especially for infants and children of early age: 1-3 years old) is the environment, which a child occupies close to his/her elders in their home.

Small children are not able to construct their "life space" independently yet, but they are influencing on significant characteristics of this space. An indicator of this influence on the construction of personal "life space" is its visibility or imprint on a home environment. The imprint of the "life space" of a child is created by images from the environment filled of meanings of children's day-to-day life in the home. Images of an environment are included into environmental contexts of social and physical realities of child's "life space" in the home, an investigation of which makes it easier to understand the meaning of the content of this life-space. And the images are transferred by the parents.

This is a presentation of an ongoing family study. Participants of the research are 15 families of infants with severe disabilities at an early age (1-3). The main focus of my research is describing and understanding the meanings of a child's "life space" through its visibility in the home space. The data collection has been based on qualitative methods of research and based on the analyzing of video films after home visiting and semi structural interviews with mothers. Child's "life spaces" are described using different parameters.

CO-AUTHOR: MAGNUS MAGNUSSON, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

Keywords: child's "life space", meanings, contexts and parameters of a child's "life space" environment

SYMPOSIUM V/6

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Individual papers

CHAIR: CARMEN DALLI

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

To what Extent Have the Children's Centres in England taken on a Research Culture?

ELISABETH CARRUTHERS AND LOUISE WHITE

Redcliffe Children's Centre, England

The pioneers of the children centres in England advocated that to be a successful children's centre it was important to be 'research active' (Whalley, 2007). As more and more children's

centres are established in England there is a strong focus nationally on developing services, self evaluation and leadership. Within the leadership focus there is a nationally accredited leadership programme with some emphasis on research.

Our research at Redcliffe Children's Centre has focused on the development of a research culture which in the beginning made us ask many questions to help us steer the way forward. From these questions we looked for possible answers to our enquiries to other centres, especially the more established centres. It is this research on researching the national research position of children's centres in England that we are presenting. This study therefore outlines the enquiry into research attitudes, the types of research and the issues surrounding a research culture.

Our data collection methods include collaborative discussion, questionnaires, expert interviews, telephone questionnaires and focus groups.

Some of the main findings uncovered the enthusiasm for research within the leadership of the centres: opposing this is the lack of clarity about the definition and the purpose and value of research, and the absence of funding and direction for institutional based research other than university ring fenced funding sources.

Keywords: research culture, children's centres, leadership

To Construct Early Childhood Education as Science as Part of Preschool Teacher Education

TARJA LIINAMAA, RAIJA RAITTILA AND LEILA TUOMINIEMI

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The aim of this paper is to arouse the discussion about the process of constructing early childhood education as science. There are two levels to consider this phenomenon, on one hand students learning and on the other hand the construction of science in general. The basic principles of the process are learning based on science and the dialogical interaction in construction of knowledge. The phenomena will be examined by the accomplishment of one study course and through the principles behind it. There is an extensive need to define the young science and what kind of tasks and challenges it has, especially methodologically.

The theoretical and conceptual framework is based on socioconstructivist and sociocultural theories of learning in which the knowledge is constructed collaboratively between students, professionals in early childhood education and educationists.

Research Questions are:

- 1) How do the students build the idea of early childhood education as science?
- 2) How do they develop their expertise through reflection between science and practical activity?

The methodology of this research is based on action research. The first phase consists of implementation the study course, which aim at supporting students capacity is to build their professionalism in the dialogue between work and science. The data includes different kinds of documents (posters and assignments, mind maps, documented discussions in the internet).

The data of next phases (portfolios and assignments) will be collected during practice periods and in working life.

The contribution of this study is both to develop the ways of working and activities in education through deeper co-operation with the work life and to promote theoretically justified work in the area of early childhood education.

Early childhood education as science is developing as ongoing process of knowledge construction. This takes place individually, but it is also a collective and social process. The education in early childhood education has an important role creating and developing the science and expertise of early childhood education. This calls for sensitivity on the social

level and active role in discourse. That means e.g. that the research should be directed to actual themes.

Keywords: early childhood education as science, preschool teacher education, science based learning, dialogue, professionalism

Mapping and Appraisal of Scandinavian Research in Early Childhood Institutions in 2006

THOMAS MOSER (1), BENTE JENSEN (2), INGE JOHANSSON (3), JAN KAMPMANN (4), MICHAEL SØGAARD LARSEN (2), SVEN ERIK NORDENBO (2) AND NIELS PLOUG (5)

(1) *Vestfold University College, Norway*

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In Scandinavia almost all children from age 3 to 5 and a significant majority of children from 1 to 3 are spending the main part of their every day life in Kindergartens and the quality of these institutions has been positively evaluated by international assessment (OECD, 2006). However a systematically, research based body of knowledge about this field is still missing, even if such an overview is internationally requested.

On behalf of the Danish Evaluation Institute the Danish Clearinghouse for Educational Research has conducted a mapping of Scandinavian research in early childhood education institutions (Kampman, et al. 2008). The overall aim of the mapping is, on one hand, to give an overview of existing research within Scandinavian early childhood education research, on the other hand lacks of research should be identified. The method applied was the analytical tool provided by The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordination Center (EPPI). From originally 532 identified hits in different databases, only 53 fulfilled the inclusion criteria to be accepted as research publications.

Some of the main findings: Dominating qualitative research, only a few studies combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative research is mainly descriptive and only 7 studies had an intervention design. The majority of the studies are focusing on staff (39) only half of the studies (25) had children as their primary objects of investigation. There is a clear lack of longitudinal, comparative studies. More research concerning the relation between children's every day life in institutions, economical conditions, care, significance of the parents and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion is needed. A new analysis for the year 2007 is already initiated. In the future the results of these mappings will be openly accessible.

Keywords: research mapping, research appraisal, early childhood education institutions, Scandinavian research

SYMPOSIUM V/7 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: ÅSTA BIRKELAND

Bergen University College

The Silent Child in the Kindergarten, School and Home. A Qualitative Observation and Interview Study of Children with Selective Mutism

HEIDI OMDAL

University of Stavanger, Norway

Selectively mute individuals refuse to speak to certain people, in specific social situations, while speaking in other situations.

Objectives. (1) To search for the meanings of the silent behaviour from the perspectives of formerly SM individuals, parents, teachers, and SM children themselves. (2) To identify characteristics of interaction between the SM child and other children and adults in the natural surroundings of the home, kindergarten and school. (3) To identify implications and conceptualisation of SM and the assessment and treatment of this group.

Samples. Six formerly SM adults and five SM children, their parents, siblings and teachers/kindergarten staff.

Methods. Recovered adult interviews, video-observations of interactions in natural situations in home, kindergarten and school, interviews with parents, teachers and kindergarten staff, and interviews with the school-aged SM children.

Results. The recovered adults: (1) Onset of SM was associated with events they had found stressful. (2) All interviewees reported being strong willed, with a conscious determination not to speak. (3) Only two respondents (twins) reported feelings related to social anxiety in childhood. (4) Four respondents changed their current lifestyle in order to starting to speak.

The SM children: (1) Kindergartens/schools that succeeded in including children with SM found that the child started to speak after a year with gentle encouragement from adults and other children. (2) The SM children willingly communicated in writing about sensitive matters. (3) SM could be conceptualised as a specific phobia and treated by teachers with principles consistent with graded *in vivo* flooding.

Keywords: selective mutism, inclusion, specific phobia, recovered adults

Assessment of Approaches Posed by the Teachers and Students towards Application of Sexual Non-Discrimination Training Programme Developed for 6 Years Olds in Receipt of Preschool Education

GULCIN KARADENIZ

T.C. Maltepe University, Turkey

In spite of the fact that the sensitivity felt towards human rights has increased, and of all legal and administrative arrangements, 'discriminative' implementations are seen as an important issue. In this study, question of discrimination have been handled sexuality's viewpoint. Taking shape of the sex role is actually children's acquisition of values, motives and behaviours/attitude unique to culture, as female and male. Expected sex role is loaded onto a baby long before s/he is born. As the sex (of the baby) becomes definite prior to the birth, parents choose pink things for their baby girls and blue for their baby boys. Even each name selected for kids can be accepted as an indicator concerning the role of sex. While names such as Gül, Ece, and Kibar are chosen for girls, baby boys are given names such as Mert, Kaya, Aslan and alike. The impact of the sex role on behaviour/attitude is also significant. According to traditional sex role patterns, while a man is independent, aggressive, competitive and dominant of his surrounding, a woman is expected to be passive, dependent on others, warm and calm (Öngen, 2006). Based on biological characteristics, a human being has sex roles specified as male and female. Sexuality is on the other hand, a wider definition that is added onto this biological structure and that includes sociologic, psychological, philosophical, social dimensions. This is a developmental process that involves feelings, thoughts, beliefs, behaviours/attitudes and experiences from antenatal to death and sexual feelings/senses, beliefs and behaviours/attitudes experienced within a specific life period determine sexual development appropriate to that age. When considered the fact that stereotyped judgements/ideas are formed on 18 months old babies, the education provided in the early childhood period against sexual discrimination is thought to be a forward looking, permanent investment. The research was carried out with 466 kids

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SET V

who continue to kindergarten/nursery school, day caring houses/dispensary and maiden vocational highschool in Istanbul province, for which administrators had given permission. In this study, an educational program, which had been developed by the researcher and called 'To Be Human', was applied. To Be Human Educational Program; had been formed by preparing the story called "To Be Human" and planning activities after the related literature was scanned. Activities had carried out for five weeks and prepared by using creative games. Each activity; comprises icebreaker/warming up, game and evaluation stages. In the end of the reasearch, observations carried out during the education and information obtained through interview forms was assessed.

Keywords: Sexual discrimination, Preschool education, Teacher and student

Is There Anything Worse than Being Blind? Of Course, People who Can See but Have no Vision (Helen Keller).

BRONWYN GLASS

Botany Downs Kindergarten, New Zealand

Inclusion, at its best, seeks to ensure quality outcomes through a strong belief in equitable experiences and learning for all. Inclusion is as much about values as it is about practice; a heartfelt belief rather than just a policy document. Inclusion in education has undergone a monumental shift in thinking, moving towards the term diversity.

The teaching team at Botany Downs Kindergarten is in the third year of a government funded three year action research project as a Centre of Innovation asking:

How does an inclusive environment enhance the learning of all children?

How do visual communication tools invite and extend engagement with children and their families?

How do we support children on a journey from dependency to self efficacy?

The point of difference is their notion of inclusion ... inclusion for all ... children, families, community, teachers and pets.

"A broad definition of 'inclusion' relates not only to children with disabilities or additional support needs being included but also to ensuring that all children feel valued and welcome. And so we increasingly ask ourselves what we can do to achieve the ideals of inclusion in our own settings" (Casey, 2006).

Through the lense of possibility thinking the research included the voices of children, their families, the wider community and teachers. Results indicate that communications and relationships ... child / child, child / adult, adult / adult hold the key to successful inclusion. This session will share some of the moments of inclusion captured in this research.

Keywords: possibility thinking, inclusion, visual tools, communication

SYMPOSIUM V/8

LANGUAGE - PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: JAYNE OSGOOD

London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

The Influence of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood on Children's Early Learning Competence and Approaches to Learning: An Australian Study

DONNA BERTHELSEN

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Strengthening cooperation between schools and parents appears critical to improving outcomes for children. In previous research conducted in other national contexts, level of parental engagement in children's learning at home and school is a significant predictor of social and academic outcomes for children. Variation in the level of involvement is largely dependent on the socio-economic position and ethnic and cultural background of parents. This study investigated the relationship between parental involvement and child outcomes in the early years of school. The analyses use data from Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian children (LSAC). LSAC is a cross-sequential cohort study funded by the Australian Government with biennial data collection, through 2004 (Wave 1) to 2010 (Wave 4). The analyses presented use data from Wave 2 (2006) for 4464 children in the Kindergarten Cohort. The mean age of the children was 6.8 years (SD= 0.24). Relations between parental involvement (e.g., frequency of conversation with the child's teacher), as well as responsiveness of teacher and school to support parental engagement, and family characteristics (e.g., language spoken in the home and household income) are described. Child outcomes are measured by teacher-reported ratings of children's language and literacy competence, mathematical thinking, and approaches to learning (e.g., attentiveness and task persistence). From regression analyses, findings support the hypothesized linkages between parent engagement and more positive child outcomes. Discussion of the findings focuses on how schools can support involvement, in particular, the extent to which such efforts successfully engage less involved parents.

CO-AUTHOR: SUE WALKER

Keywords: Parent involvement, approaches to learning, academic outcomes

“Burning Eyebrows” – Mediating Culture and Language Through the Use of Dual-language Storybooks

JAMES MA

Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom

Minority-ethnic parents speaking a language other than English can be marginalised in schools. Many schools work to involve them, but the full potential of the role they might play has arguably not been well-explored. The 'reading books' children take home can raise obvious difficulties for such parents, and the assistance they can thus offer their children is perceived as limited. The importance of social inclusion of minority-ethnic parents as core collaborators in mainstream education provides the rationale for a sociocultural approach to early years reading development on which this presentation reports. By examining mother-child reciprocal mediation during shared reading of dual-language storybooks, the study reveals that, with the mother's intervention, the child is enabled to read in two languages and therefore assisted in maintaining her first language. The mother is also able to develop her awareness of English mediated by the child. It is argued thereby that schools providing children with dual-language as well as mono-language storybooks will help facilitate parental involvement in home reading as a support for school learning.

Resonating with 'equitable and inclusive education in the early years', one of the main themes of the 18th EECERA Annual Conference, this presentation will offer detailed explanations of how 'reading' becomes transformed into a meaning-making activity from what can be a decontextualised task. It will also provide implications for developing approaches that minority-ethnic parents can employ when reading with their children, alongside reading strategies that can be adapted for use by monolingual teachers and bilingual assistants in mainstream schools.

Keywords: social inclusion, education, development

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SET V

Rapid Automated Naming/rapid Serial Naming Skill Connection to Reading Skills. An Estonian Experiment

KADI LUKANENOK

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Reading competency is affected by several background skills, among the others by rapid automated naming/rapid serial naming (RAN/RAS) skill. RAN/RAS is referred as an ability to recall serially presented familiar stimulus.

Early identification of reading difficulties (RD) and/or risk for RD is crucial in point of view of early intervention and planning proper approaches for supporting in learning to read.

One of the earliest predictor for later reading skills and risk for RD is RAN/RAS performance. Deficit in RAN/RAS skill has been founded to predict later RD and differentiate children with and without RD.

RAN/RAS skill should be investigated in early years of childhood.

Aims of current research:

1. investigate Estonian (language of transparent orthography) speaking children`s RAN/RAS skill and research connections between RAN/RAS skills and reading difficulties.

2. adapt into Estonian language the Finnish version of RAN test "Nopean sarjallisen nimeämisen testi" (Ahonen, T. et al 2003).

Method: 4 year longitudinal research during 2006-2009 in Oct – Dec. Sample: appr 400 children in the age of 6 in the beginning of research. Main group: children with age appropriate speech and language development (MG); special group: children with SLI diagnosis (SLI).

Results of the 1st year research pointed out the statistically relevant differences in RAN performance time and mistakes account between MG and SLI children.

Current presentation reports:

the 1st year results (2006)

the 2nd year results (2007)

discuss about RAN/RAS concept and RAN/RAS tests

Keywords: reading skills, reading difficulties, rapid naming skills, early assessment

SYMPOSIUM V/9

INCLUSION IN ECE

Individual papers

CHAIR: MARTHA LEA

University of Stavanger, Norway

Pedagogies of Inclusive Transition to School

ANNE PETRIWSKYJ

Queensland University of Technology, School of Early Childhood, Australia

International trends towards more extensive inclusion of diverse learners presents significant challenges to early childhood teachers, particularly those whose understandings have been framed by notions of readiness for school and special education of children with disabilities or learning difficulties. The intersection of the emerging paradigm of inclusion with that of transition to school has prompted reconsideration of both educational support structures and pedagogic approaches. Using critical and ecological theory as frames, this mixed method study in twenty-two Australian classrooms investigated early years teachers' responses to diverse abilities and cultural backgrounds of young children during transition to school. Although teachers cited school organisational and relational issues as key influences in the classroom, many also reported and demonstrated varied pedagogic responses to diverse learners and to children's transition from play-based kindergarten classes to outcomes-based

compulsory school classes. The study investigated the impact of classroom learning environment, school-wide issues and transition approaches on children's academic, developmental and adjustment outcomes. While it identified factors supporting successful transition to school of diverse learners, it also highlighted tensions between school policies, practices and teachers' normative understandings that have implications for policy, teacher professional learning and family-school relationships.

Keywords: Pedagogy, transition, diversity, inclusion

What Difference? Making a Difference in Inclusive Education.

EUCHARIA MCCARTHY AND MARY MOLONEY

Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland

Set against the backdrop of national and international legislation that promotes inclusive early education in the Irish context, this research paper considers the child's right to inclusive education as embedded in legislation that includes: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs, 1994; the UNESCO Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All, 2006; the National Children's Strategy, 2000; the EPSEN ACT 2004 and the Disability Act 2005. Building on the work of UNESCO (2005) and cognisant of the increasing numbers of children with special educational needs attending early years settings, this research portrays inclusion as an opportunity to respond positively to the diverse needs of young children and to see individual difference as an opportunity to enrich learning.

It is widely recognised that the period from birth to six years is a critical period in any child's development. The 'What Difference?' research project resulted in the development of a toolkit, outlining a range of evidence-based strategies that support the inclusion of young children with special educational needs. It highlights the partnership between parents, educators and early intervention specialists in supporting the child's development and learning. This research demonstrates that early intervention together with appropriate support from educators can help develop essential social, communication and play skills providing a foundation for future learning, thus making a difference by maximising children's participation in early years settings.

Keywords: inclusion, evidence-based strategies, partnership, participation.

'Therapy' at Pre-school: Experiencing the Disparate Discourses Involved in Integrated Practice

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(1) University of Winchester, United Kingdom

(2) The Open University, United Kingdom

(3) University of Southampton, United Kingdom

In England, there are strong policy drives towards Integrated Working in Children's Services (DfES 2004) aiming to reduce the gap between children who are more or less disadvantaged. Little is yet known, however, of how such integrated provision is experienced by young children and their families (Freeth et al, 2002; Anning, 2001, 2006; Tucker et al, 1999). In a previously reported study underpinned by sociocultural theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and multimodal approaches to communication (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001), funded by Rix, Thompson, Rothenberg Foundation, we examined how three young children with learning disabilities 'coped' with moving between home and inclusive early years educational settings (Flewitt, Nind and Payler, 2007a, 2007b; Nind, Flewitt and Payler, 2007). The children's experiences of learning were captured through ethnographic case studies, including video observations, documentary evidence and semi-structured and informal interviews with staff and parents.

This paper analyses afresh data from the study to explore how the principles underpinning different aspects of service provision may 'collide' in the experiences of young children with learning disabilities as they undergo 'therapies' as part of their pre-school activities. Diverse values are embodied in the multi-modal discourses used as early years practitioners and therapy assistants attempt to deliver integrated support for the children. It suggests that young children may experience these different discourses as inconsistencies as they move between aspects of care, education and support. This is exemplified through the experiences of two of the case study children, aged 4 years, who reacted in different ways to the 'clash'.

Keywords: integrated practice, therapy, learning disabilities

SYMPOSIUM V/10 MATHEMATICS II

Individual papers

CHAIR: JEF VAN KUYK

Cito Netherlands, The Netherlands

Mathematics as Cultural Praxis

JYRKI REUNAMO AND JARI-MATTI VUORIO

University of Helsinki, Finland

The core values of mathematical theory and practice are studied in the paper. The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (2005) considers mathematics to be one of six content orientations. It states: "Mathematical orientation is based on making comparisons, conclusion and calculations in a closed conceptual system. In ECEC, this takes place in a playful manner in daily situations by using concrete material, objects and equipment that children know and that they find interesting." In addition of mathematics being a closed conceptual system, it can also be regarded as cultural praxis. Mathematics can be regarded also as a product of human interaction and dependent on it. Four different orientations to mathematics are proposed here. 1) In proximal development the child's open and involved contact to the math content is important as more advanced math helps the child in producing more advanced interaction. 2) In children's actual development learning is adding elements and inventing new ones; the child acquires the ability to use new elements without external help. 3) Considering mathematics as instrumental tools learning is to find ways to control and organize the environment using math. 4) In math as tool production math is a part of cultural process without predefined axioms, in which children learn things related to the process. The applicability of these four orientations in pedagogical planning has been studied with kindergarten students as participants. The results bring children forward as creators of both mathematical content and conditions.

Keywords: mathematics, adaptation, agency, pedagogy

'Really, What do Children see When They See a Square?' Young Children Describing, Constructing and Reflecting on Squares.

CHRYSALLA PAPADEMETRI-KACHRIMANI

European University Cyprus, Cyprus

The consensus in existing literature is that children's appearance-based descriptions of shapes indicate that children view shapes as a whole and lack understanding of shape

structure. This study approaches the subject from a different perspective, based on an alternative interpretation of the van Hiele model and with the acknowledgement that there might be multiple ways of knowing and expressing mathematical knowledge.

This study examines the understandings young children have about the structure of shapes, and how this knowledge is expressed and used in the process of constructing squares. Fifty-two children were engaged in three phase naturalistic task-based interviews. In Phase A (Description) the children were involved in classification and recognition activities, in Phase B (Construction) they were asked to construct squares and, in Phase C (Reflection) they were asked to reflect on the construction process of Phase B. Even though during Phase A, the children, as supported by existing research, exhibited limited understanding about the structure of squares, through their involvement in Phase B, they exhibited much richer intuitive structural understandings. In Phase C, children tended to express structural understandings about squares in diverse and inventive ways.

These findings challenge the view that children's limited verbal descriptions of shapes indicate lack of structural understanding. In the process of the interviews, construction became the language which the children could 'speak' and the adults could 'hear'. Overall the findings indicate that, provided sufficiently sensitive techniques are employed, it is possible for children to express structural knowledge in diverse and often unconventional ways.

Keywords: constructionism, mathematics education, shapes, situated abstraction

Early Childhood Mathematics Teaching: Challenges, Difficulties and Priorities of Teachers of Young Children in Primary School in Ireland.

ELIZABETH DUNPHY

St. Patrick's College, Ireland

Issues of pedagogy are critical in all aspects of early childhood education. Early childhood mathematics is no exception. There is now a great deal of guidance available to teachers in terms of high quality early childhood mathematics teaching (e.g. Clements, Sarama and DiBiase, 2004; Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and Early Childhood Australia, 2006). Consequently, the characteristics of high quality early childhood mathematics education are clearly identifiable (Ginsburg et al., 2005). Issues such as building on young children's prior-to-school knowledge, engaging their interest and assessing and documenting their learning are some of the key aspects of high quality early childhood mathematics education. The extent to which teachers of four- and five-year-old children attending primary school in Ireland incorporate recent pedagogical guidance in early childhood mathematics education was explored in 2007 in a nationally representative questionnaire survey of teachers of four- and five- year old children. This was done through asking early childhood teachers about the challenges and difficulties they experience in seeking to address key approaches to early mathematics learning and about their priorities in early childhood mathematics education. This paper presents some of the findings of the study in relation to teachers' self-reported challenges, difficulties and priorities in relation to teaching early childhood mathematics. Implications are drawn for both professional development programmes and for curriculum guidance.

