



# BECERA 2021

**UNITY AND PLURALITY:  
EXPLORATIONS OF PEDAGOGY AND  
CURRICULA IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

16 & 17 February

# UNITY AND PLURALITY: EXPLORATIONS OF PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULA IN EARLY CHILDHOOD



**BECRA 2021**  
**16<sup>TH</sup> & 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

**HOSTED BY**  
**CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC)**



# BRITISH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (BECERA)

BECERA is an independent organisation for those early childhood practitioners and researchers working in the British Isles who want a space to meet, enquire and discuss issues relevant to their work with young children and families.

BECERA aims to stimulate, support, create and disseminate rigorous, grounded and conceptual knowledge and its applications to our early childhood services. It does this through an annual conference where research is presented and subjected to peer-review. The knowledge generated from each conference will be made available in an online, searchable database.

## **WHAT ARE BECERA'S AIMS?**

BECERA is particularly interested in practitioner research and exploring paradigms and methodologies which impact directly on services.

BECERA is interested in how knowledge is constructed, who listens and who speaks, and in capturing the voices of all, including parents and children.

BECERA will provide a unique British forum to bring together research, practice and policy and strengthen the early childhood research community in the vital contribution it makes to British practice and policy.

## **WHO RUNS BECERA?**

BECERA is an independent, self-funding organisation run by the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) which has dedicated itself to improving services for young children and families in the UK for more than 25 years. CREC's Directors are Professor Tony Bertram and Professor Christine Pascal OBE.

## **HOW IS BECERA FUNDED?**

CREC has undertaken to cover start-up costs and uses ticket sales to cover conference costs.

# CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC)

The Centre for Research in Early Childhood, is the home of CREC in Birmingham (Charitable Trust) and Amber Publications and Training (APT).

[Established by Professor Chris Pascal and Professor Tony Bertram](#), CREC has been working to improve Early Years provision for over 25 years.

Located in the St Thomas Children's Centre near Birmingham city centre, CREC specialises in early childhood research which has relevant and meaningful outcomes for practice and policy.

Some of its research is transformed into training and development programmes designed for the specific needs of the early years sector.

CREC also delivers [postgraduate and research degrees](#) through its close affiliations with Midlands universities, particularly Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University.

In 2