Keywords: early childhood mathematics, pedagogical guidance, challenges for teachers, teachers' priorities.

SYMPOSIUM V/11

CHILDREN'S LEARNING II

Individual papers

CHAIR: WENDY SCHILLER

University of South Australia, Australia

SYMPOSIUM
SET V

How Sustainable is Children's Coping in the Initial Stage of Education: Empirical Analysis

LEIDA TALTS

Tallinn University, Estonia

The present report is based on the longitudinal study that was carried out from 2003 to 2007. Children's coping in achieving the educational aims prior to school entry and during the first three years of school were studied in the kindergartens and schools in the capital of Estonia – Tallinn and in the surrounding areas of the capital.

The theoretical basis of the study proceeds from child-centered pedagogy, according to which the curriculum is composed and the activities are planned focusing on the needs of a child and his possibilities to actively participate in study process with the teacher and the children of the same age.

The study rests on interviews conducted on the basis of a questionnaire, which was composed of statements regarding different areas of the curriculum. On the ground of the statements teachers assessed children's coping on a scale from one to five for each item through four years. Proceeding from the achievements in all the target areas in the end of kindergarten, the results of the same children from different ability levels were studied during the first three years of school. The aim was to study the following aspects: 1) How sustainable are the convictions on perceiving the world as well as the knowledge acquired in kindergarten in the following stages of school? 2) Are children who received higher assessments in the kindergarten equally successful at school? 3) How well is the school capable of guaranteeing the coping of children with weaker starting point?

The study showed that pre-school education in Estonia focuses greatly on specific study results in reading, writing and calculation, but pays less attention on forming a positive study motivation as well as developing initiative and cooperation skills. Although the study as a whole affirms the sustainability of coping of the children, the coping of some children is not as good compared to the achievements in the kindergarten, because the new environment expects a child to be more independent and act in a goal orientated way. However, some children who received weaker assessments on their subject related skills and knowledge in the kindergarten may cope very well in school environment.

CO-AUTHORS: AIRI KUKK, MAIE VIKAT AND ENE MÄGI

Keywords: curriculum, sustainability, child's development, coping

Views on Learning and Teaching in Preschool Curricula

BRYNDIS GARDARSDOTTIR

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This study explores the ways in which different preschool curricula reflects learning and teaching in preschool and what kind of ideology underpins their aims and methods.

According to a 1994 law, preschools are the first level of schooling in Iceland (Law on preschools, no. 78/1994). Although the preschool has not been generally accepted as such in the community, pressure on preschool teachers are reflecting two factors: On one hand to support teaching methods from the primary school tradition and teach children skills in subjects such as mathematics and reading, together with skills like children being able to: write their name, dress one self, follow instruction etc.. On the other hand intentions of moving five year old children from preschool to primary school, which is compulsory education, are repeatedly discussed and planned. The Ministry of Education formulates the educational policy for preschools and publishes the National Curriculum Guide for Preschools (Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1999). The National Curriculum describes the common goals and requirements which apply to all preschool activities and is intended to form a

flexible framework for preschool teachers and administrators. Based on which each preschool is obliged to put together a curriculum guide, which aim is to plan the preschools activities and children's learning.

The focus of this research values children's wellbeing and the view that children learn best through activity and own interests when playing and communicating with others. Curricula from several Icelandic preschools, reflecting different emphasis, were examined and analysed. In this presentation aims and methods that occur in the preschool curricula guides will be analysed and discussed.

Keywords: Preschool education, curriculum, learning, ideology

SYMPOSIUM V/12

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: WENDY LEE

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Curriculum Development for Pre-school Education in Estonia

MAARJA HALLIK, KATRIN KALAMEES-RUUBEL AND URVE LÄÄNEMETS

Avita Publishing House, Estonia

The aim of this study was to analyse the development of the content and learning activities as specified in Estonian pre-school curricula from 1917 to 2008 and the achieved school maturity level of pre-school children.

Theoretical framework of the study is based on works of Vygotsky, Piaget, Gardner, Coleman, Erikson for specification of children's identity building and development of social skills. The basic methods used in the study were analysis of curriculum documents of different periods and a questionnaire of teachers for specification of pre-school children's school maturity (n=3974).

The most important findings offered descriptions of school maturity level reached in different regions and allowed to analyse correspondence of the curriculum requirements with pre-school children's achieved school maturity. The structure of curriculum documents deserves particular attention as well as their implementation considering their contribution to primary socialisation processes of children. Selection of values, knowledge and skills for acquisition are deeply rooted in tradition, local culture and language, which are supposed to help pre-school children reach school maturity.

The study offers implications for policy making and educational practice. The content and the process of learning and upbringing need constant updating according to changing social and cultural needs and environments; balance between traditional and innovative approaches as well as re-establishment of the moral imperative of education are crucial. Provision of supportive learning environments for children to reach school maturity can be best organised in rational co-operation between educational institutions and homes.

Keywords: socialisation, curriculum content, school maturity, supportive environments

A new Framework Plan – a New Practice?

How is the Framework Plan Interpret and Implemented? An Interviewstudy among Directors of Education

SOLVEIG NORDTØMME AND HILDE DEHNES HOGSNES

Vestfold University College, Norway

The aims: On the request of Ministry of Education and Research we are to evaluate the implementation of The Framework Plan of Content and Tasks of Kindergarten. The study will assess:

- Differences in interpretation of the framework plan between different levels of government in the early childhood education (here after ECE) sector and how different actors understand their responsibility and role in regards to its implementation.
- The strategies used and the aspects emphasized in the implementation of the Framework plan.
- The interviews will assess the use and impact of earmarked funds from the Ministry of Education and Research.

Theoretical and conceptual framework: The evaluation will be based on curriculum theory and research (Goodlad 1979; Alvestad 2001; Bjørnsrud 2004; Engelsen 2006). The implementation of the Framework plan will be seen in the light of its historical context and current discourse in the field of ECE in Norway.

Methodology: The study collects its data from interviews.

Main findings: The study will attempt to identify possible variations in how the county governors and the directors of education understand their responsibility for implementing the Framework plan. Further, we will identify possible variations following administrative hierarchies through different levels of government.

Possible implications of the study for policy or practice: The study will be used by the Ministry of Education point out further initiative in ECE Policy.

Keywords: evaluation, curriculum, discourse, strategies

A new Framework Plan – a new Practice? How is the Framework Plan Interpreted, Implemented, Used and Experienced in Kindergarten in Norway? Sub-projects 1 and 2: Survey Studies among Kindergarten Leaders and Parents

SOLVEIG ØSTREM

Vestfold University College, Norway

Aims: By appointment of the Ministry of Education and Research, we are to evaluate the implementation of the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (valid from august 2006). The aim of the project is to identify

- how the Framework Plan is being interpreted and how the agents in the Kindergarten sector administer their responsibility in the implementation,
- the significance of the Framework Plan for the pedagogical contents of the Kindergarten, and
- how the Framework Plan is experienced by children, parents, and kindergarten employees.

Theoretical framework: The evaluation will be based on curriculum theory and research. The implementation of the Framework Plan will be regarded in the light of its historical context and contemporary discussions about the kindergarten.

Methodology: The evaluation project is organized in six sub-projects based on quantitative and qualitative methods. The informants are children, parents, kindergarten pedagogues, leaders, and representatives of the municipalities and districts. Sub-project 1 is a survey study among leaders in 1,000 kindergartens in 76 Norwegian municipalities. The questionnaire consists of questions about measures taken in the implementation, assumed consequences and effects. Sub-project 2 is a survey study among a representative, nationwide selection of 1,500 parents. The questionnaire consists of questions regarding the parents' knowledge of the Framework Plan and how they perceive the kindergarten's employment of the pedagogical areas in the Plan. Both sub-projects will have a particular focus on the children's participation in the kindergartens.

Findings: The studies will be carried out during the spring 2008 and results should be available by September. Of particular interest will be to bring out possible changes compared with earlier studies (2004, 2005).
CO-AUTHOR: HARALD BJAR

Keywords: evaluation, curriculum, implementation, participation

SYMPOSIUM V/13

PLAY

Individual papers

CHAIR: BERIT GRINDLAND

University of Stavanger, Norway

Exploring the Aesthetics of Simulacra in Play for Play-based Curriculum

HAE-RYUNG YEU

Yeungnam University, Republic of Korea

The question of play-basedness as the thumb principle of child-centered curriculum is in this paper readdressed in terms of the original importance of flow experience in play. The paper attempts to deconstruct play theories in order to unfold the aesthetic dimension of play for curriculum implications. Discussion is methodologically guided by theoretical insights of postmodern aesthetics and supported by qualitative interpretation of the empirical data of children's pretend play. The notion of play-based curriculum reflects the logocentric tradition of Western metaphysics in its instrumental and teleological view of play. Its theoretical grounds have evolved from the dichotomized worldview of phenomena/essence since Plato, from which the representational thinking of play for human intelligence has developed in modern times. Moving beyond the instrumental view of play as a vehicle to learning, I place the stress on the aesthetic experience of play. Play phenomenon is rather the reality of simulacra, i.e., flow aesthetics, in which conceptual dichotomies like fantasy/reality or phenomena/essence come to be fused into an all-integrated whole. In play enactment children experience the process of becoming. Children as active human subjects learn in flow moments how to create meaning-making through sincere commitment to the surrounding world, and how to live responsively to existential difference in every specific context. Children's pretend play in a kindergarten classroom show some specific instances of how children eclectically interweave and transform cultural elements into communal flow of new meaning-making of surroundings. Such aesthetic principle of play experience is brought into the fore of pedagogical consideration here. Conclusion is made that the notion of play-based curriculum can find its way in its full appreciation of the inter-penetrating relationship among children's playing, learning, and being.

Keywords: flow, mimesis, play pedagogy, postmodern aesthetics

Child's Play? Exploring Adult and Child Perceptions of Play

JENNIFER WORSLEY

University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

This paper identifies a commitment to children's learning and play by exploring children's perceptions of their play experiences in comparison to the attitudes of early year's practitioners. The idea of children as active participants in defining their own play is also recognised. Adopting a socio-cultural approach the context of this research explored ideas around the benefits of play to young children's learning, the range of experiences that should

be provided and pedagogy linking to the opportunity for participation in adult initiated and freely chosen activities (Siraj- Blatchford and Sylvia 2002) Key literature also identified adult attitudes and involvement in children's play and children's differentiation between work, learning and play activities. (Wing 1995, Wiltz and Klein 2001)

A case study of the pre-school room in a private day nursery utilised semi-structured interviews with early year's practitioners, video observations of children's activities and reflective dialogues with both the children and practitioners using discourse analysis. When comparing attitudes there were distinct differences between practitioner and children's ideas about play. The practitioners tended to stress the educational outcomes of a play activity, in comparison, the children identified an activity as playful when they were able to identify their own processes and outcomes. Therefore, if adults lack an understanding of children's play there may be a tendency to view play as meaningless with low importance. If children are to have an ownership of their own play culture adults need to open a dialogue with children to investigate it.

Keywords: play, perceptions, participation, dialogue

Creative Aspects in the Learning Environment of Gifted Children

INKERI RUOKONEN

University of Helsinki, Finland

Creativity is a broad and abstract concept and it is bound to lead to a number of interpretations. According to F. Beetlestone creativity has six key strands: creativity as a form of learning, representation, productivity, originality, creative problem-solving skill and a nature of universe/creation. This presentation concerns the creative aspects in the learning environment of gifted children. According to J. Piirto creative people have certain characteristics in common. She has constructed The Pyramid of Talent development to illustrate this. The most interesting parts of Piirto's Pyramid concerning my study are the five 'environmental suns'. These suns are certain factors in the environment which everyone is influenced by. The three major suns are the sun of home, the sun of community and culture and the sun of school. The other smaller suns are the sun of chance and the sun of gender. This study concerns the effect of five environmental suns that in the development of giftedness and creativity. I present some examples from my qualitative data of Finnish and Estonian early gifted children aged 6-8 associated with their environmental suns related to creativity. Data has been collected through the questionnaires of the parents and teachers and the interviews of children. According to this research material can be seen that the environmental suns work as positive catalysts for childrens' creativity and talent development. The descriptions of environmental suns show that gifted children can learn to be creative in their own surroundings when they are encouraged to be curious, open minded and free.

Keywords: creativity, early giftedness

SYMPOSIUM V/14

KINDERGARTENS RESPONSIBILITY AND CHALLENGES CONCERNING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Discussion group

INGER HILMO, KARI HOLTER AND GURI LANGHOLM

Oslo University College, Norway

The new Framework Plan for the Content and Task of Kindergartens (2006) says on page 24: "The aim is for children to begin to understand the significance of sustainable

development". Questions to reconsider are: How are outdoor activities connected to sustainable development? How does the pedagogy of today succeed concerning sustainable development? As a consequence we will have to consider the curriculum and pedagogy in pre-school education. It is also important that these reconsiderations include children's right to be active participants in their kindergarten.

Our aim is to reveal what kindergartens themselves think they are doing in the field of sustainable development and to give them a possibility to consider more closely what they might do. We also intend to give a firm base for the rethinking, reconsideration and improvement of education of pre-school teachers.

We have used triangulating as an approach. 70 part-time pre-school students have described what their kindergartens do concerning sustainable development. Several groups of another cohort worked for about a month to elaborate good practices. We plan to establish a focus group on the subject. The kindergartens work with a variety of themes and offer children a broad range of activities. It is about time to reconsider which approaches are fruitful in kindergartens. How do pre-school teacher educators prepare their students to do what they are obliged to do according to the framework plan, i.e. to ensure that children begin to understand the significance of sustainable development.

Keywords: sustainable development, kindergarten, nature and environment

SYMPOSIUM V/15

LEADING THE WAY TO EUROPE: PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM AND RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Discussion group

MATHIAS URBAN

Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

Early childhood education and care has moved up European and national policy agendas, creating increasing demand for highly qualified professionals and providing a growing requirement for a strong European research perspective. The current attention at European level may appear unprecedented, but it reflects that, from its very roots, early childhood education and care has been a field of cross-national development and reciprocal influence. In October 2007, a consortium of six European universities, funded by the EU ERASMUS scheme, has set out to deliver the first joint European Masters programme specific to our field, explicitly aiming at creating an international community of learners and at linking research, practice and policy across Europe (www.em-ec.eu). Students and lecturers of this unique programme will discuss the theoretical frame of thinking and practical issues that have emerged during the first year of the programme. Particular attention will be paid to the intercultural dimension of collaborative learning and the challenges that arise for professional development. A short presentation will be made at the start of the forum to provide the context for the discussion.

Keywords: professionalism, higher education, intercultural learning

SYMPOSIUM V/16

WORK BASED LEARNING, A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGES IN KINDERGARTENS?

Discussion group

HEID OSNES AND ANIKKE HAGEN

Oslo University College, Norway

SYMPOSIUM
SET V

This year the Faculty of Teacher Education in Oslo University College started a part time education programme named Body, Movement and Nutrition.

The objective of this educational programme is to make sustainable professional kindergartens in the field of physical activity and healthy nutrition. The curriculum of the program is based on work-based learning and on context-learning. The teaching will take place both in the kindergarten and at the college.

Action research will be the key tool in the implementation and evaluation of the programme. The students will be the practitioners and the teacher the researcher. This will be a process where the students have to be open for self-reflection in collaborations with others. This method will give important contribution to the knowledge about the process of development and change in the kindergarten.

The aim of the research is to run and evaluate a part-time work- based education programme in physical activity and nutrition.

Research questions:

- How will the participants' experiences from work link with theory?
- How does Problem-Based Curriculum affect the learning process?
- What development and which changes will be seen in the kindergarten?
- How sustainable will the changes in the kindergarten be?

Methodology: Action research and focus groups

Main findings: The first gathering of result will be done in June after half of the programme.

Our presentation will be based on the experiences we have had and the student information we receive at the halfway mark of the programme.

Keywords: work- based learning, action research, kindergartens, and physical activity

SYMPOSIUM V/17

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE EARLY YEARS 0-6

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Session overview

This symposium offers three papers based on data from a Scottish Government commissioned project which investigated the perceptions held by parents, practitioners and service providers of children's behaviour in the early years, 0-6 (Dunlop, A-W, Lee,P., Fee,J. Hughes, A., Grieve, A., Marwick, H. and Henry,J. , 2008). The research context of the session is set with a brief overview of the design and main findings of the study which sought to identify and explore the extent to which behaviour of young children is of concern to educators, carers and parents, the approaches and interventions used to manage behaviour and and promote pro-social behaviour, and the extent to which practitioners feel skilled and prepared for the issues children present in their settings. The study involved a multi-perspective approach underpinned by ecological systems theory, based on a sample of over 1000 children and their early educators and families in two local authority areas in Scotland. Matched measures were used across age strata, in preschool and primary, and by practitioners and parents. All behaviour occurs in context, the three linked papers consider service environments, the views of parents and the well-being and involvement of children.

Positive Behaviour Study: Does Environment Matter?

ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP AND JACQUELINE HENRY

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Given that all behaviour occurs in context, a whole setting approach was used to provide a backdrop to this study. Forty one settings in two local authority areas took part in the study. This paper considers the usefulness of two early childhood environment rating scales: the ECERS and ITERS, in terms of the information generated about the out-of-home behavioural contexts in which children were spending their time. The ECERS was used on two occasions at an interval of four months to measure quality of environments offered to 3-6 year olds. The ECERS® is reported to be a reliable measure of provision for social and emotional development (Sylva et al, 2006) whilst ITERS is used for settings catering for under-threes. The study confirmed the appropriateness of ECERS® to the pre-school settings in this study but raised questions about its use in primary classes catering for children of 4.5 – 5.5 years of age. The ITERS proved to be a reliable instrument for use in settings for children under three. Results suggest that well-being can be high across an uneven ECERS setting profile, but that children's involvement in learning is lower in settings where ratings of interaction, activities and programme planning are weaker. It is concluded that early childhood practitioners may need to plan more effectively for children's engagement in learning and would do well to concentrate on the quality of their interactions with children and activities provided. Strengths and difficulties

Keywords: quality, interaction, engagement, behaviour

Positive Behaviour Study: Parental Perspectives

JACQUE FEE AND PETER LEE

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Children's challenging behaviour has been highlighted as a cause for concern by policy makers, professional bodies and the media in Scotland. This study sought to ascertain the perceptions parents hold of their young children's behaviour. Research methods included standardised and non-standardised questionnaires and the data was analysed using SPSS. Documentary analysis, interviews and focus groups were used to triangulate findings. The sample consisted of 603 parents of children aged 0-6 years whose children attended early childhood settings and the first class of primary school in a major city and a smaller urban municipality. One of the main findings indicated that parents consider that over half of the children have no behaviour difficulties. More than a third of the children were perceived to have such difficulties, with concerns ranging from peer relationships, to restlessness and overactivity. A similar number noted a negative impact on children's learning. The ways in which parents promote pro-social behaviours and the strategies at their disposal to cope with difficult behaviour emerge from the data: overall, parents did not find dealing with their children's behaviour and needs to be a hassle, as measured by the Daily Hassles instrument.

Keywords: *behaviour, parent, support, policy*

Positive Behaviour Study: Children's Well-being and Involvement

JACQUELINE HENRY AND ALINE-WENDY DUNLOP

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

One of the measures used to provide background data on children's behaviour so that it could be studied in context, was the Leuven Well-being and Involvement Scales for Young Children (Laevers, 1994). As part of project development practitioners were trained in the use of the whole class screening approach. The first round of screening for well-being

included 1230 children. Each child was assigned a score on a five-point scale with 1 being low and 5 being high. In the first round of involvement measures, 1,208 children were involved.

About 60% of children were perceived by staff to display characteristics of well-being, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, receptivity and flexibility, within the setting. Children overall were perceived to be experiencing higher levels of well-being than involvement according to the staff who work with them. Involvement includes concentration, energy, creativity, persistence and satisfaction, and in the view of staff, 19% of children were at a low level in terms of their involvement in the early years setting, 30% were at a middle level, whilst 51% of children were experiencing high levels of involvement.

Whilst levels of well-being were high, it is suggested that early years settings need to incorporate more challenging and engaging activities for young children in order to promote their increased involvement in the learning environment. Promoting positive behaviour is a shared endeavour, this means that the early years sector, both pre-school and primary, needs to find innovative ways of building on current good practice to provide and maintain an inclusive approach for all children and their families.

Keywords: well-being, whole-class screening, intervention

SYMPOSIUM V/18 DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE AND POLICY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN ENGLAND

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: HELEN MOYLETT

National Strategies, United Kingdom

Session overview

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the new quality framework integrating care and education in England, for all children from birth to five. It becomes statutory in September 2008. Drawing on previous English guidance, the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and Birth to Three Matters, it aims to strengthen the quality of provision through the promotion of a principled pedagogy built around four core themes, the Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development. This symposium will explore the early implementation of the new policy document in schools and early childhood settings, through the first hand experiences of practitioners and children. The presenters are members of the National Strategies Early Years team working with Local Authorities and early childhood advisers, consultants and practitioners in raising the quality of practice in all types of provision for children birth to five.

Observation, Assessment and Planning in the EYFS: From Policy to Practice

VICKY HUTCHIN

National Strategies, United Kingdom

This paper considers how the development of effective early childhood pedagogy is supported by new policy initiatives in England, based on information from interviews, questionnaires and observations of practice in settings. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) strengthens the principle that observation should be the basis for assessment and planning. This principle is based on the premise that the observation-assessment-planning cycle along with a greater understanding of child development will promote children's entitlement to provision that puts their interests, strengths and preferences at the heart of the learning process. Guidance materials to support the implementation of the policy make the

processes involved more explicit, in a way earlier national guidance did not. There are many excellent and long-established examples of this practice in England, based on pedagogy established in the early twentieth century and more recently influenced by Reggio Emilia documentation (Reggio Children, 2001) and the learning stories approach (Carr, 2001). However for some practitioners, particularly in schools, observation-based assessment requires a deep cultural shift as the locus of control moves from the adult to the child. The Foundation Stage Profile, the statutory assessment for five year olds introduced in 2003, relies on observation-based assessment but evidence suggests that there is still much to be done to support practitioners' confidence in interpreting their observations and using this to inform their provision. The paper includes the learning journeys from a range of early childhood settings and Local Authorities where the observation-assessment- planning cycle is being developed.

Keywords: observation, assessment, planning, learning stories.

Developing the Outdoor Learning Environment – from Policy to Practice

ANDREW LOCKETT

National Strategies, United Kingdom

The outdoor learning environment study entitled 'Art in the Wild' was developed within a Nursery School (3-4 year olds) based upon having an artist as part of the teaching team following the Reggio Emilia approach. The project took place in a 'wild' area of the outdoor provision developed along the lines of the forest programme resulting from a UK Government Department 'Forest School Initiative'. The presenter will outline the development of the outdoor learning environment in relation to the new UK Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, illustrative of the 'Enabling Environment' and 'Learning and Development' strands. The study concerns the assessment of children's learning, following concepts and practices propounded within the document, with references to the work of Carr (2001), Drummond (1993), and Reggio Children (2001) 'Making Learning Visible'. The study was designed to fully include children with special educational needs thus picking up on the 'Unique Child' strand of the EYFS. The presenter, along with a co-researcher, generated a reflective stance and supported the documentation of the learning relationships by the children, practitioners (teachers and nursery nurses) and artist involved in the project (illustrating the 'Positive Relationships' strand of the EYFS). The children demonstrated a growth in confidence and an ability to express themselves creatively through self-directed activities. Children with special educational needs took a full and active part as their confidence and independence grew. The role of adults in directing learning was re-orientated to facilitate children's creativity and self-initiated learning.

Keywords: outdoor, creativity, observation, learning journeys.

Adults as Co-researchers: From Policy to Practice - Interpreting the EYFS

SALLY JAECKLE

National Strategies, United Kingdom

The principles that frame the Early Years Foundation Stage reflect a social constructivist approach to learning and development that recognises the critical importance of the dynamic that exists between children and those with whom they live, play and work. It presents a vision of the child with the capacity to be strong and resilient, competent and capable from birth within the context of loving, secure and generous relationships. This principled approach to policy has been welcomed by the sector, but many have identified that it

signifies the need for deep cultural change. History suggests that if the EYFS is to be translated uncorrupted into practice, as much attention will need to be paid to the learning journeys of the adults as to those of the children with whom they work. This seminar will start from the hypothesis that the emotional and cognitive conditions for learning change little with age and that creativity and creative approaches are the key to the development of positive, life long and life wide dispositions to learning. As such it will argue that adults and children are critical partners in the learning journey, co-researchers in the pursuit of new connections and understanding. But if adults are to model and 'scaffold' the meta cognitive and affective skills that they would prize in their children, they must first have the capacity to embrace for themselves the risks and challenges that all new learning brings. This cannot happen in a vacuum and the importance of reciprocity, collaboration and collegiality cannot be underestimated. This seminar will illustrate the ways in which practitioners have discovered the power of networking to develop the confidence to implement new and innovative approaches to learning and teaching that put the child at the heart of practice and challenge their own values and beliefs.

Keywords: learning journeys, creativity and lifelong learning, co-researchers, reciprocity

SYMPOSIUM V/19 INTERDEPENDENT WELLBEING WITHIN EARLY CHILDHOOD ENACTMENT IN AOTEAROA

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: JENNY RITCHIE

Unitec Institute of Technology, New Zealand

Through the growing international concern regarding the impacts of environmental degradation and the depletion and exploitation of natural resources on our planet's wellbeing, we are being challenged as individuals and educators as to how we can change our practices and pedagogies in order to replenish and protect our planet. This can be seen to require a shift away from an individualistic paradigm to one which recognises our inter-subjectivity, interdependence, inter-connectedness and inter-relatedness as planetary beings, members of a shared woven universe (Royal, 2003, p. 21). This is a worldview that has been upheld by indigenous people despite the impacts of colonisation (Cardinal, 2001; Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2002; Patterson, 2000). For the Māori, indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand, "the spiritual unity of the child with the land, with its people, and with the Universe at large is as one" (Reedy, 1995). In Western discourses also there has been growing recognition of a need to prioritise an ethic of care based in recognition of the interdependent nature of individual and collective wellbeing within our academic and professional discourses and enactment (Foucault, 1997; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1995; Rinaldi, 2006). This paper reports on a New Zealand study in progress (2008-9) utilising narrative (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin et al., 2006) and kaupapa Māori (Bishop, 2005; Smith, 1999, 2005) methodologies to illuminate transformative early childhood discourses and pedagogies that enact Māori and Western ecological understandings. The focus of this study has relevance in enacting "an ethic of global caring" (Said, 1993, p. 21) generated within early years education.

Keywords: environmental sustainability, ethic of care, pedagogies of place.

Manaaki to Whakapapa: Indigenous Maori Origins - A Paradigm Repositioned

CHERYL RAU

UNITEC, New Zealand

This paper highlights the significance of whakapapa (origins), Maori relatedness to the natural world as potentiality in re envisaging environmental sustainability (Meyer, 2007). Indigenous ancient wisdoms of respectfulness and reciprocity underpin notions of the future, the present and the past in caring for self, others and the environment being expressed in early years' teaching and learning in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Maori articulation from both recent and current research 'Titiro Whakamuri Hoki Whakamua' provides the foundation of this korero (talk).

Repositioning indigenous philosophy as a centre of early childhood education has encouraged thinking beyond a monocultural lens, enactment expressive of wairua (spiritually), whakapapa (relatedness) and (mana) prestige. Utilising the methodology of counter-storytelling (Kaomea, 2007), as a mode for illuminating indigenous constructs, shared educator, mokopuna/whanau narratives give life to experiences that have not been regularly shared. Maori ways of seeing and experiencing the environment uphold kaitiakitanga (exercise guardianship) as shared by educators and tamariki/mokopuna in early childhood services.

In re-configuring possibilities for enhanced global environmental sustainability there is significant learning to be gained in the educative input and praxis of indigenous knowledge beliefs, values and systems. Global place and space are in need of protection and enhancement, kaitiakitanga (guardianship) integral to the process. Globally, early childhood education is a site of potential, a setting in which indigenous ancient wisdoms if valued and given voice might resonate powerful shifts. Tamariki/mokopuna (children/grandchildren) across the globe are our future, this paper sharing indigenous Maori early childhood educators, children's and whanau (family) ways of knowing, doing and being in enacting manaakitanga (respectfulness) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) towards our

Keywords: Maori indigenous environment responsibility

SYMPOSIUM V/20

PARENTS, CHILDREN AND TEACHERS – EVERYBODY LEARNING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: GERRY MULHEARN

University of South Australia, Australia

Session overview

This presentation will provide an outline of how one program is making a difference through strengthening the ways in which parents guide their young children's learning at the same time as re-engaging with their own learning.

In a search for the "right way" to improve outcomes for children who are seen to be "at risk" of not succeeding in later learning, a government decision was made to introduce an early literacy program for children under the age of 4 years in 5 communities of disadvantage. In a climate full of temptation to push down and narrow the curriculum to prepare children for school learning, a different approach was taken and the outcomes, both in terms of program design and results for parents and children have been surprising and, at times, controversial.

The papers in this session will outline the learning that has occurred from three research projects and from program activities, particularly in terms of developing children's dispositions and early literacy experiences. Qualitative and quantitative evidence will be provided through surveys, child observations, demographic data, video and photographic footage, and program artefacts. Implications for children's learning, adult learning and program design within the context of program expansion will be discussed. This session relates to the conference themes of equitable and inclusive education in the early years and core values in policy, theory and practice.

Keywords: birth- 3, partnerships, early learning.

A Policy Dilemma: Is This for the Parents or the Children?

GERRY MULHEARN

University of South Australia, Australia

Significant but subtle changes have been made with a new approach to learning for under 4s in a state system where the main delivery mode to date has been early learning programs for children, with children, away from their parents. Similarly often programs directed at parents of young children have been with parents away from their children. Mostly children in preschool programs are 3 years or older and the child is the focus of teaching and learning.

This paper outlines findings from two research projects - one external evaluation "looking in" (Whiteman et al 2007) and one practitioner research project (Mulhearn 2008) that have sought to distil the unique elements of the approach that includes attending to the elements of children's involvement in learning, adult/child engagement and adult learning and support simultaneously.

The paper will discuss how the findings expose some challenges for further program development and expansion, and some of the issues that, after 5 years, still limit the program from becoming mainstream, even though its value has been demonstrated. Evidence based on both quantitative and qualitative data will be provided.

Keywords: policy, early learning, partnerships.

The Whole is More than the Parts – Parents Engaging with Their Children's Learning on a Daily Basis.

JUDE JONES AND VERONICA KENNY

Department of Education and Children's Services, Australia

This paper will outline some of the principles and key elements of the program and how they are enacted in local sites on a daily basis. We will provide information and share stories about family involvement in children's learning, in particular children's dispositions and engagement in literacies.

Research about the program has shown that the children involved have demonstrated good knowledge about making meaning in a variety of contexts and generally exhibit an emerging meta awareness of their own literacy practices. How children negotiate their literate identities will be highlighted as part of this paper.

Ways of supporting parents' roles in "noticing" their children's learning, acknowledging new achievements and extending their confidence to provide enriched environments will be discussed, particularly in relation to parents developing their understand of learning that goes far beyond content.

Program artefacts showing ways of recording children's learning will be made available for consideration. Parent voices provide evidence of the impact on both children's and parents' learning.

Keywords: early learning, partnerships, dispositions, literacy

"Now I Get it- You Want us to Learn so We can Help our Children to Learn!"

JANE HARGREAVES

University of South Australia, Australia

Drawing on a range of data including a postgraduate research project (Hargreaves 2007) and parent voices, this paper identifies and explores the changes in parent perceptions about themselves and their children as a result of their involvement in the Learning Together program. Parents have been involved in both formal and informal learning experiences about children's literacy, attachment, and learning dispositions and this has impacted greatly on their attitudes to themselves as learners, their understandings about their children's learning and behaviour and the power of their own role in their children's lives. The positive relationships and partnerships they have established with educators, other parents, other professionals and their own children are contributing to deep changes in perceptions and attitudes and developing life changing outcomes.

Keywords: partnerships, parents as learners.

SYMPOSIUM V/21 RESPONDING TO YOUNG CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: SUE DOCKETT

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Session overview

The aim of this symposium is to share tensions in order to stimulate further the debate and discussions around young children's participation in research and the implications of this participation for the children, the researchers, educators and families. In particular, issues arising from legislative and ethical considerations are canvassed.

Beyond Listening: Translating Research into Practice

ALISON CLARK AND LUCY WILLIAMS

Roehampton University, United Kingdom

What happens when listening to children's perspectives becomes enshrined in legislation?

This paper will be based on case studies of local authorities' responses to recent legislation to listen to young children's perspectives. The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities in England to take into account children's views of the services they receive. Case studies will be drawn from a development project, the Young Children's Voices Network coordinated by the National Children's Bureau. The network is designed with a local and national focus. The aim is to support local groups of practitioners to incorporate young children's views and experiences into everyday practice whilst at the same time drawing general themes to the attention of policy makers. Examples of the process of gathering children's perspectives will be given. The paper will discuss the theoretical, ethical and methodological challenges encountered in attempting to act on children's perspectives in this way.

Beyond Listening: Ethical Tensions in Researching with Young Children

SUE DOCKETT AND BOB PERRY

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Researchers in the field of early childhood education adopt a range of approaches to promote children's engagement in research, with the specific intent of listening to children's

voices. There is a need to engage in reflection about both the processes and outcomes of these approaches in order to ensure that they provide ethical, as well as effective, means for harnessing the 'voices of children'. In this paper, some of the ethical tensions we have experienced as we seek to engage children in research will be discussed. To illustrate these tensions and to reflect on the strategies and questions we have used to guide our future engagement with children, we utilise examples from our research into effective transitions to school. In particular, we refer to issues of informed consent, levels of children's participation in research and the impact of children's participation. We are conscious of raising a number of issues, and have avoided offering simple solutions. We suggest that there are a number of contextual and relational variables that guide our research interactions and that these ensure that there is no 'one best solution' applicable to all contexts.

Beyond Listening: Ethical Issues in Conducting and Interpreting Research with Children

JOHANNA EINARSDOTTIR
Iceland University, Iceland

The increasing emphasis on engaging children in research establishes the need for critical review of the methodological and ethical challenges experienced by researchers.

This paper draws on a project conducted in Iceland where a group of children were followed from their playschool to primary school. The study used varied research methods, such as group interviews, children's photographs and children's drawings, to elicit children's perspectives and opinions. The philosophic bases of the study are that children are experts on their own lives and are competent social actors who have the right to be heard. Further, the project is underpinned by the belief that adults can learn much about ways to enhance children's lives by listening to

Keywords: children's perspectives, ethics, methodology

SYMPOSIUM V/22

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP: LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION: SYMPOSIUM: YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE MEDIATED LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: LIV GJEMS

Vestfold University College, Norway

Session overview

In this symposium we will focus on different aspects of language: language as mediating factor in all kinds of learning. We will present a study of what children may experience when they express their points of view in kindergarten, and how preschool-teachers, and peers attend to such utterances. We will then present an interviewstudy with preschool teachers. This study focus on the language that teachers use when they describe children's everyday functioning to parents, what they emphasize and whether they adjust their language to the educational level of the parents.

Keywords: language, democracy, preschool teachers, parents

The Formal Conversations with Parents in Kindergartens – a Critical Perspective

WILLY AAGRE

Vestfold University College, Norway

The formal conversations with parents in kindergartens – a critical perspective

Generally, the formal conversations between the pre-school teachers and the parents about children in kindergarten are recognized as an important and necessary dialogue. Still, we know little about how the participants in this talk experience this encounter. As a general introduction to a project focusing on what kind of professional vocabulary that are in use to describe (or assess) the language of the child, I will try to find out, through interviews with a sample of experienced pre-school teachers, how this institutional conversations functions.

To put light on this issue, I will pose questions aimed at the following aspects:

- What kind of language do pre-school teachers use when they describe children's everyday life in a kindergarten to the parents?
- In what degree do they adjust this language, consciously or not, to the education level of the parents?
- Which aspects of the day-to-day functioning (play, bodily control, social relations, language) do the pre-school teachers think that they describe most thoroughly?
- In what field do they feel most safe about their own knowledge level?

The answers to these questions may lead to consequences in two directions: 1) with regards to the need for education beyond education, and 2) for the organization of the primary education of pre-school teachers itself.

Keywords: conversations, parents, language, education

In Which Way do the Preschool Teachers Advocate Children's Participation in a Joint Formation of a Project?

TURID THORSBY JANSEN AND KRISTIN R. THOLIN

Vestfold University College, Norway

The aim of our study is to investigate how the kindergarten, founded on democratic principles, may promote children's participation in a community. By collaborating with others in an ongoing project, children will have something in common to talk about. This talk will contribute to the children's language learning and put a democratic approach into action.

The study is built on socio-cultural perspectives for learning where both teacher and children in dialogs are seen as *competent other*. We video-observe organized conversations between the preschool teacher and groups of children aged from three to five years. To ease the children's efforts in putting words on their joint experiences in the projects, the preschool teacher brings together documentations like photos, children's drawings and work of creations. We discuss our observations with the preschool teacher and together with her we plan for further steps in the project.

We have discovered that the preschool teacher is bringing the project forward, and that she listens to how the children express their engagement and ideas. She invites the children to express their point of views and experiences, and she repeats their statements and brings forward different senses. She tolerates silence and gives the children time for remembering and telling in their own tempo. At the same time we see that the preschool teacher's questions seldom are authentic. The children seem to know that the teacher already knows the answer.

Keywords: preschool teacher's skills, citizenship, participation, project work.

SYMPOSIUM
SET V

SATURDAY 6th SEPTEMBER
SYMPOSIUM SET VI
09:45 – 11.15

SYMPOSIUM VI/1
DEMOCRACY, DISCUSSION SPACE

Individual papers

CHAIR: BENTE JENSEN

Aarhus University, Denmark

Learning from the Children: Exploring Methods to Give Young Children a Voice in Research

CHRISTINE STEPHEN

University of Stirling, United Kingdom

For researchers the conference theme (Reconsidering the Basics in Early Childhood Education) prompts another look at what we know about children's experiences, how we can learn about their perspectives and 'listen' in ways that suggest authentic engagement with young learners as active agents. Touching on core values in policy, theory, practice and children's rights, this paper looks at the methodological implications of adopting a theoretical construction from the new sociology of childhood tradition which conceptualises children as active agents in the social and cultural settings of home, contributing to both reproduction of and change in their social world (e.g. Corsaro, 1997). Using case study data from Entering e-Society (our longitudinal study of children's developing e-literacy) this presentation will focus on what we learned from talking directly to the children that might otherwise have been overlooked. We have adopted a broad definition of information and communications technologies (ICT) that goes beyond desk-top computers and a socio-cultural perspective which defines learning as a change in the nature of participation (Rogoff, 2003), mediated through interactions with others who are more experienced or knowledgeable (Schaffer, 2004). We will describe and evaluate the activities which we developed to give children a voice in the investigation and to maximise their contributions to the research. By paying attention to the children's perspectives we have evidence that they are discriminating users of ICT who evaluate their own performances, know what gives them pleasure and who differentiate between operational competence and the substantive activities made possible by ICT.

CO-AUTORS: JOHANNA MCPAKE (1), LYDIA PLOWMAN (1), SARA BERCH-HEYMAN (2) (1) UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING, UK (2) VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE, NEW YORK, USA

Keywords: preschool children, research methods, using ICT

To What Extent does Current Training of Staff Support the Empowerment of Children within a Full Day Care Setting

FIONA KELLEHER

National Children's Nurseries Association, Ireland

Arnett (1989) discovered that a higher level of training in caregivers was related to more positive attitudes towards the children and less authoritarian styles of interaction.

The National Children's Nurseries Association, Ireland believe that in order to address the quality of service provision in childcare, the professional development of staff needs to be priority of all childcare providers.

This paper sets out to establish the level to which current training supports staff to empower children in their social development. Through extensive research of current legislation and documentation the researcher will investigate the link between theory and practice in day to day experiences. A review will then be carried out on the existing training available to childcare practitioners and identify areas that need to be developed or extended to ensure professional practice in this regard. It will be established through the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data if current basic training supports the empowerment of children in their social development.

Through the critical analysis of this data the researcher will establish what training needs exist. The researcher will conclude with suggestions as to how appropriate supports may be put in place to support practitioners.

Keywords: staff, children, training, empowerment

The Right to Choose: How to Enhance Infants and Toddlers' Choice and Initiative

DALILA LINO

University of Maine at Farmington, USA

This paper explores the importance of children's choice and initiative towards the construction of democratic values.

The first part of the paper analyzes the role of choice and initiative within the theories of three major pedagogues of 20th century: John Dewey, Celestin Freinet and Loris Malaguzzi. The second part reports a case study conducted at UMF Infant and Toddler Playgroup Program that aims to follow children's interests and needs towards the development of choice and initiative.

From a constructive perspective, choice is an individual activity that is essential to cognitive, as well as, social development. Choice requires the child to think about alternatives, possibilities available to choose from and the necessity to limit those possibilities to those that are most essential or important. Allowing children opportunities to make choices fosters both intellectual and moral autonomy and helps children become capable decision makers. The pedagogical legacy of Dewey, Freinet and Malaguzzi highlights the children's right to make choices and to initiate their own experiences and activities. At the end of the 19th century, John Dewey, in *"My Pedagogic Creed"* stated that "The child's own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education" (1897, pp.78). In *Pedagogical Invariant* n° 7 Freinet (1973) points out the importance of children's free choice within the learning process: "Everyone likes to choose his work, even if it is not necessarily the right choice". Give children the freedom to choose their work, to decide when and how quickly they are to do it – and everything will be different. (pp.177). Also Malaguzzi, in later 20th century, claimed for a school that allows children to have many choices, "Children know that when pursuing their goals, they can make their own choices, and this is both freeing and revitalizing" (1998, pp.87).

The second part of the paper presents a case study conduct at the UMF (University of Maine at Farmington) Playgroup Program for Infants and Toddlers. The study aims to develop an infant and toddler's curriculum that provides opportunities for young children to choose, initiate and carry out their own learning experiences within a democratic community. The research involves three groups of children that attend the program (a total of 35 children from 2 months to 3 years old), and sixteen early childhood major students. Data was collected, by the researcher, during 4 months, through direct observation. The *Well-being and Involvement in Care Settings. A Process-oriented Self-evaluation Instrument* (Laevers, 2005), and the students' portfolios content analysis were used to assess the quality of the program and opportunities given to children to choose and to pursue their interests and initiatives. The *Well-being and Involvement in Care Settings. A Process-oriented Self-evaluation Instrument*

scores average and the students' portfolios content analysis highlights the strategies used to develop an infant and toddler's curriculum centred on children's choice and initiative. The theories of Dewey, Freinet, Malaguzzi, and other authors from nowadays, Oliveira-Formosinho, Laevers, Katz, and Hohmann are used to interpret data.

Keywords: choice, initiative, rights, infants, toddlers

SYMPOSIUM VI/2 FRIENDSHIP, PEERS AND NEGOTIATIONS

Individual papers

CHAIR: KARIN LAGER

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Philosophy with 5-year Olds

BEATE BØRRESEN

Oslo University College, Norway

For many people philosophy seems unknown and foreign. It shouldn't. All human beings, also young children, think and find answers to important and difficult questions which crop up every day. Philosophy is about making this thinking and answering more systematic. When we practise philosophy we try to find out something true, but we do it without going out and looking at the world or looking things up in books. Instead we look into ourselves and talk to each other. We find answers by thinking, not by weighing, measuring or gathering. In Norway philosophy has just been introduced in pre-school connected to children as participants, and to ethical and religious questions. I will present a way of working with children that helps them be active participants by training abilities like listening, speaking precise and to the point, and being critical. Doing philosophy is a way for children to explore by themselves and together, matters about ethics and beliefs. It is also inspiring for adults to be able to work on questions like these without being the one who shall have the right answers, but instead find the answers together with the children. Together with my colleague Bo Malmhøster I have written the books "La barna filosofere" (Let the children do philosophy) 2003, "Tenke sammen. Å arbeide med filosofi." (Thinking together. To work with philosophy) 2006, and "Filosofere i barnehagen" (To do philosophy in kindergarten) 2008. Together we have led the project "Philosophy in school" (2005-2007) for the Ministry of Education.

Keywords: Philosophy with Children, P4C, Ethics, Dialogue

Self Report from Young Children: Presentation of a New Method and its Effectiveness in Norway and Australia

KAREN THORPE, COLLETTE TAYLER, ANNE I. H. BORGE AND SUSAN DANBY

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

It is important to measure 3- 7 year old children's own reports about their friendships and popularity in their peer group because these are predictors of social and scholastic attainment both in the current time and into adult life. In order to measure these types of social relationships among children in day care centres and, later, when they enter primary school, a sociometric tool has been developed. This tool is called "the Bus Story". The children are told a story about a bus on which they will take an adventure. Each child is asked to choose three to five friends from their classroom group to go with them on the adventure.

In Australia, over 800 children from urban and remote locations have participated in a study about social relationships and they have nominated friends to participate on the bus trip. In Norway, the same method has been used in a study of 605 children in day care centres. Findings from both studies indicate that children's self reports on peers, friendships and behaviour are different from corresponding reports, for example from the teachers and parents. This underlines the importance of obtaining the perspectives of children themselves. Furthermore, the method is effective in differentiating between child reported presence of best friends, number of friends and the child's popularity.

Keywords: children's self-report, child perspectives, friendship, peer relationships,

Negotiating Strategies among Toddlers

TORGEIR ALVESTAD

University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This is a study about strategies of negotiation among toddlers. The main questions in this study are: What kind of negotiations are they doing? How do they negotiating? The study is basically based theoretically on social psychological and sociological thinking.

Negotiating among toddlers do not necessarily depend on children's knowledge and experience only, but also on the way they are interacting in their negotiations. Culture education is not only a way of knowing, but also a way of behaving.

My methode of collecting data is inspired by ethnographic thinking. I have videotaped different negotiations among children in their play. I have followed two different toddler groups for 1.5 years. There are 8 girls and 8 boys presented in the study, and they are in age from 2.0 to 3.0 years old.

The reflection of the study want to throw light on how negotiating among toddlers can contribute both their culture education, and their developing of identity. I have chosen to call this process among toddlers their own culture education.

Negotiating among toddlers gives them the possibility to sense the different possibilities of acting, and how to choose among these. It is this kind of judgment the toddlers are learning through their negotiations. They do not necessarily have the power of judgment, but they are learning face to face in their negotiations.

The culture education among toddlers will always start with their unique experience of life. Even a child of only one year old has his own specific experience of life. To admit this, we also give them authority. The learning among toddlers is produced together in the process of cultural education.

Keywords: toddlers, negotiations, strategies, learning

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LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: PÄIVI LINDBERG

STAKES, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Healt, Finland

How are Young Children Pursuing their Schemas in a Day Care setting?

FRANCES ATHERTON

University of Chester, England

This paper aims to identify patterns in thinking of young children under three years of age. Their consistent 'forms' of thought (schemas), evident in their actions, speech and representations will be highlighted and the developmental route of young children's schematic behaviour revealed, as they immerse themselves in active, play – based explorations.

Through observations taken in a day care centre and in focussed conversations with practitioners and parents, the complex nature of young children's distinct repeated behaviour patterns, revealed as they travel on their learning journeys, is exposed.

The paper leads us to ask questions about the learning environments we offer to young children and our interactions with them as they play. Practitioners are able to intervene in young children's play in a more attuned way if schemas are identified, for as Athey (2007) warns, if there is a concentration on content in the learning environment, then a coming to know and understand young children's forms of thought can be missed.

An understanding of schemas enables those working and caring for young children to be in step with children's thinking and make a match between content and thought in the social construction of knowledge. To offer responsive learning environments which nourish and enrich young children's schemas, supported though informed interaction, demonstrates a respect for the active nature of young children's thinking and learning and the rightful place for their interests to be at the centre of the learning process.

Keywords: patterns, actions, speech, form

“..And at The Sixth it Works”...: Reconsidering the Process of Creating Successful Assessments Procedure

KAREN MARIE EID KAARBY

Oslo University College, Norway

Through six cycles of revision assessment procedures have been developed for the Outdoor Learning module of the Early Learning Teacher Education at Oslo University College. Both teachers and students have arrived at a satisfactory conclusion. This paper reconsiders the main changes. The aim has been to develop assessment procedures that promote learning and assess students' skill, understanding and reflection of the concept of outdoor learning and their ability to apply this understanding in their practice, all in accordance to aims in the curriculum. Since the module started up in 2003 the assessment procedure has been developed through variations of portfolio assessments.

The project's theoretical framework is social-cultural Vygotskian perspective of learning. As the responsible teacher and an action researcher I have gone through circles of diagnosing, planning action, taking action and evaluating the action.

My analysis shows that the assessment procedure has been redefined from a control of students learning to a communication between students and teachers about valid knowledge based on each student's portfolio. The consequences are that the portfolio tasks and the assessment procedure have been more authentic. Separating formative and summative assessments made mentors more comfortable with giving feedback, and feedback has become an integrate part of the learning process. The assessors experienced that each student's understandings and reflection was well shown in the oral exam, and freeloaders could not lean to the group. The students were pleased to enter the oral exam well prepared. These are aspects of a successful assessment procedure.

Keywords: assessment, portfolio, action research

The Meaning of Participation and Assessment in Everyday Life in Norwegian Kindergartens – a Critically Discussion

BRIT NORDBRØND

Oslo Univeristy College, Norway

What does it mean to be a participant? The Norwegian philosopher Skjervheim approached this question in his doctoral thesis, "On objectivism and the study of the human being" (1956), where he associates the state of being a participant to the essence of human being. Language, relations, interaction and involvement, form some of the elements of this essence of being.

From the middle of the nineties, the ideology of market liberalism has been manifested in increasing degree in policy documents on education (kindergarten and school) in Norway as in the rest of Europe. We have seen an increasing focus on learning and individual assessment. Against this backdrop, I consider it important to critically discuss the meaning of participation in connection with everyday life of young children.

In an ongoing project about assessment in early childhood education, we have analysed the national curriculum of early childhood education, and other relevant documents. With this paper, I want to go a step further, and discuss different ways of assessment in light of children's right to participate (cfr the Kindergarten Act). What is the meaning of being a participant, and how to take care of this perspective in assessment of young children in such a way that it does not reduce practices in kindergarten to instrumental actions?

I think it is necessary to reconsider traditional ways of assessment in the light of young children's right to participate and to express their views on what goes on in kindergartens.

Keywords: participation, assessment, everyday life

SYMPOSIUM VI/4 LEARNING IN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: ANDREW LOCKETT

National Strategies, United Kingdom

Places for Children: Investigating the Characteristics of Good Outdoor Environments for Young Children in Early Childhood Programmes

JAN WHITE AND HELEN WOOLLEY

University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

This presentation reports on a preliminary study to combine and apply research contributions in the fields of Early Childhood and Landscape Architecture. The literature is being reviewed to develop new understandings about the characteristics of good outdoor environments for young children in early childhood programmes. Research in other relevant disciplines, such as Playwork, Body and Movement Studies and Environmental Psychology, yields further insights to this application. The paper addresses conference themes of core values in policy, theory and practice and children's play and learning in institutional contexts.

Several major developments of integrated children's services involving refurbishment and new build are taking place in the UK. An urgent need exists for the application of research findings in order to create effective pedagogical outdoor spaces and places to meet programme aspirations. Whilst useful research information exists, it has so far not been captured and drawn together nor made sufficiently available to those developing this crucial aspect of effective experience for the youngest children.

The presentation describes several major characteristics of outdoor spaces indicated to have significance for young children's well-being, development and learning, such as affordance, loose parts, responsiveness, plasticity, diversity, nature, softness, reverie, refuge, prospect, topography, pathways and boundaries; placed within a range of conceptual frameworks that cross the various disciplines, such as children's experience of place (Hart 1979). We will

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identify some areas for further research, how the fields of landscape and early childhood research might work together, and how findings can become accessible to those developing early childhood provision.

Keywords: outdoor play, children's environments, children's perspectives, pedagogical design, early childhood

"You May Die if You Get too Dry!" Pedagogical Values of Outdoor Learning

EMILIE FOYN-BRUUN, ANNE ENGH AND AUDUN EMIL TVEDTEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

In Nordic countries Nature and Outdoor life plays a considerable role, not only in people's leisure time activities but also in education. One may say that nature and outdoor activities are a considerable part of the national identity also in Norway. However, the question has to be raised, whether the pedagogical foundations and reflexions are knowledge based, and fulfil the national demands in the framework plan for day care institutions and the school curriculum. Outdoor play and learning give several positive advantages for the children's bodies. The children use their bodies as a way of conquering their surroundings. Awareness, knowledge, competence, and emotions are strongly connected to the body. The fact that children challenge their bodies physically is essential for their curiosity and experience of nature, physical competence, health and cognitive development. If the outdoor pedagogy is to be defended in a lifelong learning perspective with an increasing demand on learning basic skills and also a beginning insight to sustainable development, we need to focus on didactic methods where the outdoor environment is shown to be an essential part of the children's learning environment. The presentation is partly based on the relatively small amount of existing research literature on this topic. In addition we want to present the results from a study which focused on children's understanding of natural cycles. The results include both documentation of the children's learning processes, and of the researchers' interpretations of the children's expressions.

Keywords: outdoor-pedagogy, nature-kindergarten and primary school, values, pedagogical ideas and praxis, sustainable development

Exploring Reggio Outside: Children Playing and Learning in the Outdoor Environment

TRISHA MAYNARD, JANE WATERS AND JENNIE CRIDLAND

Swansea University, United Kingdom

In September 2008, the Foundation Phase framework becomes statutory in early years classes in Wales. This framework, for children aged three to seven years, promotes an active, play-based approach to learning within stimulating indoor and outdoor contexts and advocates the inclusion of child-initiated as well as teacher-directed activities. This paper reports the findings of a project which aimed to support eight early years teachers' explorations of Reggio-inspired approaches in the outdoor environment. Of particular interest was how teachers might support child-led learning in such contexts. The project, which drew on social cultural ideas, adopted a loosely-framed action research approach. In Phase One practitioners took part in a series of university-based seminars which focused on key ideas underpinning Reggio philosophy and the affordances of the outdoor environment and undertook a series of related tasks in their settings. In Phase Two teachers continued to attend seminars but also developed child-led projects in their settings. Data was collected through interview, video observations, field notes and documentary evidence. Drawing on the analysis of the teacher interviews and written reports, and an initial analysis of the video observations, the paper describes teachers' projects before discussing emergent issues relating to child-led learning and the use of the outdoor environment. It is suggested that as a

result of involvement in this study, teachers went 'back to basics' and began to reconstruct their ideas about what, how and where young children best learn, in ways that broadly support the introduction of the Foundation Phase framework.

Keywords: foundation phase, outdoor play, Reggio Emilia, child-led learning

SYMPOSIUM VI/5 LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: NORUNN ASKELAND

Vestfold University College, Norway

Child's Storytelling: The Effect of Preschool and Family Environment

URŠKA FEKONJA PEKLAJ, LJUBICA MARJANOVIČ UMEK AND SIMONA KRANJC

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Storytelling reflects child's ability of pragmatic use of language which develops rapidly in the early childhood and is related to different characteristics of child's environment. The aim of the study was to examine the effect of preschool and maternal education in connection to the quality of home environment, on child's storytelling competence. The sample included 229 Slovene children, aged approximately 6 years, who, at the time of the assessment, visited 1st grade of primary school. Children differed in the years they have spent in preschool prior to the primary school enrolment (5 years, 3 years or 0 years) and their mothers' education. Children told stories spontaneously while looking at the pictures. The developmental levels of the stories were determined using criteria established in some of our previous studies. The quality of home environment was assessed using the Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire. The findings suggest that child's enrolment into preschool has a significant effect on his/her storytelling competence. Six years old children who entered preschool at the age of three, told more coherent and cohesive stories than their peers who were not enrolled into preschool. The results proved that maternal education is a significant factor of child's storytelling competence. Children whose mothers had a high education expressed higher storytelling competence than their peers whose mothers had a low educational level. The difference in storytelling competence of children whose mothers had either high or low education was greatest in the group who entered preschool in the first year of life.

Keywords: storytelling, preschool curriculum, quality of home environment

Strong Language Development for Weak Learners.

WIEKE BOSCH (1), MARIANNE LUIJCKX (2) AND JOSÉ SMEETS (1)

(1) *Hogeschool IPABO Amsterdam/Alkmaar, The Netherlands*

(2) *Teacher Primary School, Amstelveen, The Netherlands*

Literature shows that pre reading activities in nursery groups are offered most of the time to children who are 'ready' for these activities (Smits, Zwolle, 2000). These children develop a headstart in the field of lettersymbol knowledge and basic reading skills in comparison to children who do not show a spontaneous interest in letters and reading.

In doing so, the difference in development among children is enhanced. The children who should be stimulated in the first place, are, due to a lack of interest, not involved in these activities

During our research we supported pupils from a nursery group who had a weak score on a standardised 'language' test and showed interest in reading nor writing together with pupils of

the same group who had a good score on the same test and showed an interest in reading and writing in the requisition of early literacy.

We focused the design of our research at meaningful activities for young children which were linked to language skills. Meaningful activities were discussed in a small group (six children and a teacher) and, at the same time, letters and words were presented in a playful manner during these activities. (Moyles 1995; Janssen-Vos 1997; Van Oers 2005)

We aimed to investigate whether skills concerning language and phonological aspects of the language in particular, presented in a meaningful situation, had a positive effect on the reading and writing interests and the reading skill development in a later stage of their development.

Once a week, during three months, this group will be involved in discussions dealing with interesting situations and incidents which are of interest to them, these discussion topics are linked to letters and sounds. How the young learners who form a risk group will develop and which teaching skills are important to stimulate this development, is being analysed (in both ways: qualitative and quantitative) with the aid of video footage.

Results of our research will be incorporated in the Teacher Training Curriculum of the IPABO, Amsterdam/Alkmaar.

Keywords: meaningful context, early literacy, young children at risk, reading problems

The Effects of Reading Experiences and Reading Activities in Preschool

TRUDE HOEL

University of Stavanger, Norway

This study is based on the project BOKTRAS (2005-2008), a project aimed at increasing early literacy activities in seven Norwegian preschools. BOKTRAS introduces the book usage and literacy-related experiences in early childhood as important contributors to language development. In this study, which is based on sociocultural theory, I will pursue 20 six years old children from the BOKTRAS project (experimental group) and 20 children from a non BOKTRAS municipal (control group) from preschool to school.

I will study the effects of reading experiences and reading activities in two ways and combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Part of the project is to study the children's narrative competences expressed through narrative structure, modes of expression and intertextuality in the children's real narratives. In this context I distinguish between "real" narratives and "refer" narratives. A real narrative does not refer, but follows a narrative grammar, characterized by coherence between the different elements in the story.

My hypotheses is that children's real narratives include intuitive traces from texts they have experienced. When developing the narrative competence children will benefit from numerous reading experiences and reading activities.

At the EECERA Conference I will present and discuss my study of how children from the BOKTRAS project and children from a non BOKTRAS municipal tell real narratives. I will focus on the first step in this process: the data collection, the method used and the first categorisations based on the children's stories. I will particularly discuss "Frog story" as a method to make small children tell stories.

Keywords: early literacy activities, literacy development, "real" narratives "refer" narratives, children's storytelling

SYMPOSIUM VI/6 PLAY AND COMMUNICATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: JENNIFER CARTMEL
Griffith University, Australia

Developing Children's Communicative Skills in Learning Environment in Small Children's Kindergarten Group

RIITTA KORHONEN

University of Turku, Finland

The aim of this research is to clarify child's communication and interactions in small children's learning environment in kindergarten. The focus of this study is in kindergarten group under three years old children. Children start to communicate from the very first days when they have born. The youngest children are under one year old, when they start to be in kindergarten for day care. According the contextualism (Bronfenbrenner 1997) all environments, where children are with, form the wholeness for children's life. Teachers and nurses who are acting with small children in kindergarten are partners and models for children. What kind learning environment is developing and effective for children who are under three years old?

The learning environments consists of physical, emotional, psychological, social and educational elements. According to many theories child's main activities are playing, physical activities, artistic experiences and self-expression and exploration. The communicative skills are developing very strongly under three years. Contacts and communication between children and adults and the other children are the main focus in this study. Adults who are with a child give models for living culture (Vygotsky, Erikson). A child's identity, cultural elements and communication start to develop in very early age.

The method of this qualitative study is observing 1-3 years old children in the kindergarten group and following children's activities, plays and communication with teachers and the other children. There are also interviews of teachers and nurses. According the results of this study children's communicative skills depend on contacts and models in the learning environments with adults.

Keywords: communication, early childhood education, interaction, learning environment

Reflecting on The Basics of Learning through The Study of Children's Sociodramatic Play

CARMEL BRENNAN

DIT and IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation, Ireland

This paper promotes a shift beyond the view of learning as an individual construction process to understanding the social and collective processes of 'intersubjectivity' (Trevarthen, 1980), 'guided participation' and 'appropriation' (Rogoff, 1990). The study of children's sociodramatic play demonstrates these processes in action and brings us 'forward to fundamentals' (Kelliher 1986:42), the fundamental skills of learning on the intermental plane. The paper emerges from a PhD research study entitled 'Partners in play: How children organise their participation in sociodramatic play'. It is a qualitative, ethnographic study conducted through close observation (with video) and consultation with children in a pre-school setting. The underpinning position in the study is that participation in social activity is critical to learning (Vygotsky 1978, Rogoff 1990, Lave and Wenger 1991), and that sociodramatic play provides a rich context to negotiate participation in multiple roles and contexts. The study identifies key teaching and learning strategies that can inform pedagogic practice, particularly in early childhood.

Keywords: intersubjectivity, learning, participation, pedagogic skills, play.

Young children's playfully complex communication: Distributed imagination

SOPHIE ALCOCK

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

This paper draws on research exploring young children's playful and humorous communication. It explores how playful activity mediates and connects children in complex activity systems where imagination, cognition, and consciousness become distributed across individuals. Children's playfulness is mediated and distributed via artefacts (tools, signs and symbols) such as words, sounds, gestures, gaze, posture, rhythm, and movement using a variety of processes including imagination, imitation and repetition. Novelty emerges via the dynamic interplay between artefacts within complex systems. This perspective is congruent with the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki, and specifically the theoretically-based Relationships Principle which states that "Children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things". Socio-cultural historical activity theory informs both the methodological paradigm of the research and the framework for data analysis. The transdisciplinary nature of complexity thinking broadens this psychological socio-cultural paradigm. Findings suggest that understanding the interconnected, mediated and distributed nature of children's playfulness is central to understanding children in early childhood settings. The concepts of interconnectedness, distributed playfulness and imagination have pedagogical implications for how teachers understand and view children and themselves in early childhood centre communities, and for curriculum and assessment practices.

Keywords: playfulness, cultural historical activity theory, complexity thinking, artifact mediation, distributed imagination

SYMPOSIUM VI/7

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Individual papers

CHAIR: PETRA LUCK

Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

Reducing Misbehaviors: The Process of Creating a DAP Learning Environment for Toddlers

WEI-YING HSIAO (1) AND TSUNG-HUI TU (2)

(1)*Southern Utah University, USA*

(2)*Kent State University, USA*

This study was designed to investigate the factors that caused toddlers' misbehaviors, and subsequently how the influence of a developmentally appropriate learning environment changed the toddlers' behaviors. The participants of this study were two teachers and 10 toddlers from a child care center in central Colorado, USA. One teacher has a BA in Elementary Education from Europe with more than 10 years teaching experience in elementary schools and one year experience in an infant's room. Another teacher has a high school diploma with two years experience working with young children. A total of 10 toddlers ages 12 to 24 months enrolled in the class were observed in this study. A two-week pre-observation was utilized to identify the factors that caused toddlers' misbehaviors. The identified factors of this study were transition frequency, routine, learning materials, classroom organization, curriculum, and teacher-child verbal interactions. Based on the principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), several changes have been implemented in the toddler's room, such as maintaining the same daily routine, allowing

more individual play time, aligning play materials with curriculum, using positive communication skills, providing instrumental music in the environment, using soft voice in the classroom, and implementing more movement activities. After adapting these new changes, the results of the two-week post observation showed that 1) all 10 toddlers participated in self-selected activities more, 2) they became more cooperative and independent, and 3) violent/aggressive behaviors were reduced.

Keywords: Misbehaviors, Toddlers, Social/emotional, DAP

Learnscape or Room for Cultural Appreciation

ARNE MARIUS SAMUELSEN

Telemark University College, Norway

“Learnscape” or “Room for Cultural Appreciation” is a 3year project which focuses on research in an often neglected field in schools and kindergartens; the physical inner- and outer environment as serviceable bounds for aestheticisation. We wish to concretise the institutions cultural content as a developmental dimension where cultural appreciation is a part of both school and the kindergarten staff, thereby also developing their competency in seeing single intention and reality. We also wish to develop the physical environmental awareness of the subjects as arts and crafts, languages/literature and movement (physical education) in a special indoors/outdoors context both separately and interdisciplinary. The outdoor environment is an important part of the context both for aesthetic learning tasks and recreation, for all ages and genders.

We want to examine the relevance of an aesthetic physical framework both generally and especially for the arts and craft education. more carefully than we have done in previous developmental projects. We have in mind the architectural framework as well as the artefacts meant to further aesthetic activities.

Three schools and five kindergartens together with seven fellow researchers are in the foregoing project. The project has an activity research design with high elements of critical and poststructuralistisk approach especially when dealing with levels of pedagogical documentation

Following an observation – and registration phase, there will be an intervention phase where the researchers in collaboration with the subject teachers and kindergarten staff focus on development and change of the physical indoor/outdoor environment as a common aesthetic learning environment.

Keywords: physical indoor and outdoor environment, architecture, aesthetics, learning

“Schatzsuche”: Hunting for Treasures to Create a Motivating Surrounding for Children under Three

SUSANNE WOLF

University of Bayreuth, Germany

There is no time in life when we learn more than during the early years of childhood. Small children are curious about the world and do everything they can to explore how things work. They watch how people communicate with each other, and learn how they themselves can be self-sufficient. Exploring themselves and the world around them the infants quickly develop their own egos. A supportive and positive surrounding plays an essential role for personal development. Infants need acceptance from the beginning.

Therefore, the main aim of our project ‘Schatzsuche im Kindergarten’ is to seek and deal with the children’s as well as the educator’s potentials and resources. This means all people involved in the day nursery should start to look for these treasures when the children are still babies. It is not just important to be an encouraging ‘Schatzsucher’ (treasure hunter), but also to create the surroundings where infants find opportunities to be self-active and learn by doing. They need chances to climb, to slide down hills, to run and experience their body in

different ways. Educators who work with toddlers need to comprehend the signals and needs of infants.

We would like to discuss how “Schatzsuche” and a resource-oriented way of working can create suitable conditions for toddlers to grow up. By showing “Best-Practice” - examples of our blended-learning-seminar “Schatzsuche im Kindergarten” we want to deliver an insight into learning processes of children under the age of three years.’

Keywords: children under three, e-learning, resources, play and meaningful actions, physical activity

SYMPOSIUM VI/8 FUTURE CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY

University of Northampton, United Kingdom

Engaging our Millenials

OLE C. BRUDVIK

Macquarie University, Australia

There is a gap between how our learners need to be equipped to deal with the future and how we are preparing them for it. The world around us is changing, and becoming smaller. Communication and media are changing, and becoming more universal and global. Our youth are at the vanguard of these changes, and in countries around the world, researchers and educators are realizing that the current models of education are failing to attract and energise younger learners. In countries as diverse as the United States, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and across Europe, attention is beginning to turn to how to take advantage of the new skills and abilities common to today’s kids, and how to maximize their potential. We have an interesting paradox. We have industry commentators saying that, for a successful future, we need people who think, are creative and innovative, and yet our education systems seem to be working against this.

Learners come to school equipped to learn at many levels, use multiple pathways and draw on multiple intelligences. Today’s curricula do not meet always their needs and too often formal schooling is the least engaging part of a learner’s day. Schools do their learners a disservice when they fail to teach literacy in the expressive new language that their learners have already begun to use before they even arrive (Prensky, 2005). Younger learners naturally gravitate into the daily world of sounds, layered images, and simultaneous events. It is a sensory world and it is up-close, technological, connected, visually rich, emotional, and immediate. Often described as digital natives, these learners have grown up with computers, video games, the Internet, and cell phones. Such devices have always been a part of their lives, and these tools are as natural and familiar to them as radio and television has been to previous generations. The ease with which learners use and apply them is fundamentally different from the way their older counterparts approach using the same tools. The Internet has been a powerful leveler for this generation, providing immediate and broad access to opinions, ideas, music, visual information, and more. This is where pop culture lives and where the senses and the imagination drive creative thinking... outside the box. There is a need to rethink what we teach and how we come to know about our world.

The Engaging our Millennials program at St. Patrick’s Catholic Primary School aims to address challenges with 21st century schooling.

RQs:

- How do learners research and explore curriculum areas, construct meaning, collaborate with others. And work on significant projects that have value?

- What ICLT literacy/skills does the learning environment support?
- How are the learning activities, curriculum content and the technological tools used in the learning environment achieving cognitive gains?
- What are the issues that teachers have with the background knowledge and the experience or the support necessary to implement the technological learning environment?
- How does the technological infrastructure support learning in terms of reliability and affordances?

The data collection started with one data collection period towards the end of term two. The evidence collected at this time included: interviews with each teacher individually, a computer screen recording of learners explaining a learning activity recorded with learner audio; interviews with a sample of learners pairs; and classroom observations. The second round of data collection began with a focus group interview with the teachers; collection of the teacher produced learning materials; collection of learner work samples; a learner survey, and learner focus group interview of a sample of students. The sample was selected by the teacher and was based on each learner having a different multiple intellig

Keywords: engaging kids, wireless laptop, learning, teaching

Stories Unsung - Using Music Theatre to Empower Isolated Families

DONALD MCKAY

Ryerson University, Canada

This seminar presents a project, which promotes communication by using music - theatre as a storytelling media with families. It developed as a response to the apparent isolation of high risk and high need children and their families. The families are often disempowered by circumstances and are unable to advocate for their needs. Although a wide range of strategies have been used to promote constructive communication; language barriers, poverty and educational disparity still present obstacles to communication. Stories Unsung responds to a need for different approaches that build paths for interaction. Stories Unsung brings together families with theatrical directors and composers in weekly workshops. It adapts techniques from Boal's Forum Theatre to help the families tell their stories and identify both the tribulations and the pleasures in their lives. This facilitates exchanges of ideas and empowers families to problem solve. It breaks down barriers and encourages joint understanding. It does not necessarily eradicate isolation, but it does create avenues for cooperative problem solving. Employing music and drama to validate their stories supports families in communicating their needs and advocating for appropriate resources. Project outcomes include: better communication between and amongst communities; enhanced self concepts; deeper understanding of heritage and family histories for the children; improved understanding of community concerns; development of common bonds amongst families; knowledge of music for all participants (parents and children); a deeper understanding amongst arts professionals of the role culture and heritage play in artistic communication; and enhanced oral literacy for the adults and children.

Keywords: arts, heritage, families, empowerment

About Hospitality in French Preschool

SYLVIE RAYNA

INRP-University, France

The notion of hospitality, object of philosophical (Derrida, Levinas, Foucault, etc.) as well as sociological reflections (Mauss, Gottman, etc.), is in the center of numerous societal questions, within the international context of mobility of populations and more particularly in the French current debate on the republican issue, and has penetrated the early childhood aerea. The aim of this presentation is to explore this notion within the « école maternelle »,

considered as part of the « school of the republic » as a vector of integration and the first place of construction of the 'student identity'.

The discussion is based on content analyses of teachers and parents voices which were gathered in focus groups conducted in preschools and social centers in 6 sites (big cities as well as rural villages, in the north, south and west regions of France). It is part of the international project, piloted by J. Tobin, Children crossing borders, on immigrant children in preschool in five countries (Brougère, Guénif-Souilamas & Rayna, in press). Some main issues, which appeared in the discourses, such as teaching-caring, children bodies, love or shame are analyzed within a multireferential theoretical framework (Gotman, Montandon, Moro, Scherer, etc.). Results show that practices of hospitality are not natural but demanding, involving the test of alterity and requiring utopias (Rayna, Guénif-Souilamas & Brougère, 2008).

Keywords: early education, care, migrant children, alterity

SYMPOSIUM VI/9 CULTURE AND INCLUSION

Individual papers

CHAIR: DIANNE JACKSON

University of Western Sydney and Connect Child and Family Services, Australia

Curriculum for Early Childhood: Let me Count The Ways

BERENICE NYLAND

RMIT University, Australia

Curriculum can be described in a myriad of ways, including frameworks based on subjects, resource areas, statements and beliefs, areas of learning and dimensions or ways of learning. It is widely recognised that the early years have a significant influence on children's growth

and well-being and this includes dispositions for learning. Recently, the first three years have also received increased attention with research on brain development. Many countries are developing strategies aimed at improving the quality and range of services for young children.

Present government policies are being influenced by economic rationalist ideas of human capital theory and investing in children with a particular emphasis on targeting children and families in disadvantaged groups. These government initiatives have been accompanied by a growing popularity for formal early childhood curriculum. This has sometimes been accompanied by a narrowing of educational approach so that literacy and numeracy is emphasised over more conceptual and traditional practices like an emphasis on expressive languages.

As more countries move towards formal curriculum frameworks for children in the early years it is worth reflecting on how the conceptual basis, the structure used, implementation strategies and processes of different curriculum approaches might be impacting on children's learning experiences within their early childhood years. In this study we examine a number of recent curriculum documents and identify and discuss key principles that emerge. A number of approaches to curriculum then will be discussed in terms of explicit and implicit representations of the social image of the child.

CO- AUTHORS: ANNE WILKS, BARBARA CHANCELLOR AND SUE ELLIOT

Keywords: early childhood curriculum, policy, social image of the child

Guiding Childcare Practitioners through Observations, Planning & Reflective Practice

KATHLEEN TUIITE

National Children's Nurseries Association, Ireland

This paper will focus on observations, planning and reflection in an early years setting and provide evidence which has shown that regular observations are central to meeting the needs of children. Using evidence gained through our Centre of Excellence Supports towards quality daycare, we developed a publication which highlights how regular observations can be used effectively to meet the collective and individual needs of children. This publication 'Guiding Childcare Practitioners Through Planning, Observation and Reflection' describes how carrying-out observations enhances practitioners skills in developing strategies which can support and document the small steps that children take towards achievement in many areas of their development. It will show how practitioners can make connections across activities and develop a more rounded portrait of individual children and their needs.

It will also describe how practitioners can build regular observations into their practice and provide them with the necessary skills to reflect on ways of describing children's learning, documenting, discussing and deciding what to do in order to meet the needs of children. It will provide a thematic framework for analyzing practitioners findings and describe how they can build regular observations into their practice.

The methodologies employed will focus on tips and tools from practice, group discussion and the use of model frameworks for recording, documenting, reflecting and analyzing findings.

Keywords: children's needs, observations, planning, reflection,

Education for Children with Disabilities in Azerbaijan: Barriers and Opportunities

ULVIYYA MIKAYLILOVA

Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan the approach towards education of children with disabilities (CWD) has been usually associated with the education of CWD in special schools, separated from other children. 41% of 28542 registered CWD in Azerbaijan are educated in special schools or at home, 0.5% is involved in the inclusive education, and the rest do not get education. The research was conducted to study the level of the educational provision for CWD in Azerbaijan in terms of policies, resources and teaching practices; and to provide recommendations to strengthen the capacity of the national government to bring about policy reforms, ensure adequate resource allocation, and promote programming that supports inclusive education. The methodology was designed to collect data on the educational provision through policies, legislation, resources, teaching practices, services and family. Research methodology combines a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methods such as structured and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation of teaching practices, and secondary data analysis. Survey was conducted in 13 regions of country with the highest number of CWD and different range of available educational provision for CWD such as segregated special education, home schooling, and inclusive education. Main findings of the research related to the analysis of the national educational policy and legislation, education access and quality of teaching and families' attitudes towards educational mainstreaming of CWD will be presented to the audience.

CO-AUTHORS: YUSIF AGAYEV, ALMAZ AKHMEDOVA, NIGAR ALIYEVA, RAMIZ BEHBUDOV, ULKAR ISA-ZADE, YULIA KARIMOVA, ELMINA KAZIMZADE

SYMPOSIUM
SET VI

SYMPOSIUM VI/10 POLICY - QUALITY

Individual papers

CHAIR: MICHELLE J. NEUMAN

Open Society Foundation, United Kingdom

Free Early Childhood Education in New Zealand – A Paradigm Shift?

NANCY BELL

New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand

In July 2007 the New Zealand government rolled out a policy described by the Minister of Education as ‘the most significant expansion of the education system since the roll out of free secondary education in the 1930s’. Around 90,000 3 and 4 year old children were expected to benefit with greatest benefits going to families previously paying fees for education and care services.

However the policy received both acclaim and criticism and has given new impetus to a number of public and political debates. Parents complained about limited access to free services and the need to top up government funding through donations. Many ECE providers resisted the new constraints around fees, concerned that the funding rates, based on national regulatory standards, will reduce quality. The perceived privileging of teacher led over parent led services has generated new energy for old debates around the effects of childcare. Throughout the sector there has been significant re-thinking about the fit between parents’ choices and service provision.

This paper compares recent evaluative research conducted by the Ministry of Education alongside survey data from member services. Using an interpretive framework it briefly examines current debates relating to access, quality and parental choice in the light of these data.

Keywords: early childhood education policy, parental choice, access, quality

Early Childhood Education: The Pakistani Experience

MEHNAZ AZIZ

Children’s Resources International, Pakistan

In Pakistan, Early Childhood Education, although present in the public school system till the 1970s was never a formalized program. It existed in most primary schools, especially in rural areas, allowing younger siblings of primary students to sit in a separate section to prepare and familiarize them with the school environment prior to enrolling in class I. Usually, there was no separate room allocated for this group nor a proper teacher; at times, these children even sat in the open air. However, this practice was almost discontinued during the 1980s.

It is unfortunate that the teacher training institutions are not equipped to teach educators in child centered specialized ECE requirements. The drop out ratio in earlier grade is around 40%. Parents’ participation in schools is almost non existent and often discouraged.

CRI Pakistan undertook a research study in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Pakistan to review the status of ECE. Using tools such as field surveys interviews with the concerned persons and filling out questionnaires, the findings of the reports were obtained which revealed that at the provincial level, there is a lack of awareness regarding the importance of ECE due to which provincial governments have never prioritized ECE in budgeting. Lack of coordination between different tiers of government and different service providers of ECE is a serious issue resulting in duplication of efforts and wastage of valuable resources. The provinces do not even know that a national curriculum exists and has been revised for Early Childhood Education classes.

The study has helped in bringing out the ECE related issues and in formulating a plan for promoting ECE in Pakistan. The report concludes with comprehensive recommendations in the light of the identified issues.

(The abstract is based on a research study undertaken by Children's Resources International Pakistan in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to review the status of ECE in Pakistan. It was a regional exercise in which nine countries of the Asia Pacific region (China, Mongolia, Nepal, Lao DPR, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Pakistan) with the support from UNICEF and UNESCO joined hands to review ECE situation in their countries.

Keywords: access, quality, financing, coordination and governance of early childhood education in Pakistan

SYMPOSIUM VI/11 DRAMA AND CREATIVITY

Individual papers

CHAIR: ELSE CATHRINE MELHUUS

Agder University, Norway

Some Perspectives after One Year in an Action Research Project in a Multicultural Kindergarten

JORUNN MELBERG

University of Stavanger, Norway

My research is on the aesthetic learning processes which takes place in a child (a group) from the impulse is given through storytelling with puppetry till the child (the group) takes part in the aesthetic follow-up activity using dramatic expression.

I focus on the impulse, or the aesthetic impression, which is important in the aesthetic field, because it is the utmost starting point to any expression through any art media.

Impulses are impressions, experiences, which very often are something else than an everyday life experience. It brings something different into the child's everyday kindergarten life. It is a strong sense impression where child and adult meet in a common impression. I believe that learning processes which has their starting point in sense impressions and firsthand experiences constitutes the best basis for learning.

I have, together with my researching practitioners, gathered stories and songs from the bilingual children own families. I have used both the songs and stories as my material in storytelling with puppetry in the kindergarten. Together we have used the material in follow up work as dramatic play, drawing, shadow theatre etc...

Every performance and follow-up work has been videotaped. Observations have been noted, I have used log and informal interviews. We have had meetings in the group and evaluated the process and together formed new goals.

In this paper I will present some experiences from this action research process and what we have achieved so far.

Keywords: aesthetic learning processes, action research,

The Meaning of Creative Activities for Toddlers as Seen through The Eyes of Their Teachers.

MAI SEIN

Tallinn University, Estonia

SYMPOSIUM
SET VI

The presentation focuses on the question of how the teachers that conduct creative activities with children aged between 1-3 years, reflect on their actions. They concentrate on three main areas of creative activities – art activities, musical activities and physical activities. All these activities involve active participation of the child and the parent.

The research focuses on creative activities for toddlers and on the teacher's role as the creator of a creative environment. The theoretical part is based on Vygotsky's and his followers (Karpov, Valsiner, Berk, Cole etc.) sociocultural theory, on Winnicott's (1971) concept of a „good enough“ mother and on Csikszentmihaly's (1999) concept of creativity as a part of the social system. Vygotsky's idea was that the central element of educational process is cooperation between the child and the adult (Vygotski 1987: 169) and he wished to enrich natural parent-child communication with cultural meanings.

In the spring of 2007 14 teachers of toddlers were interviewed for this research. The teachers mainly work at different hobby schools for toddlers. The information was analyzed using the NVivo7 computer software. Results of this research will be published in the spring 2008 and are part of a larger study dealing with teachers of toddlers and teaching at Estonian nursery schools and hobby schools.

Keywords: creative activities, early childhood, zone of proximal development, „good enough“ mother, sociocultural system in classroom

Creative Learning, Concept Development and Dramatic Interventions in Child – Initiated Play

ELENI KANIRA

Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

This study engages with the kinds of meaning that children make when they are involved in spontaneous play and have ownership of a 'game'. How can the practitioners explore children's thinking, emotions, actions and interactions through Drama? Can Drama enhance children's meaning-making in learning through imaginative play? What can the practitioners, the dramatist and the researcher learn from the children?

The research is based on a case study participatory project in a Children's Centre. This approach depends on effective and ongoing communication between the researcher, the dramatist and practitioners and extends beyond the end of this research, to the generation of further research questions (Lewis, 2004). Children's engagement in meaningful dialogue with one another and / or the adults is examined through discourse analysis.

During the process of this project dramatic conventions are introduced to encourage meaningful conversations and enhance conceptual development Bruner (1974; 1975a; 1983 & 1990); Clay, (1976); Isaacs (1930); Barnes & Todd (1995) and Britton (1970).

This project explores a group of children's natural curiosity, active pleasure and spontaneous behaviour, as some of the most striking features of the minds of four year olds in the context of 'free' play and 'make-believe'.

The research findings demonstrate how children's thinking processes are sustained when they have ownership of the project. This challenges us to reconsider the basics of Early Years Education. During practitioner inquiry analysis and reflection show a change of understanding as practitioners begin to acknowledge the feelings and emotions that children can express when given the opportunity.

Keywords: arts, drama, active participation

SYMPOSIUM VI/12 TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Individual papers

CHAIR: REIDAR MOSVOLD

University of Stavanger, Norway

Interacting Situations in Early Childhood Educators' Child-centered Pedagogy

ANNELI NIIKKO

University of Joensuu, Finland

For several years both researchers and educators have been interested in the development of pedagogical action in day care centres. Many researchers have showed that the development of pedagogy is productive if the educators themselves are inspired to improve their own work. Many other researchers have emphasized children's subjective rights, equality with adults and democratic membership in the action. With these things in mind three early childhood educators carried out their child-centred project in 2002 – 2007. In this study I describe the interacting situations in the child group of three educators. The qualitative study questions are: 1. Where and how do the interacting situations appear in the child group? 2. How do early childhood educators act in different interacting situations? 3. What kind of levels of child-centred pedagogy do early childhood educators represent? Interacting situations mean here interactions between children and educators in morning circles, in small groups, play and eating situations and in different transition phases between the actions. They consist of discussion and speech, feelings and emotions and also action and doing from the viewpoint of early childhood educators. As the theoretical bases of the qualitative case study it is sociocultural paradigm and research writings of child-centred pedagogy. The data was collected by video recordings in the autumn 2005 and 2006. For the analysis of the video material a tool was developed to consider interacting situations. 25 video clips were selected for a closer analysis. The analysis and the study report are being made at the moment.

Keywords: child-centred pedagogy, interactional situations, pre-school teachers

Transition to School: What Children Think about How it Works and How it is Going to be Different Things.

KAY MARGETTS

The University of Melbourne, Australia

Becoming a school child involves interpreting information and constructing understandings about school. It is important that the voices of children are sought and used to validate and improve school transition practices. This paper reports the perspectives of 54 children from 4 different schools in Melbourne Australia about what new entrant children need to know and the ways schools can assist children as they start school. Children participated in small focus group interviews during the first year of schooling and again in the following year. Children's responses were categorised in relation to emerging issues around peer relationships, school rules, general procedures, classrooms, academic skills and emotions and feelings. Some differences were noted between children's perspectives in the first year of school and in the following year. The ability of children to make links between what they think new entrant children need to know and what schools can do to assist new entrant children was very strong, even though children were not prompted to make these links. The playground was a key focus of children's responses including concerns about their own safety and would benefit from deeper investigation. The perspectives expressed in this study can be used to inform understandings about transition to school and issues associated with children's adjustment to school.

Keywords: children's voices, transition to school

Child's Transition from Nursery School to Primary School in Estonia – Parental View

KERSTIN KÖÖP

Tallinn University, Estonia

The transition to school is an important time in a child's and his family's life. It is one of the major steps that each child has to take in their continuing education. A smooth transition to school is very important for the child's future physical, emotional and intellectual development. Parents try to prepare their children as best they can for the difficult school entrance exams. As the competition is tight parents concentrate their attention to improving the child's intellectual part of school readiness – reading, writing and mathematics skills – which is requested by the school.

The aim of this research was to find parents' understanding of the meaning of school readiness, their opinion on preparation for primary school in nursery school and how much children participate in school preparation classes in addition to nursery school.

According to the paper's hypothesis, it was assumed that during the transition from nursery to primary school parents evaluate the intellectual part of school readiness, and the physical and social parts are left aside. In this research questionnaires for parents were used. 386 parents were questioned in sixteen nursery schools and in eight primary schools in Tallinn.

According to this research it can be said that: parents emphasise the intellectual part of school readiness; school readiness is reading, writing and mathematics skills; parents evaluate nursery school's preparation for primary school well; parents value children's participation in school preparation classes in addition to nursery school; and major reasons for children's participation in school preparation classes are to familiarise children with school life and to gain knowledge for school.

Keywords: school readiness, transition to school, pre-school education, nursery school education

SYMPOSIUM VI/13

TEACHER EDUCATION, STUDENTS

Individual papers

CHAIR: ARVE GUNNESTAD

Queen Maud's College of Early Childhood Education, Norway

The Relationship between Student and Mentor in Preschool Teacher Education

TARJA LIINAMAA

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This paper focuses on mentoring in Finnish preschool teacher education. The aim of the present study was to find out the most meaningful elements of mentor-student relationship during practice periods. The empirical data consist of interviews of five students' own experiences, their mentors' views and of supplement data with recorded discussions of student and his or her mentor. The data were analyzed in accordance with phenomenological approaches. The findings demonstrate how meaningful mentoring is built in relationships between the student and the mentor, and how in general level the elements of meaningful mentoring are illustrated.

The results revealed the importance and significance of the beginning of the practice period. Also the nature of interaction and the pedagogical activities are important for good and meaningful relationship. Especially in pedagogical activities it was significant that students got responsibility, space and freedom enough. One interesting finding was the position of the student in day care community. To the students it was especially meaningful to be and act as a legitimized participant in community. However, they felt their situation contradictory

because of their role as a student. The question is how it is possible for the mentors to scaffold their students to work as an equal colleague in the community of learning environments. Another interesting finding was the dialogical character of the process in constructing the relationship between mentor and his or her student. Based on these findings, further description will be done based on the data and experiences of mentors.

Keywords: practice periods, relationship in mentoring, preschool teacher education, phenomenological methodology

Women Practitioner's Reflective Learning Journeys to Professionalism

ELAINE HALLET

University of Derby, United Kingdom

Traditionally women practitioners in the U.K. have worked with young children in a supportive role to others. Foundation degrees were introduced in 2002 to raise practitioner's qualifications. The research aims to investigate the impact of an Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation degree upon practitioner's personal and professional development. This research follows five Early Years Foundation Degree graduates who are experienced practitioners on their transformational learning journey in which they redefine their professional identity, develop professionalism and lead professional practice through work-based reflective thinking and behaviour.

The Feminist research methodology used in the five case studies authenticates each woman's voice as it is 'heard and listened to' (Kitzinger, in Seale et al, 2007) through biographical narrative methods. (Andrews et al in Silverman, 2006). The women's experiences have empowered them professionally. Their voices are not only being heard but they are leading professional practice within Early Years settings and schools.

The Effective Provision for Pre-School Education Project (Sylva et al, 1999) reported inequality of provision for young children and recommended a higher qualified workforce. The Children's Workforce Strategy (2006) is professionalizing the Early Years sector through the development of a graduate workforce. The research findings recognised the contribution of work-based reflective practice in practitioner's professional development and in raising the quality of service for children and families.

Keywords: professional identity, reflection, transformation

How to Create the Educational Situation that Promotes Formation of Students' Responsibility

MARE TUIISK

Tallinn University, Estonia

The general context of this article is the problem of sustainability in society. The paper focuses on how to create the educational situation that promotes formation of students' responsibility. The problem is that Estonian school today fails to provide all necessary preconditions for moulding responsible citizens. More and more teachers confess that students have only their rights while teachers have the obligations and responsibility.

The survey is based on 48 narrative essays and 16 thorough interviews. The received data were processed applying the methodology of the grounded theory. The author has interpreted the outcomes relying on the works of P. Sartre, V. Fränkl, V. Peavy, R. Fischer and M. Fullan.

The most significant conclusion is that a majority of teachers cannot differentiate the essence of the sense of responsibility from the sense of duty neither do they possess the theoretical background for developing those senses. This prevents teachers from contributing to the development of the students' sense of responsibility. Informed teachers do value critical thinking and the freedom of choice and decision-making; however, they describe numerous obstacles they have encountered when trying to implement those principles. Although some

necessary changes (e.g. alterations to the curriculum) can be effected only through government regulations, the current situation also holds great reserve for developing students' sense of responsibility. However, this calls for teachers' awareness, courage to make decisions and responsible action.

Keywords: subjectness (being a subject), critical thinking, decision-making, responsibility

SYMPOSIUM VI/14 TODDLERS, PARTICIPATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: MIRIAM K. ROSENTHAL

Hebrew University, Israel

Toddlers in Preschools - Possibilities and Hinderances within The Daily Schedule.

GUDRUN BJARNADOTTIR

Iceland University of Education, Iceland

This presentation will reveal some findings of an ongoing research. The purpose is to look into the facilities and framework for the youngest children in preschool, age 1– 3 year. Furthermore, the research focuses on the participation of the children and their interaction. The theoretical framework are the postmodern ideas which emphasis children's competence and their right to influence their life in preschool.

The methods are both quantitative and qualitative. A questionnaire was distributed to eighty preschools in Reykjavik. Sixty-four department leaders responded. A focus group with department leaders was established to gain further information about their beliefs concerning special issues. In field observations within the preschools the focus was on the children's participation and interaction.

The preliminary findings indicate that in 51 preschools (85%) the number of children in each department is 16– 20 (thereof 18– 20 children in 36 departments). The teachers emphasised the importance of planning for the care and education of the children. They also claimed the necessity of dividing the children in to smaller groups to better serve the purpose of the curriculum and the individual needs of the children. At the same time, the teachers consider it important for children's play and interaction to have the daily schedule more flexible. The above seems to be contradictory and can lead to a dilemma in the work with the children. The study indicates that the number of children in each department and the daily schedule seemed to affect childrens participation and interaction.

Keywords: toddler, participation, interaction, daily schedule

Toddlers are More or Less active Participants in Finnish Day Care Centres

MARJATTA KALLIALA

University of Helsinki, Finland

As a part of a larger research project on under-three-year-olds' well-being in day care, toddlers (N 28) were observed in a variety of situations alone, playing with their peers and in interaction with adults. The research material was generated through observations using the LIS-YC (the Leuven Involvement Scale for Young Children). In addition a mini narrative was attached to every score indicating the level of involvement. The combination of quantitative and qualitative material enabled the possibility of sketching activity profiles for individual children, each of which was observed during six mornings.

The results show that the profiles of some of the children correspond relatively well with the ideal and idealized picture of young children as active participants and competent learners

whereas some of the children rarely got involved in self chosen activities during free play and needed considerable adult support. The paper presents children with different profiles e.g. 'the child of the outer circle', 'the ideal pre-school child' and 'the carefree explorer'. Finally, the paper reflects on the challenges that the results raise in relation to the adult role.

Keywords: toddlers, participation, adult role

Participation among Small Children in The Everyday Life in a Norwegian Kindergarten

ANNE GREVE AND ANNETTE KRISTOFFERSEN WINJE

Oslo University College, Norway

This study about friendship and participation, among one-year-old children in the kindergarten, modifies previous perceptions about participation. Within the framework of a lifeworld-phenomenology, inspired by post-colonial theory, studying children without a full knowledge of the spoken word shows that observation is used as a strategy for entering the children's game. Furthermore this study implies that observation is an aspect of participation itself. Previously one assumed that children that "only" observed the children's game were immature socially. This study distinguishes between participation and contribution. Through video observation the study has found that children seem to have a sense of participation, even though they do not contribute or are noticed by the other children.

Another important issue is how the youngest children leave traces in their every day life in the kindergarten. Children's visual, acoustic, and physical activities has an impact on how significant their traces are. The verbal utterances seem to be of particular importance in order to establish oneself and others in the pedagogical landscape. The youngest children leave relatively insignificant traces, the ones that are older leave more significant traces and the oldest leave the strongest impression. This has to do with the oldest children moving between important places in the landscape, while conversing or producing loud noises. Participation is mostly defined by the majority. The youngest ones leave traces, but these are often overlooked. Therefore, if they are to leave traces that are noticed, they must participate in interactions on the terms of the majority or the adults.

Keywords: participation, small children, observation, traces

SYMPOSIUM VI/15

DEVELOPMENT, STRATEGIES

Individual papers

CHAIR: NINA ROSSHOLT

Vestfold University College and Norwegian Center for child studies (NOSEB), Norway

The "Integrative Psycho-pedagogical Model" of Early Childhood Education Professionals in the Kibbutzim in Israel

RONIT PLOTNIK (1) AND NIRA WAHLE (2)

(1)Kibbutzim College of Education, Israel

(2)Kibbutzim College of Education and Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Most of the researches that deal with development of Early Childhood (EC) professionals focus primarily on the qualification and training of the kindergarten teachers and caregivers. Though, little attention is given to other significant professionals, and to the systematic, social and cultural context.

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This produced a lack of general perspective and resulted in poor treatment of challenges. The intervention program presented here, exists for twenty years in the Kibbutzim in Israel, and created a revolution in the EC Education.

The Kibbutzim went through a transition from a collectivistic society to an individualistic one, which emphasis on family units. Parents found themselves in a new role that has not passed to them by inter-generational transfer. While caregivers lost their socialization roles, expressed by exhaustion and low professional self esteem.

This crisis gave rise to the "Integrative Psycho-pedagogical Model" which merges theories from the child and parent developmental psychology with organizational, systemic counseling and ecological theories. The crucial connection between the academy and the field is kept during the training process and after it. It is sustained by a national hierarchical network that functions according to professional groups, from individual counseling to national conferences and events. In most systems the counselors, managers and kindergarten teachers (from birth to six years) are psycho-pedagogical specialists. This model provides a new professional horizon for women who work in the EC field and increases their professional self esteem. Due to its success it is adopted by educational systems outside of the Kibbutzim in Israel.

Keywords: professional, psycho-pedagogical model, professional development, professional training.

Vygotskian Developmental Cognitive Curriculum for Early Years. Implementing Vygotsky: Pedagogical Implications and Challenges

GALINA DOLYA

Key to Learning, United Kingdom

This paper presents finding from a two year study evaluating the effectiveness of the 'Key to Learning' Curriculum in UK preschools.

This unique educational programme based on the work of Leonid Venger and his team of prominent Russian psychologists and educationalists offers specially designed optimal learning experiences that amplify development but doesn't accelerate it and unlock possibilities to a maximum. It develops symbolic literacy and introduces different psychological tools. The programme for the development of pre-school cognition is based on systematic introduction of children to sensory standards and perceptual modelling. Children are taught how to independently construct object-based, graphic and motor models and how to use these models for solving cognitive problems. Initially these models appear in external activity of the child and then become internalized as inner models and representations. In this session I will describe the theory behind the approach and talk about its successful application in Early Years settings for children with all levels of ability from children with severe special educational needs to those who are gifted and talented. Observation in the settings suggested that the impact of this programme was greatest on the child's vocabulary, creative language and focussed attention. This was confirmed by experimental data which was collected at three time points and involved 83 children (aged 3 and 4). There were significant differences in the children's vocabulary and creative language. One group made on average 20 months progress during the 12 months of the intervention. Some children advanced three years. A second group on average made 18 months progress after 7 months of intervention.

Keywords: psychological tools, symbolic literacy, modeling self-regulation

Greek Preschool Teachers' Perspectives on the New Curriculum and its Implementation

EFSTRATIA SOFOU (1) AND VASSILIOS TSAFOS (2)

(1)Hellenic Pedagogical Institute, Greece

(2)University of Athens, Greece

In 2003, a new curriculum was enacted in Greek preschool education, replacing the previous one of 1989. This followed the development of new curricula for primary and secondary education, which introduced a cross-curricular approach to learning. In this context, the new curriculum's policy development aimed at an equal integration of preschool education into the unified design of the primary and secondary education.

A basic issue in any such educational change is teachers' understanding of the new curriculum and the latter's impact on their thinking and daily practice. Given the need for deeper understanding of the relationship between curriculum and parameters that shape practice, this study aims to examine preschool teachers' perspectives on the new early childhood curriculum and its implementation, as well as the extent to which the new curriculum has influenced preschool practice.

The study's main questions are: What are the characteristics of the new preschool curriculum in Greece? What does the new curriculum mean to preschool teachers and their work? How do preschool teachers understand the concept of teaching and learning and their role in educational practice and planning, and how does this relate to the new curriculum? How do preschool teachers understand curriculum content in terms of their practice?

Qualitative methods were chosen in order to capture and explore the teachers' own understandings and constructions of the new curriculum. The qualitative study is based on in-depth interviews of a small number of preschool teachers, and uses text analysis informed by critical discourse analysis to examine relevant curriculum policy documents in terms of the underlying discourse and ideology. By understanding the complexities that shape curriculum, educators, educational administrators and policy-makers can reflectively monitor the positive and negative impact of curriculum reform on teacher practice.

Keywords: curriculum, early childhood, teachers, implementation

SYMPOSIUM VI/16

PARTICIPATION

Individual papers

CHAIR: JOANNE AILWOOD

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Models in the Education of Pre-school Children in Kindergartens

RENATA MILJEVIĆ-RIDIČKI

University of Zagreb, Croatia

Some results of the scientific project Methods and models in the education of pre-school children in kindergartens will be presented. The project is part of the scientific program Curricula of early education and compulsory education.

Some Croatian authors have done a research about primary school teachers competences. Teachers have pointed out that they lack some deeper education on working with children with special needs and cooperation with parents. Although they have this subjects included in university curricula, it turned out that is not enough.

Kindergarten teachers are strong models for young children. The most relevant psychological theories show the importance of early influences on child development (Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky, Feuerstein etc).

Our main research questions are:

Are pre-school teachers competent enough for their roles in early childhood education?
Is there a difference between attitudes, skills, values etc. of future pre-school teachers and present pre-school teachers?

Do they have any suggestion about university curricula?

The research plan is to compare current pre-school education university students and pre-school teachers in kindergartens. They will be asked about their attitudes towards various educational conceptions, satisfaction with the work/study, expectations, needs etc. Their answers will be analysed and compared.

According to the results, changes in the university curricula will be prepared and applied.

Keywords: models in education, university curricula

What is a Housewife? Doing Bourdieu in Kindergarden

RØNNAUG SØRENSEN

Vestfold University College, Norway

This paper examines how preschool equality work can contribute to children's desire to understand, to do and to construct gender, and how the adults' naturalization of gender contribute to the reproduction of gender roles in the kindergarden. This problem will be illustrated by several projects in which I have participated together with students and staff at Vestfold University, and also at several kindergartens in Vestfold. I have also included suggestions from Australian preschool teachers and researchers in connection with a workshop at the Melbourne Conference "Honoring the child, honoring equality 7", in November 2007.

My basic premise is that children's first encounter with gender difference is their first encounter with inequality. It is mainly from the age of three that a child can be observed to question gender inequalities. In my analyses, I have used Bourdieu's concepts field and habitus (Bourdieu 1998, 2000).

How can we as adults meet children's challenges regarding these topics? I shall try to answer this by relating two kindergarden stories: "What is a housewife?" and "Is pink a girls' colour?"

This paper concludes that observing gender from children's perspective can help preventing traditional sexist role models from being reproduced. Only then can we notice the staff's naturalizing attitudes towards gender and equality (Bourdieu 2000). Equality is about values and motives for actions. Respecting children's rights alters adults' self-reflexivity, and thus their own practice can be changed. The Children's Convention does not only alter children's status but also the status of adults.

Keywords: childrens rights, gender

Emergent Literacy in Norwegian Preschools: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

JENNY MIGLIS SANDVIK

University of Stavanger, Norway

Despite widespread agreement in the research literature about the impact of children's early literacy experiences on future literacy development, there remains a divergence of views in the early childhood education and care community. The present study examined Norwegian preschool teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to emergent literacy. The research questions addressed were: What do preschool teachers believe about their role and the role of preschool in children's early literacy development? What is the quality and quantity of early literacy activities in Norwegian preschools? A 130 item survey, entitled the Preschool Literacy Survey (PLS), was sent to preschools in two categories: 1) preschools that participated in a literacy-awareness pilot program (BokTRAS) and 2) preschools that did not participate in an early literacy program (Non-BokTRAS). A total of 90 preschool teachers

participated in the study. Significant differences in Beliefs and Practices were found between BokTRAS and non-BokTRAS preschool teachers. There was no significant difference found in the Quantity of Time category, however, which indicated that, overall, Norwegian preschool teachers spend very little time engaged with children in literacy-related activities.

Keywords: preschool, kindergarten, emergent literacy, early literacy, teachers' beliefs

SYMPOSIUM VI/17 THE FUNCTION OF DIGITAL OBJECTS IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC GROWTH AND EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN SETTINGS

Discussion group

KNUT STEINAR ENGELSEN

Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

Despite little research-based knowledge on the area, ICT as a concept is formalised in the national curriculum for Norwegian kindergartens and seems to be of interest in the practice field. The theme of this project is interaction among children and child – teacher when using digital technology in kindergarten. We want to present a research-design and raise some questions related to methodology. The main aim of our research is to develop new research-based knowledge on how digital objects function in the social and linguistic growth of children in a kindergarten setting.

Theoretical and conceptual framework is a socio cultural perspective on learning which has as a consequence that the use of digital technology has to be studied in relation to the context, thus we aim to investigate the role of some digital tools in the context of kindergarten. First we want to triangulate between ludology, narratology and dramaturgy to understand the nature of digital games. Furthermore we want to study the linguistic interaction between game and child, mapping the cultural and linguistic competences connected to the act of playing. The last framework is connected to children's situated and mediated learning in everyday practice.

The methodology has a qualitative approach based on a phenomenological and hermeneutic framework. The aim is to bring out a picture of the context we study as a whole. The collection of data will be marked by observation, interviews, video recordings and field notes. Grounded Theory and Strauss & Corbin's (1998) step-by-step method will be utilized.

Questions to ask during the session:

1. How could alternative methodology to what we have chosen contribute in strengthen our design? (This is important because other's experiences could give us complementary perspectives on our design)
2. Are there any critical objections about our choice of theoretical perspectives? (This is important because other theoretical perspectives could possibly strengthen our design)
3. To seek the childrens' perspectives is that possible or desirable? (It is important to clarify to what extent seeking the childrens' perspectives, as we aim to do, is practical and appropriate)

CO-AUTHORS: MARGRETHE JERNES, VIGDIS VANGSNES AND NILS TORE ØKLAND

Keywords: digital games, language and dramaturgy, interaction: inclusion vs. exclusion

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SYMPOSIUM VI/18

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER

Discussion group

CARMEN DALLI

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

This discussion group links to theme 5 of the conference: Professionalism and challenges/demands for professional development. Researchers from seven countries: Australia, England, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and New Zealand will discuss initial findings from the first phase of a collaborative research project entitled A day in the life of an early years practitioner. The project uses case study methods to investigate how early childhood practitioners "act as a professional" in their specific local contexts; the professional "habitus" of early childhood practitioners and "ways of knowing" in relation to professional practice; practitioners' self-perceptions as professionals; and external perspectives of what it means to be an early years professional. In Phase one of the study, the researchers in each country have gathered data through continuous video recording of one day in the life of an early childhood practitioner in their country, pen and paper observations and a follow-up interview and constructed case reports. Members of the research group will present key themes from Phase 1 data and facilitate discussion of key questions such as: What does being a 'professional' in early childhood mean? Are there common features of professional habitus across different socio-cultural contexts? What does it mean to 'act professionally' in a particular context?

Keywords: professionalism, early childhood practitioners, early childhood policy, habitus

SYMPOSIUM VI/19

IMAGES OF TRANSITION

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: SUE DOCKETT

Charles Sturt University, Australia

Session overview

This symposium presents 8 posters investigating images of educational transitions. The aims of the session are to:

1. highlight the complexity and multiple perspectives of educational transitions
2. explore conceptualisations of educational transitions and
3. promote theorising about educational transitions, problematising stereotypical descriptions of these transitions.

Poster presentations encompass media images of transition, children's perspectives of transition, curricular and cultural continuity in transitions, as well as generational comparisons of transition.

The format of the symposium will include:

1. introduction to the session
2. time for the audience to read posters displayed in the room and
3. discussion of themes and issues emerging from the posters, led by the discussant for the session (Sue Dockett).

Keywords: transition, images, children's perspectives

Images of Children Starting School in Icelandic Mass Media

JOHANNA EINARSDOTTIR

Iceland University of Education, Iceland

The mass media reflects culturally embedded beliefs, norms, and dominant discourses. Their role in maintaining and shaping peoples views and perceptions is also recognized. This research seeks to explore how starting primary school in Iceland is presented in the media. Children in Iceland start primary school in the fall of the year they turn 6-years-old. Although almost all children attend full day playschool from the age of 2-years-old, starting primary school is seen as a major transition in the life of children and their families.

The school year in primary schools starts the last week of August. Data was gathered for four weeks from August 20th to September 15th from the following mass media:

- Four major national newspapers.
- Television news and news related programs at two of the major television channels.
- Radio news and news related programs at the major radio station.
- Chat channels on the Internet.
- Other; such as magazines and local papers.

Content analysis was used to systematic categorize and analyze the data. The poster will present the results through images and anecdotes.

Keywords: transition, media, primary school

Learning Dispositions to Key Competencies: Navigating Learning Journeys across the Border from Early Childhood Education to School

SALLY PETERS

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Earlier work in New Zealand (Peters, 2004) indicated that for many children and families the transition from early childhood education to school involved crossing a cultural, as well as a physical border. At the time the underpinning approaches of the school and early childhood curriculum documents were very different, as were aspects of the history and philosophy of the two sectors. Since then there has been significant consultation within New Zealand regarding the nature and content of the school curriculum, and a new document was launched in 2007 (Ministry of Education, 2007). Changes made to the school curriculum including the introduction of 'key competencies', which align with the strands of the early childhood curriculum, and explicit recommendations to teachers to connect with and build on early childhood learning experiences. Nevertheless, the practical challenges of putting this framework into practice are still being explored (e.g. Carr, Peters, et al, 2008). This poster briefly explains the curriculum developments in New Zealand and the potential they offer, and provides critical consideration of both learning dispositions and key competencies. Conceptually, the curriculum alignment implies a bridge across contexts, whose strength depends on the connections made. The poster considers the implications of this for the navigation of learning journeys across the border between early childhood education and school.

Keywords: transition, border crossing, curriculum, key competencies.

Transition to University: Transition to School

HILARY FABIAN

Glyndŵr University, United Kingdom

This poster of images and comments explores some of the hopes and fears of students as they consider their transition to university and makes a comparison with children as they are about to start school.

The research took place with 24 students in the lower sixth who were considering which university to attend and children about to start school.

The theoretical considerations are based on:

Ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner)

Rites of passage (van Genep)

Cultural understanding (Bruner)

Relationships (Corsaro)

Emotional well-being (Goleman)

Agency (James, Jenks & Prout)

Students were asked to draw their ideas of university / school life and write about their expectations. The pupils were asked to talk about their expectations of school and draw a picture. The main findings are that there are key similarities between the two groups particularly about the socio-emotional element of transition.

Keywords: transition, images, drawing transitions

Follow Your Nose! -- Exploring a School's Odours as a Stimulant for Discussions with Children about Transition from Kindergarten to School

WILFRIED GRIEBEL AND RENATE NIESEL

State Institute of Early Childhood Research (IFP), Germany

The project builds on a literally transfer of the German word "Schnuppertag" (meaning "sniff-day") which refers to a widespread Kindergarten practice of visiting schools with the schoolchildren to be, to give them a first impression of school life. But this project is different in a very creative way. ...

We will describe and discuss the project from a transitional perspective, connecting the sensitivity of young noses and the importance of odours for emotions and for memories in individual biographies. The psychological /pedagogical approach will be to use the stimulant to trigger questions young children have concerning school and to find positive associations with the children's perceptions. This poster is part of the symposium "Images of transition".

Keywords: transition, children's perceptions of school.

Preschools and Primary Schools in Ireland: Classroom Context

MARY O'KANE

Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

A lack of research on transitions in the early years has been noted in the Irish context despite having been identified as being of great importance educationally in the lives of young children. The most recent research in this area identified a lack of communication between preschools and primary schools in Ireland, suggesting that there is little congruence in approaches to preparation for a changing learning environment. Findings from the study suggest that preschool practitioners and teachers of junior infant's classes have only a limited understanding of each others working ideologies and environments. Greater partnership and understandings would not only benefit children making the transition between the two educational settings, but could also result in greater agreement about curricular objectives and methodologies.

This poster presentation aims to investigate transition in terms of movement across two educational contexts. O'Kane reported on the curricular differences between preschool and primary school settings, and on the dichotomy between children's experiences of play-based activities at preschool and primary school levels. It is suggested that in order to provide some cultural continuity between the two settings, a collaborative approach to sharing

information on practice and policies, while exploring images of transition, would help practitioners from both settings to work towards a common culture for transitions. Using images of empty preschool and primary school classrooms to highlight physical differences, this poster explores imagery as a mechanism for examining the different conceptualizations of education and learning in the two classroom environments.

CO-AUTHOR: NOIRIN HAYES

Keywords: transition, classroom, images, preschool.

Children's Views on Their Learning in Playschool and Primary School

SIGRIDUR STURLUDOTTIR

Iceland University of Education, Iceland

The poster presents a study on the views of five-and-six year-old children about their education during their last year in playschool and first year of primary school in Iceland. Ten children in two playschools in Reykjavik were followed through their last months in playschool and their first months in primary school.

The objective of the study is to shed light on children's views on their education; how they want to learn, what they want to learn and what they have to say about their education and life in playschool and primary school. Data were gathered through participant observation, group interviews, photography, and drawings. Dewey's ideas and postmodern views on children and early childhood education are the theoretical base that guides the study.

The purpose of the study is to call attention to children's perspectives and listen to what they have to say about their education in order to improve early childhood education for all children.

Keywords: transition, children's perspectives, children's learning

Transition through Generations

TUIJA TURUNEN

University of Lapland, Finland

The aim of the poster is to explore how transition to school is experienced through generations. The poster will include pictures (photos and drawings) of starting school from grandparents and their grandchildren. The text in the poster is the discussion between them and comparing the transition to school between decades.

Some questions generated by the poster: Has the transition to school changed? Are there same elements in present and past time? What are the experiences in transition grandparents want to share with their grandchildren and vice versa?

The data will be collected by announcing about the project in a magazine directed on elderly/retired people. The interviews of grandparents and grandchildren are also possible.

Keywords: transition, grandparents, grandchildren

Voices of Children in Transition to School

BOB PERRY AND SUE DOCKETT

Charles Sturt University, Australia

This poster reports how children in primary schools and prior-to-school settings can be actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of transition to school programs. It is one result of a project in four Australian primary schools – and their feeder

prior-to-school settings – to trial various ways in which children might be involved. For example, children played an active role in the planning of transition to school programs through their input on matters such as activities, venues, personnel to be involved and relationships and communication among the participants. There was little guidance given to the schools and prior-to-school settings involved in the project by the researchers, although it was made clear that all participants – children and adults - were required to document their journeys and that there would be a presentation day held at the end of the project. Instructions about what was to be done were left purposely vague in order not to thwart the creativity of the participants.

The schools and prior-to-school settings worked, over a 3-month period, to develop and implement their plans. Both children and adults kept extensive documentation of their involvement. The project culminated in a celebration day held at the local City Council in which some 65 children and educators from all the sites presented what they had done through posters, videotapes, PowerPoint presentations and many other formats.

This poster will present and synthesise the power of this approach through the presentations made on the celebration day.

Keywords: transition, children's perspectives, documentation

SYMPOSIUM VI/20 PEDAGOGICAL STANDARDS AS A TOOL FOR ADVANCING CHANGE AND PROMOTING QUALITY IN EDUCATION: THE ISSA EXPERIENCE

Self-organised symposium

CHAIR: AIJA TUNA

International Step by Step Association (ISSA), Hungary

Session overview

Since the ISSA Pedagogical Standards were developed in 2001, they have been used as a tool for improving pedagogical practice and to recognize the success of dedicated teachers in the ISSA member NGO's countries. At the same time, they have also been used as an ongoing stimulus for creating change in national educational policies and systems in general and have promoted change in ISSA's member organizations.

This presentation will give an overview the history of the inception and implementation of the ISSA Pedagogical Standards and the lessons learned from the successes and challenges of that work in different contexts. Focus of the research has been on changes in the approaches and attitudes towards child-centered pedagogy at the level of individual teacher, parents, institutions, communities and decision makers including Ministries of Education.

The presentation will also discuss rationale for revisions of the Standards currently taking place to align them even more closely with the results of current international research and the lessons learned within the network.

Becoming a Professional: Role of The ISSA Pedagogical Standards

AIJA TUNA AND DAWN TANKERSLEY

International Step by Step Association (ISSA), Hungary

There are many steps on the journey to become a professional both for an individual and an organization. The International Step by Step Association (ISSA) began a journey in 1994 when many of today's members of ISSA first accepted the challenge to introduce a child-centered approach in pre-schools and primary schools in Central/Eastern Europe and

Central Asia. As the number of teachers involved in the process increased, there was a need to assure that teachers' practice reflected the same principles and values across different countries. The ISSA Pedagogical Standards and a teacher certification system were implemented as way to define and recognize quality of teaching in early childhood settings. Fourteen years later, based on the feedback and data collected from the ISSA members, the decision was made to revise the standards and their use. Through the process of interviews and focus groups with ISSA NGO members and outside experts, the question of finding more empowering and participatory ways to promote and support quality in pedagogy was explored. As Pascal and Bertram (2004) state, "The notion of a standard as definition of quality can be seen as limited when viewed in isolation from the process of reflections and action.". Based on the results of this research, it was decided that the new role of the revised Standards would be to become a tool for engaging in dialogue with national bodies and wider communities about defining, developing and sustaining quality in education on the grounds of common beliefs and research data.

Keywords: pedagogical standards; participatory tools, professionalism

International Pedagogical Standards – Advocacy Tool for Influencing Positive Changes of National Educational Policies in Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia

REGINA RIMKIENE AND REGINA SABALIAUSKIENE

Center for Innovative Education, Lithuania

Aim of the presentation is to present how ISSA's national members use Pedagogical Standards as a tool to improve educational policies in their countries.

Developed by early childhood experts from countries in transition, the Standards have supported a unique connection between implementation of child-centered early childhood education and development of open, democratic society. The quality assurance system that is based on the Standards and is being implemented in 29 countries, reflects the needs of those countries to ensure quality education and equal opportunities for every child.

The ISSA Pedagogical Standards have been used to guide the development of national educational strategies, preschool and primary school curricula, teacher attestation documentation, teacher professional development models, etc. It has influenced not only quality of teaching practice but also changes in educational policies.

In the presentation, one specific case will be described in detail on how the ISSA Pedagogical Standards were included in the early childhood development curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education of Moldova in December 2006.

Methodology used: analysis of the reports and surveys, interviews with the representatives of the NGOs, Ministries of Education and local educational authorities.

Findings: experiences of the ISSA members prove that close cooperation of educational experts on national and international level influence educational policies in positive way.

Keywords: pedagogical standards, policy, quality, advocacy

International Pedagogical Standards as a Tool for Mentoring in Professional Development of Teachers

TATJANA VONTA

Koper Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

A teacher's professional development is most effective in the context of his/her working environment. In order to best support teachers, a new model of professional development was tested at the school level in Slovenia. One of the assumptions in this project was that not only beginner teachers need support for their professional development, but that in the process of life-long learning that all professionals benefit from support from each other.

Mentoring teams were established at the school level consisting of teachers, school administrators, and mentors. Mentors were trained through both an on-line course and face to face trainings. Educators from twelve preschools and fourteen primary schools (a total number of 115 participants) were involved in this professional development opportunity. The project emphasized why, what ,and how to change the educational practice of individual teachers and to incorporate this work into to the school's vision and mission.

As the foundation of the work, the ISSA Pedagogical Standards were used both for self-evaluation and formative evaluation with special attention to observation and critical reflection on teaching practice. Standards were also used for in the teachers' professional development planning process.

During the whole project empirical data was collected. Results show that Pedagogical Standards are good tool for professional needs assessment, self-evaluation, formative evaluation, gives a framework for critical reflection and professional development planning process.

Keywords: professional development, mentoring, critical reflection, school-based support in professional development

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER 16.15 -17.30

Construction Play Development 2-7 years

ARNE TRAGETON

Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway

Play-learning have been core curriculum of preschool education for generations. The Norwegian National curriculum for preschool 2006 have play and learning in the bottom. Construction play dominates in preschool, but seldom in play research. Because of little Nordic research in the area, this old research project may still have actuality.

Earlier research goes back to Bühler 1931 and Piaget 1946. Development- Media- and Space variables were theoretical backgrounds for a project in 4 preschools. Methods were field observation and 1824 photos from the play with clay, sand, blocks, rigid and flexible materials. Preschool teacher students added 3671 running protocols.

Quantitative results documented three main symbol groups in the play: Humans/animals, Building/environment and Transport. Surprisingly Nature was a minor group.

Qualitative results described the development in the 5 media illustrated with 300 typical photos. Space analysis show the progression Sensory > Topological > Euclidian space.

The project was the background for writing a Norwegian textbook for preschool teacher students (Leik med material - play with materials). The book is also translated to Swedish and Danish. An informal replication with 5 children followed from 1996-2006 shows mainly the same development and is published in a new supplementary book for preschools, but also for parents and grandparents (Leik med bestefar – Play with grandfather).

The project and the textbooks give indirect heavy criticisms to the Norwegian preschool for meagre environment for construction play. Especially “masculine” play in restricted in a preschool dominated of “feminine” activities.

Keywords: Construction play, preschool, learning, literacy

Co-authoring Learning Stories with Children

GERARD MCKERNAN

Coatholm Nursery School, North Lanarkshire Council, Scotland

Margaret Carr (2001) described how “learning stories” allow practitioners to assess and track children’s learning in the early years in a way that includes learning dispositions and, by staying close to children’s real experiences, avoids the pitfalls of over-formal methods, while being interesting to families and supportive for learners. This small scale action research study examines the lessons about learning and teaching emerging when a “learning story” approach is used with a group of Scottish children in their pre-school year (4 years old), when children are invited to co-author their own learning stories= using narrative to explore significant learning experiences through (sometimes often repeated) story making sessions. The study involves parents and children identifying memorable or significant experiences (out of school), and recording these experiences using photographs, drawings and written descriptions. The study reflects on the stories that children tell about their experiences, using the texts created with their parents as a starting point for story making. It reflects on how this approach to collaborative story making, by involving children, peers, parents and practitioners, locates children as active participants in shaping early years practice, informing

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a processes of reflecting on what it is that “really matters” in the learning places we create. The study is set against the backdrop of the evolving Scottish Curriculum for Excellence. M. Carr (2001) *Assessment in Early Childhood Settings: Learning Stories*, Paul Chapman: London, A Curriculum for Excellence, Scottish Executive (2004)

Keywords: learning, story, assessment, big books

Japanese Kindergarten and Elementary-school Teachers’ Perceptions of Children’s Optimal Development: an Analysis of their Responses to the Video Clips in Each Setting

MASATOSHI SUZUKI

Hyogo University of Teacher Education, Japan

This study is to analyze perceptions of kindergarten teachers and elementary-school teachers regarding children’s optimal development. For providing smooth transition from early childhood education to primary education, teachers in both schools should understand their views on children’s optimal development. 17 kindergarten teachers and 21 elementary-school teachers participated in this study. The participants viewed six video clips and were asked to describe 1) their overall impressions on video clips, 2) how children’s activities are connected to their development, and 3) comments on teachers’ behaviors. Then, they were asked to rate activities with 4 categories of children’s development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects. Analysis of variance was conducted with the quantitative data, while the qualitative data was analyzed through grounded theory approach. The result showed that kindergarten teachers tend to look at children’s activities with broader perspectives, in this case, the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social aspects of their development, compared to elementary-school teachers. On the other hand, elementary school teachers tend to focus on a particular aspect of development when looking at an activity. Also, elementary school teachers gave more comments on teachers’ instructional behavior, for example, about their modeling styles, utterances such as comparing or appraising, and their observations. Kindergarten teachers mentioned more about how teachers showed their empathy with children, or how much teachers could draw educe children’s willingness and ability. Some suggestions for research on transition will be made from these results. CO-PRESENTERS: Takako NOGUCHI, Jumonji University; Junko Minowa Kawamura Gakuen Woman’s University; Riyo KADOTA, Seinan Gakuin University; Ayako TAKAZAKURA, University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Education; Hiroshi ASHIDA, University of Hyogo; Kiyomi Akita University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Education; Yutaka, ODA, The National Institute of Special Education

Keywords: transition, kindergarten, elementary school, video research

A Study on the Images of Practical Terms used in Teachers' Narratives of their Practice: Comparative Analysis of Japanese kindergarten and Elementary-school Teachers

TAKAKO NOGUCHI

Jumonji University, Japan

This study is to clarify how Japanese kindergarten and elementary-school teachers perceive their own practices using their own practical terms. When connecting early childhood education and formal schooling, it is necessary for both kindergarten and elementary-school teachers to collaborate with each other. However, using the same terms in discussion, those terms often mean different implications to them. 92 kindergarten teachers and 101 elementary-school teachers participated in this research. From previously conducted pilot studies, 8 key terms were selected for the participants to give explanations. These terms

are: child centeredness, teacher centeredness, observing children over time, understandings of children, facilitating children's activity, constructing optimal environment, organizing children's social network, and conflicts. Responses from the participants were coded and categorized using grounded theory approach. As a result, some major differences between kindergarten teachers and elementary-school teachers were found in teacher-child relationship, initiatives taken in the activities, and children's peer relationship. Kindergarten teachers tend to give priority to look through children's perspective, to entrust children with initiatives of activity, and to form close relationship among peers. On the other hand, elementary-school teachers inclined to focus on teachers' instructional role, guiding children to certain goals or attainment. Social, cultural background for such results, as well as methodological suggestions, will be discussed in order to propose suggestions for research on transition from early childhood education to primary education.

CO-PRESENTORS: MASATOSHI SUZUKI, HYOGO UNIVERSITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION, JUNKO MINOWA, KAWAMURA GAKUEN WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY, RIYO KADOTA, SEINAN GAKUIN UNIVERSITY, HIROSHI ASHIDA, UNIVERSITY OF HYOGO, KIYOMI AKITA, UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO, YUTAKA ODA, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, JAPAN.

Keywords: Teachers' narratives, the images of practical terms, transitions, teachers' collaboration

Early Numeracy in the Transition from kindergarten to Primary school – A Longitudinal study

MEIKE GRUESSING

University of Oldenburg, Germany

Recent psychological and didactical studies (e.g. Kaufmann 2003= Krajewski 2003) highlight the significance of early numeracy skills for the child's performance in mathematics at the end of primary school. Furthermore, these studies suggest that early intervention prior to school can help to prevent learning difficulties for 'children at risk' in learning mathematics.

In this context, the poster presents a longitudinal study that seeks to investigate young children's mathematical understanding in the the transition from kindergarten to primary school and to identify suitable activities and learning environments for the development of early numeracy skills.

Based on interviews with 850 kindergarten children (five-year-olds) a range of number skills was identified which was demonstrated by most preschoolers. However, around 10 % of the children clearly struggled with certain areas relevant to the development of number concept such as seriation, part-whole-relationships, ordering numbers and counting small collections. They were

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identified as “children potentially at risk” with respect to their later school mathematics learning. These children took part in an early intervention program conducted either by their kindergarten teacher within their groups or by a pre-service teacher during weekly individual sessions. Further data collections at the beginning of primary school and after the first and second year of schooling allow the evaluation of the training effects.

First results of the study will be presented and discussed supported by illustrative case study data.

Keywords: early numeracy, number concept development, transition, intervention

Playing with Sciences at Reykjavík Winter Festival – Project

KRISTIN DYRFJORD

University of Akureyri, Iceland

In this poster I will present an integrated course on play, physics, mathematic and art (conceptual- and video-art) that I have over the last five years coordinated and co-taught. The purpose of the course is twofold. First, to provide the students with a sense of the possibilities an integrated curriculum can give them when working with children. How they will be able in the spirit of the philosophy of Reggio Emilia to cross boundaries between for instances subjects and theories. Secondly, in the course I emphasize how students can use and reuse everyday materials. How they in spirit of sustainability can give a new live to the things that otherwise is thrown away.

The focus of the course is for the student’s first hand to discover and play with different principle of physics and language of mathematic, how to combine and use creatively their knowledge in projects with children.

In the poster I will present such a project that was part of Reykjavík Winter Festival 2008. The University of Akureyri with Reykjavík city organized two days open event in the Reykavík city hall were children and parents could together discover, the principle of light and balance with open ended building materials, which were collected in cooperation with different institutions and firms in Reykjavík. The project was documented, with photos and a video (pedagogic documentation). When the documentation are analyzed, children’s and parents learning opportunities are apparent, learning that illustrate experiments, discovery, creativity, mathematic and physic.

Keywords: open ended material, creativity, sustainability, integrated curriculum

Firm Foundations - Shaping Babies' Futures

CLAIRE STEVENSON, DONNA LUCK AND VERONICA LAWRENCE

Northamptonshire County Council, United Kingdom

Aim of the study: To raise the quality of babies’ experiences within full day-care settings by creating an ongoing and exciting project that by providing up to date research would empower practitioners to become passionate and confident about their vital work.

Theory and Concept: This paper explores and reinforces theories that babies’ brains are the source of who they become because of their unique experiences. Early experiences shape a baby’s brain, which in turn impacts upon their motivation, curiosity, emotional well-being, and their play, learning and development.

Methodology: This action research project involved a multi disciplinary team working closely with baby room practitioners.

Three delivered sessions had a specific focus;

- babies' brain development
- babies' emotional well-being
- babies' play

Sessions balanced information delivery with active hands on learning.

Findings: The results were dramatic. The main findings were that practitioners;

- recognised the fantastic potential of babies learning capabilities
- realised their crucial role has a huge impact on babies' healthy brain development, both emotionally and physically
- were engaging in a higher quality of positive interactions with babies
- made substantial improvements both environmentally and in the way they nurtured and celebrated the babies in their care
- felt empowered and enthused to engage parents and speak with real understanding about baby brain development.

Possible implications for policy or practice: Raising awareness of what high quality provision for babies looks like in practice.

Keywords: babies' brains, interactions, practitioners, play.

The Effects of Intersubjective Utterances during Play on Intimacy Formation among Three-year-olds

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In Japanese early childhood education, play is regarded as the focus of young children's lives, and facilitating intimacy through play is important in pedagogical practices. Therefore, playing with peers is recommended over playing alone, and teachers teach children to be considerate and to cooperate during play. In particular, because they have strong egos, three-year-olds must learn how to reach a mutual understanding to share play with peers. Therefore, this study focused on intersubjective utterances during play and examined their effects on intimacy formation among three-year-olds. Intersubjective utterances are used to coordinate ideas and reach a mutual understanding. The study observed three-year-old children's interactions from the start until the end of play in a nursery school. The study examined how intersubjective utterances were categorized and how they worked in intimacy formation. There were three main results. (I) The intersubjective utterances were categorized into about 15 categories, such as "rejecting others", e.g., "This is our secret, isn't it?" (II) Intimacy grew as the function of intersubjective utterances increased and both changes also deepened and enriched play. For example, a change in intersubjective utterances from "insistence" to "sharing feelings" or "agreement" served to continue an interaction based on equality in spontaneous relationships. (III) The intersubjective utterances mediated the mutual development of play and intimacy.

Keywords : play, intimacy, intersubjective utterances, three-year-olds.

Supporting the Transition from Kindergarten to Elementary School

LILIAN FRIED, PATRICK ISELE AND JULIANE STUDE TU

Dortmund University, Germany

One indication of effective transition from kindergarten to elementary school can surely be seen in achieving children's full potential. An essential prerequisite, therefore, is a well-funded

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understanding of children's individual development and the availability of adequate instruments for the assessment of both children's and educators' competencies.

This longitudinal study (2007-2010) conducted with about 430 German children investigates the interrelation between individual development of basic skills and the transition-specific quality of the educational environment. Included domains of child development are narratives, mathematics, science, learning competence and social emotional competence. Performance in each domain is measured by an individual test and complementary assessments at three times of survey: one year before starting school (at the age of 5), directly before school enrolment and after one year of experience at elementary school. Scores of competency will be correlated with the process quality achieved in the same children's kindergarten and elementary school classrooms: On the one hand the KES-R (Tietze et al. 2001) is applied, which aims to determine factors concerning the structure and process quality of the preschool environment. On the other hand a self-developed micro-didactic assessment (DO-RESI-E) is used to survey the individual interaction between caregiver and child with special focus on the stimulation of the child's linguistic, mathematical and scientific development. In addition, questionnaires are used to determine parent involvement.

Overall, this study aims at providing an insight into supporting and repressive contextual factors in the child's successful transition to school and, thus, creating an empirical basis for future trends in the development of educational programs.

Keywords: competencies, narratives, mathematics, science.

The comparison of Estonian and Finnish Pre-school Teachers' Conceptions of the Basis of Educational Action in Day Care

ANNELI NIIKKO AND AINO UGASTE

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Besides parents pre-school teachers in day care have a central role in the education of small children. In many countries, the Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention of the Rights of the Child legislation, official documents like curricula, and the cultural heritage guide the educational work of pre-school teachers (Hirst & Joseph 1998; Dahlbeg, Moss & Pence 1999; Niikko 1999). Also pre-school teachers' experiences and conceptions of their own educational culture influence their interpretation of educational action. The main purpose of the study is examine and compare pre-school teachers' conceptions of the main issues in early childhood education between two countries, Estonia and Finland. The central comparing areas of this qualitative study are: the aims, main principles and tasks in pre-school teacher's action. The theoretical framework of the study is based, among others, on educational philosophy and social psychology (Dewey 1923; Hirsijärvi 1985; Bruner 1996) and curriculum issues (Framework of Preschool Education of Estonia 1999; National curriculum guidelines on early childhood education and care in Finland 2003). The conceptions of the pre-school teachers are approached from a phenomenographic perspective (Marton 1988, 2004; Uljens 1989). The data was collected using open-ended interviews. The study context involves two cities (one in Estonia and another in Finland). The analysis of the interviews consists of content analysis method often used in qualitative studies. The results will be presented in the EECERA conference.

Keywords: Comparative study, curriculum, pre-school teacher, educational action.

Creative Movement and Experiences of Nature in Early Childhood

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Young children learn about nature through experience. Kinesthetic ability is a strong stimulant of experiencing, understanding and memorizing. That is why we developed activities in which we combined experiences of nature with creative movement activity. There the children were able to learn about animals, plants and some other aspects of nature. In standard approach, the educators offer stereotypical examples of animal movements that are not mirroring reality. We on the other hand, enabled children to have direct contact with live animals. The children touched the animals, held them in their hands, listened to them and observed them carefully while they were moving (walking, running, lying down, rising, stretching, eating, cleaning themselves). That is how they got to know a rabbit, a frog, a snake, a millipede, a stick insect, a hen, and a cow. As many children understand the movement as the criterion that separates life from non-life, they mistakenly have the impression that plants are not alive. With selected examples we enabled the children to detect the movements of plants directly - by observing the movement of the touch-sensitive mimosa and sprouting beans. We used simple experiments to experience other nature themes: water, wind, clouds, magnets, mirrors and mills. Through the movement of their bodies, the children described their experiences, their sense of well-being and their thoughts. With the transfer of movement from environment into the movement of their bodies they created a new quality of movement. The result of this was a more intense feeling of experience and a better knowledge.

Keywords: creative movement, arts, early childhood, science education.

Fathers at the Nursery Door - Recording the Views of Male Care-givers and Early Years' Practitioners in Services for Children and Their Families

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Our research question is shaped by some theoretical perspectives. We adopt, firstly, a social constructionist stance, respecting and seeking the multiple starting points and discourses which participants bring to the social encounter. This approach values the reality as described by our respondents at that time, in that context. A range of opinions of early year's practitioners and men are captured for what they simply are.

The perspective above influenced our approaches towards an appropriate methodology. Qualitative in essence, data collection took place in small discussion groups and one-to-one recorded contexts. Both early year's practitioners and men were spoken with separately.

Some preliminary findings may point towards men feeling uncomfortable in a 'gendered' (predominantly female) environment. The changing discourse about the role of men in caring and an expression that some men may approach the encounter with a certain 'purposefulness' which may be difficult for practitioners to understand, was also noted.

Social policy issues may include a debate about fathers' paternity rights and arrangements. Practice implications may draw attention to the training and development needs of early years' practitioners in the areas of interpersonal (gender) relations and the importance of reflective practice.

Keywords: fathers, practitioners, parent partnership, gender, reflective practice.

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Three Third-Grade Teachers Implement Character Education in a Private Elementary School in Taiwan.

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Providence University, Taiwan

The purpose of this study is to explore 3 third-grade teachers developing and implementing character curriculum collaboratively in their classrooms of a private elementary school. In Taiwan, character education is not a formal course at school. Instead, most elementary schools emphasize students' academic performance. In this study, the private school, found by a Buddhist group, values both character education and art education, and requires character education as a formal course.

The study employs collaborative action research approach. Participants include 3 third-grade teachers and their classes with 56 students in total. Data is collected from group discussions, interviews, logbooks and other relevant documents, and analyzed qualitatively. The results of this study are following:

- 1.Character course is designed and developed in copy with the school's vision "Educate students to be respectable, responsible and compassionate citizen".
- 2.Teachers, as a teaching team, according to the principles of character education, teach the course.
- 3.Due to the lack of resources, teachers have to prepare various materials by themselves. In spite of heavily load, they are satisfied.
- 4.The outcome of the course may not be measured precisely, but students show their enjoyment and look forward to it.

Keywords: character education, school-based curriculum, moral education.

Cultural Values in Professionals' Practices in the Baby Section of Daycare Centers: Reflection from Comparison of Japanese and French Professionals' Responses to Baby's Crying

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Jumonji University, Japan

The aim of the study is to clarify the influence of cultural values in daycare centers, by comparison of Japanese and French professionals' behavior to baby's crying.

Methods: (1) Observation of professionals' practices. Daily practices in baby sections of six Japanese and six French daycare centers were observed and video recorded. Scenes of babies' crying were extracted, and professionals' behavior to it was analyzed in terms of reaction time, verbal responses, nonverbal responses, and solutions to stop crying. (2) Interviews of professionals. Japanese professionals of other five daycare centers were shown four video clips on French professionals' practices to babies' crying, and were asked to tell "if I were there as professional, I would... ,because....". It was to see whether they have similar ideas to French professionals or not about babies' crying.

Results. Comparison of video data showed the following differences between the two cultures: Japanese professionals intervened immediately when a baby began to cry. Nonverbal reactions occurred sooner than verbal responses. They took him/her in their arms, caressed her/him and verbalized his/her emotion. In the interviews, Japanese professionals said that calming down a baby was an good opportunity to establish or enhance a bond with her/him. French professionals reacted more slowly than Japanese, and showed more various behavior according to the causes of crying. They watched the situation, responded verbally before going to help

him/her, and sometimes encouraged him/her to go out of the trouble by him/herself. Both French and Japanese professionals use baby's crying as an occasion of transmitting some important values to children, but with different values. This comparison would make us widen our perspectives to other possibilities of professional's practices than of our own.

Keywords: cultural value, professional, baby, crying.

The HPCE Questionnaire as a Reliable Statistical Instrument for the Study of Health Promotion in Childhood Education in Portugal

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Although Health Promotion (HP) in Childhood Education (CE) is recognized as important, there is no statistical instrument implemented in Portugal that quantifies the quality of HP by preschool teachers. The aim of this work was to develop an instrument that analyses HP in CE focusing on the teacher's approaches to this subject. For this purpose a preliminary pilot study was performed in order to assemble a statistically relevant final survey. In order to facilitate conclusion assessment from the data, inquires regarding the training in HP (academic or other), class planning, teachers self-efficacy and their perception of children health related needs were compiled into the final single questionnaire. The questionnaire is composed of 85 items distributed in 3 sections: demographic data, likert scales and open/closed questions. The pilot survey was performed in June 2007 followed by a retest in September 2007 by means of online distribution of the questionnaire to preschool teachers. A total of 41 and 29 replies were collected in the test and retest, respectively. The instrument was found to be reliable according to its psicometric features (test-retest = 0.92) and with good internal consistency (Cronbach's alfa = 0.83). We conclude that the HP in CE questionnaire (QHPCE) is a reliable statistical instrument enabling a good quantitative estimate of how teachers enforce their HP activities. It is also to our knowledge the first instrument of this kind to be implemented in Portugal thus making it a relevant statistical tool to teachers and policy makers.

Note: This study has been funded by the FCT -Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia - Foundation for Science and Technology (SFRH/ BD/ 29960/ 2006).

Keywords: questionnaire, health promotion, preschool teacher, reliability, test-retest.

An Action Research on Building the Whole Music Context for Young Children

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The purpose of this research is to build a whole music context(Lim, 2005) where young children would actively construct meanings of music through performing and listening, which is called "musicking" (Small, 1998). We use the action research, including participant observation. The action research aims at enhancing young children's understanding of musical components through "musicking", including listening to actions are conducted through a process of plan-action-reflection for 21 weeks (3 time a week) in a kindergarten music room.

The first action was to prepare the music room with musical instruments, fabric, paper, and writing materials for the young children to be familiar with the music. The actions through musicking were conducted. The sense of actions were conducted by providing 5 pieces of music (Chinese dance, In the hall of mountain king, Swan, Carmen, Little Star) for young children to listen.

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We provided the materials and tools, such as scarf, ribbon tape, action paper, icon map, drawing to mediate young Children's understanding of music based on observation of their understanding of music. Through listening and performing music with materials, which is a whole music context, young children came to feel the music itself and musical components through their body, and represent them through drawing, body movements, and speeches, "Musicking" engaged young children to construct meanings of music itself, musical components.

Keywords: whole music context, musicking, music components.

Pedagogical tasks of Childcare According to Parents and Professionals in Childcare

GREET DE BRAUWERE AND AGNES BILTRIS

University College Ghent, Belgium

Characteristic on childcare is the presence of three different parties: professionals in childcare, parents and children, which we consider as partners who influence each other. In our research we focus on parents and professionals in preschool childcare, more specific on their ideas about the pedagogical tasks of childcare. Our basic assumption is the shared responsibility on educating by parents and professionals in childcare. We regard parents and professionals in childcare as partners in giving significance to the pedagogic tasks of childcare.

The methodology of our research is shared in five phases:

- Phase 1: Inventarisation of (national and international) literature about (the pedagogical tasks of) childcare;
- Phase 2: Preparation of data collection (sample, preparation interviews, test cases, ...);
- Phase 3: Data collection (interviews with parents and professionals in Flemish childcare);
- Phase 4: Data-analysis;
- Phase 5: Valorisation (information kit for parents, instruments to communicate about the pedagogic tasks of childcare, conference, ...).

Currently we are working on phase 2 of the research project.

Keywords: preschool childcare, parents, professionals in childcare, pedagogical tasks of childcare.

Arts Education in Cyprus: Developing Artistic Activities in Early Childhood Settings

NOPI NICOLAOU TELEMACHOU

University of Cyprus, Cyprus

This poster presents a 5 month training programme at the University of Cyprus intended for in-service early childhood teachers in order to enhance the quality of their arts (music and visual art) education practices. The aims were: a) to introduce to in-service teachers ways of developing artistic activities in the context of their *chorotopos* (personal environment), b) to study children's experiences through creating and viewing.

This research programme was designed as a form of teacher professional development and reflective practice. Specifically, it draws attention on a broad theoretical framework of arts education emphasizing learners' (children and teachers) prior experiences, interests and motivation in order to deepen and develop their learning. The significance in studying how teachers implement artistic programmes and young children's artistic learning in specific socio-cultural contexts is highlighted in the present study.

The sample included two in-service teachers and thirty five children drawn from two classrooms into different early childhood settings. Data were collected through interviews, photographic and video material and childhood teachers' reflective diaries. The findings indicate that: 1) Children's engagement in artistic activities through creating (composing, making) and viewing enabled them a) to experience their *chorotopos* b) to understand the potential expressiveness of materials. 2) Teachers developed integrated and interactive artistic activities. Their role was decisive in providing special 'scaffolding' to further the exploratory process in an interactive environment of learning.

Keywords: early childhood teachers, in-service training, artistic activities, reflective practice.

Nature and Outdoor Preschools in Norway are Attractive to Men!

KARI EMILSEN AND OLAV B. LYSKLETT

Queen Mauds University College, Norway

The consensus in Norway is that the participation of men in young children's lives is important, also through professional care. In Norwegian preschools only 8% of the staff are men, however, the number is increasing. The government has urged remedial action to increase the percentage of men working in preschools and schools. A new kind of preschool, called forest preschool or nature and outdoor preschool, has become popular in Norway, and the number is increasing. The number of men working in these preschools are 19 %, which are interesting compared to the traditional preschools.

In our study 121 men and 151 women from 59 nature and outdoor preschools and 28 traditional preschools answered a questionnaire. The men from the nature and outdoor preschools answered that they looked upon the new preschools as a new arena for their professional care for young children. The preschool teachers are satisfied and motivated for their contribution to young children's development. The data shows more than 90 % of respondents agree with the importance of increasing the number of men who works in childcare. We thus argue a stronger focus on outdoor preschools and outdoor activity for recruiting men to Norwegian preschools.

Keywords: men, nature, outdoor preschool, gender.

Developing Mathematical Activities for the Early Years; Teacher Learning Through Classroom Research

CHRYSTALLA PAPADEMETRI-KACHRIMANI AND MARIA SHIAKALLI

European University Cyprus, Cyprus

This poster presents the case study of a preschool teacher involved in a 5 month in-service training programme organised by the 'Learning in Science Group, University of Cyprus' and the 'Early Years Research Lab'. The aims of the programme were to train the participants to deal with their practice as teacher-researchers and to support the participants in designing scientifically justified mathematical activities. The training programme approached the issue of professional development based on the conviction that teacher learning requires (a) collecting and analysing information regarding ones practice (b) identifying and articulating problems and (c) designing, implementing and reflecting on applications. The case study shares the small steps of a teacher's attempt towards improving her practice in relation to designing mathematical activities. It describes how the teacher articulated a specific pedagogical problem based on information she gathered about her practice, how she designed and implemented a structured activity plan to address the problem and how this experience helped her to build on change. The

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story is described from the point of view of the teacher-researcher as well as the researcher-advisor which was the person in-charge of the programme and facilitated the teacher-researcher's development. The procedure involved a number of data collection methods (reflective journals, audiovisual material, videotaped sessions, children's representations etc). Overall, this procedure allowed (a) reflecting on the involvement of the teacher in the program and thus on the program itself and (b) developing scientifically justified mathematical activities through a collaborative process between a teacher-researcher and a researcher-advisor.

Keywords: reflective practitioners, classroom research, mathematics education, professional training

New Roles for Day-care Unit Leaders Following an Organizational Change to a Two-level Model in the Municipal Administration

KARI HOÅS MOEN AND PER TORE GRANRUSTEN

Queen Mauds University College, Norway

The presentation focus on the first part of the research study: "New roles for day-care leaders following an organizational change to a two-level model in the municipality administration". The research is covering the day-care administrative organization. This presentation directs on one of the leader roles, the unit leader (educational leader) in particular. We have decided to look at the functional parts: (1) Pedagogical leadership, (2) Personal manager of staff and (3) Administrative leadership. We wanted to examine the relationship between the changes of these functions by means of its contents, and use of time after the two-level model was introduced. The data was analysed based on the theoretical organizational approach. We hypothesized that "the size and structure of an organization influence the degree of formalization and autonomy for the units' staff in handling the variety of tasks". We interviewed five unit leaders who had participated in the reorganization process, all working in different day-care centres. All these leaders perceived higher demands on responsibility and emphasise on personal- and administrative duties. However, there were discrepancies in the way they experienced the changes as stimulating or distressing. Some of the perceived changes were caused by new duties initiated by the unit principals, while others were probably consequences of the reorganization process per se.

Keywords: organizational change, leader roles, educational leader, day-care.

Finding Research Questions: Preschool Students and Teaching Staff in Cooperating R & D

MERETHE HAGEWICK, RENATHE INDREBØ, WENCHE ØPSTEBØ AND ÅSE AKSLEN

NLA College of Teacher Education, Norway

As part of the program of preschool teacher education at NLA College of Teacher Education students write their individual bachelor thesis during their last semester. This individual work is based on literature studies and field work. As a pilot study this year preschool students have been working out their research question for their bachelor thesis in cooperation with the teaching staff during the student practicum experience, under guidance of the director of the preschool. Both students and the teaching staff have shared experiences from Reggio Emilia inspired schools in the US (Reggio Emilia: Reggio Children 2001), and are discussing cultural diversities in preschool practice. The aim of the study is to improve preschool teacher education, and to develop research in preschools as frames are changing in Norway (KD 2005, KD 2006).

Students and staff have been documenting their work leading to the final bachelor thesis, and they are presenting this as a poster. The aim for the students is to learn about their individual subject to write the best paper. The aim for our college is to improve teacher education and practice, and the purpose is to find best practises for cooperation between our teacher college and preschools in the community.

Keywords: students, preschool teachers, R&D.

Videoconferencing in Early Childhood Education: the "Staying in touch" Project

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Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal

Although becoming a more common resource for distance education (Anderson, & Rourke, 2005, Greenberg, 2004), videoconferencing is at an early stage rearding implementation in early childhood settings (Siraj-Blatchford, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2002, Yost, 2003). The learning potential of this tool and it's practical implementation in this specific context need to be adressed (Lawson, & Comber, 2006, Piecka, 2007). In a joint pilot study, two early childhood teachers and six student teachers, together with their 26 children, participated in seven videoconferences with children in other early childhood centers and one daycare. All the centers were located in a rural area, with little presence of technology. Data on this experience was collected through video recordings, children's drawings, photographs, and interviews to the participants: adults and children. The combined analysis allowed us: a) to sugest good practices of implementing videconferencing in preschool and which learning experiences can be expected, b) to identify the meanings children assigned to videoconferences, and c) discuss some of the issues that research on videoconferencing has highlighted: interactivity (Anderson, & Rourke, 2005, Greenberg, 2004), collaboration (Ertl, Fischer, & Mandl, 2006, Greenberg, 2004), understanding the other (Greenberg, 2004, Piecka, 2006, Siraj-Blatchford, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2002), reaction to one's own image (Wegge, 2006), children's attitudes towards technology (BECTA, 2003) and recognition of children as technologically competent (Marsh, 2004).

Keywords: videoconferencing, ict, Portugal, research with children, children's conceptions.

Teachable Moments vs. Careable Moments: Rethinking Teachers' Roles for Children's Emotional Development

SOYOUNG SUNG

Keimyung University, Republic of Korea

The purpose of the study is to rethink the contemporary realities of emotional coaching practices for young children in the field of early childhood education and to explore alternative teachers' roles for children's optimal emotional development. This research takes a critical view of educational practices, and most importantly, of the teacher's role. I observed classrooms and interviewed teachers in a Korean preschool and kindergarten. For data analysis, I used standard qualitative methods. This qualitative study uses some of Michel Foucault's ideas to interpret the contextual episodes and analyze current phenomena. The findings show that, in the name of facilitating children's emotional development, teachers have often analyzed children, more rigidly controlled children's nature, constructed more regimes, and intervened in children. If emotional situations emerge in the classroom, teachers think these are teachable moments in which they can teach children appropriate behaviors. Such emotional talk aims to infuse adult's ideas into children and to redirect children's inappropriate behaviors. This study shows that teachers

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respond to children's superficial behaviors, rather than to their feelings. This research will address how teachers practice their power while having their daily emotional talks with children. This study emphasizes the importance of teacher's roles in caring for, empathizing with, listening to children and their feelings, and building trust.

Keywords: emotional development, teachers' role, care, teaching practice.

Creating Opportunities for the Child Protagonism: the Documentation of a Project

OFÉLIA LIBÓRIO AND PAULA SANTOS

University of Aveiro, Portugal

There is currently a broad consensus in the scientific and professional Childhood Education community in favour of Pedagogies of Participation, which recognize the social agency of children.

In the history of Pedagogy in Childhood Education, we may find several proposals that recognize the active role of the child in his development and learning and want to place the child at the centre of the educational process (active pedagogies). We recognize in all the proposals a discourse in which the child is perceived in his individuality and seen in the light of universal principles of development and learning.

The idea of pedagogy of participation brings to first plan the political dimension of the children-actors, their collective agency (Corsaro), the inevitability of their role in the curricular design and development.

In this poster we document a project in which the explicit interests and preferred learning modes of children have guided the educational action of a educational community composed by professionals and families.

Keywords: pedagogies of participation, child protagonism, pedagogical documentation.

Kindergarten as an Arena for Cultural Formation

A Research Project on Conditions for Cultural Formation and Change

ELIN ERIKSEN ØDEGAARD

Bergen University College, Norway

The purpose of this project is to study and transform kindergartens. We will investigate, conceptualise, understand and problematize the relationship between the subject matter in kindergarten and kindergarten as an organisation.

In this project, cultural formation deals with both children's sense making in their social encounters, introduces learning material and artefacts (toys, issues, places, texts and events) as well as conditions for didactic practice and participation management. Children are influenced by and create new meanings in such encounters. The project works towards improving children's conditions for the promotion of active fellow citizenship for all regardless of gender, age, ethnic and social background and is based on socio-cultural epistemology and innovative work forms.

Keywords: artefacts, meaning-making, educational formation

Parental Educational Values in Estonia

AINO UGASTE AND TIIA ÕUN

Tallinn University, Estonia

Family and children rank still high in the value judgement of Estonians although quick changes in the Estonian society have brought along the decreasing of the secure feeling, change of values and lack of stability in the family. Our previous studies showed that young parents have quite a lot of theoretical knowledge in educating their children but they are not satisfied with their skill and ability to educate their children. Estonia is a multicultural society, where beside the ethnic majority, minorities of non- Estonian exist. Whereas there are no researches, that would analyse the educational problems of non-Estonian parents and children.

The main aim of the study is to find out the educational principles of non-Estonian parents and main problems they encounter in everyday life in upbringing their children. The sample was formed by 100 mothers, who filled in questionnaires and whose children were at the age of 4-7 and went to the Russian kindergarten.

The results indicated that parents consider their child's all-round developing important. In case of home education they valued the development of independence, honesty, obedience and communication skills. The main task of the family was considered to be the child's preparation for life by the parents. In case of the kindergarten the children's all-round development and the introduction of the Estonian language and culture was considered important. The majority of the respondents look for the solution to the upbringing problems inside the family.

Keywords: educational values, parents, preschool children, Estonia.

Nature Study Trail and Learning Outdoors – Preschool Teacher's Important Helpers for Giving Ecological Education at Pre-school Age.

LEHTE TUULING

Tallinn University, Estonia

Man is a part of nature and without nature man cannot survive. We must preserve nature to make earth a good place to live for future generations as well. Nature is the first book that our children read. Nature is an excellent tool for teaching in early years. Nowadays outdoor learning is regaining popularity. Estonia has beautiful nature and we should use it to teach and educate our young children. It is easier to teach children new things about nature and how to behave responsibly towards it being in and around nature it also deepens ones love and understanding to his or her surroundings. We often see that some children and even adults do not know how to behave in nature and how to preserve it. The younger the child is when he learns to appreciate nature the deeper will his love be towards it. Ecology is a science trying to describe and explain the relationship between the living beings and their environment. Ecological education is a persistent activity in order to mould a personality with environmentally friendly attitude who is characterized by high awareness and sense of responsibility as well as convictions and behavioural motives corresponding to the principles of nature education. Thinking about the future through the prism of nature protection issues the first thing to be done is to solve the preparatory level and its quality of developing a person of tomorrow. The whole ecological education is directed to the development of the new way of thinking. Nowadays the mankind is confronted with problem – either to cooperate with nature, considering the natural circuits in the environment or to bring damage to nature. The future of our planet depends on the choice we make today. By giving ecological knowledge we are mainly moulding the attitudes of young children. The motives concerning the attitude to nature depend on the age as well as on the acquired knowledge. The small children's ecological understanding is formed through habitual behaviour in the nature, whereas the example plays a great role.

I chose this topic because nowadays children are distancing themselves from nature due to the influences of computers and television. Therefore teachers and parents have to make sure that

children spend more time outside and learn to experience the environment with all their senses. Nature gives children the joy of discovery, observation and exploration, through which positive attitudes towards nature are formed. In presentation I concentrate on two main tools in ecological education in preschool age – outdoor learning and learning-tour.

Studying outdoors is the best means to teach children, as child learns best through experience by studying, discovering and doing themselves. in the open air it is possible to developed the senses, to watch and examine, to draw, model, measure, count, do physical exercises= to teach ecology and environment, to give practical experience and skills about what to do when lost in forest. The learning-tour in nature is an effective method in improving the awareness of nature and environment for both the children and their teacher.

Keywords: sustainable development, outdoor learning, nature, ecological education.

Knowledge is Power

PETER ENGELBREKT PETERSEN

BUPL - The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators, Denmark

Knowledge is power - a statement that is common knowledge to most people working with science and education. But many labour organisations have not acted on this statement - yet. The Danish national Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators (BUPL) tries to empower their members by funding research and knowledge production within the field of pedagogy.

Since 2007 BUPL have granted 18 million dkr. to 12 different research projects. The poster presentation will present and discuss the research fund that BUPL started in 2007.

We will raise questions like:

How free is this research?

Will the pedagogues benefit from this and if so how?

Furthermore BUPL use 2 mill dkr. to secure that the members have easy access to knowledge and research. BUPL does that because we know that our members are eager to know more about their profession.

Another way of spreading the word is by choosing projects with certain designs of research. BUPL has in some cases chosen projects that want to use methods that involve many pedagogues and the pedagogues play an active role in the knowledge production.

The poster presentation will also present and discuss the 12 research projects that were financed by the fund.

Keywords: funding research, strengthening the profession of the pedagogues, 12 very different projects

The Concept of „Bildung“ for Young Children and Their Teachers in Further Education

BEATE IRSKENS AND RENATE NIESEL

Bertelsmann Foundation, Germany

In Germany expansion of care and education for children under three is a declared political goal. Following the issue of quantity, questions of quality have to be answered. To improve the educational work of teachers and childminders we transferred the English framework "Birth to three matters" into a German version. "Wach, neugierig, klug - Kinder unter 3" was published in 2006.

After a representative survey asking for required competences for the work with children under three, the Bertelsmann Stiftung launched an interdisciplinary working group to develop a concept for further education. The leading principles build on a perspective looking at the strengths of children in their capacities as learners from birth on and to understand educational processes as co-constructive processes. To achieve this the working group developed a field manual with five training units that took the German version of the "Birth to three matters" materials as a basis. Concepts like Reggio or Pikler were added. Another main component of the manual is a DVD with 18 scenes showing children's actions in day care settings. Spoken and written comments regarding topics of developmental psychology have been added.

As a next measure a nationwide professional network for those who practice further education in early child care has been founded. Members come from universities, colleges or work as educational advisors for child care providers or freelancers. This panel will discuss and develop concepts and programs of early education to achieve high quality in care and education for young children. - We are interested to learn about similar initiatives like this to link together.

Keywords: children under three, train the trainer, conceptualizing "Bildung", professional network.

Child Environment Assessment and Children's Perspective

JOHN ANDERSEN, SOREN GUNDELACH AND KJELD RASMUSSEN

UdviklingsForum, Denmark

Danish legislation of January 1st 2006 demands that once every 3rd year all day care institutions must carry out a survey, an account, and an evaluation of children's physical, mental, and aesthetic environment in the institution. This is called "Child Environment Assessment".

Day care includes crèches, day-care centres, nurseries, and integrated institutions. According to legislation it is of utmost importance that the assessment is carried out in a "children's perspective". This, however, is not a particular method, but should be appreciated as an empathic and sympathetic insight in order to view children's perspectives on child life in day care.

Since 2007 UdviklingsForum by appointment of Aarhus Municipality and in cooperation with 16 crèches, nurseries, and day-care produced an easy read, time-economical, meaningful, and professionally well founded model that all day care institutions in Aarhus have used during the first half of 2008. Supplementary to existing methods of involving children's perspective UdviklingsForum has invented "The Speaking Questionnaire", a PC-based, self instructing programme, meant for children at the age of 5-8 years. "The Child Environment Assessment" model and "The Speaking Questionnaire" are published all over Denmark and are to be published in Norway and Sweden.

The result of "Child Environment Assessment" in Aarhus will be presented in July 2008, analyzed and evaluated. Thus a general view of the result is created, and transverse analyses of 350 children's environment assessments in Aarhus day care institutions will be carried out.

"The Child Environment Assessment" as well as "The Speaking Questionnaire" will be introduced as "posters", and there will be opportunity of participation in a session for conference participants to interact with poster presenters.

Keywords: children's perspective, speaking questionnaire.

Presenting a New Nordic Open Access Journal in ECEC

JAN-ERIK JOHANSSON

Oslo University College, Norway

POSTER
PRESENTATIONS

A new open access journal is founded by the Oslo University College and the research network 'Barnehageliv' – Preschool life – with Queen Maud's University College, Vestfold University College and University of Stavanger. The aim is to give researchers in the Nordic ECEC field a good platform for publication in all Nordic languages: Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Sami, Swedish and later also Faroese and Kalaallisut. English might also be used. The journal aims at publishing peer reviewed research articles 20—25 pages long, together with other types of texts. The focus is at the Early Childhood Education and Care institutions and their work together with children. This means that a lot of different academic fields may contribute, not only education, but also philosophy, psychology, history and sociology etc, as long as the focus on ECEC is not lost – we aim at the whole knowledge universe of ECEC. The relations to families and society at large must not be forgotten. The journal will be produced at Oslo University College, but the editorial board will have members from all Nordic countries.

Keywords: Nordic ECE, open access journal, publishing ece research

Connecting Children with the Outdoor Environment in Ireland

RITA MELIA

National Childrens Nurseries Association, Ireland

This poster presentation will reflect the play and learning experienced by Irish children, in a variety of settings urban and rural it will include, seasons, animals, themes, environments. Because of the variable weather conditions and distinctive seasons in Ireland, children throughout the country have different learning experiences, in the outdoor environments. This often depends on the location of the childcare service. Many childcare settings, incorporate, their geographical location, to enhance the quality of their outdoor environment. Children engage with nature and learn from their natural environment. This learning changes dramatically as the seasons change. The learning experienced by children through out the country, through their connection with the outdoor environment in both urban and rural settings, is visible from this poster presentation, regardless of geographical location or childcare setting. Connecting children with the outdoor environment is dependent on the value and motivation placed on this wonderful learning opportunity, by childcare professional, in the direct service provision. This presentation demonstrates that children, learn through engaging with their environment, it also shows how children learn to respect and care for animals. While seasons change, so too will the learning experiences of children as they learn to notice the differences and acknowledge the passage of time.

Keywords: children, actively, participating, outdoors

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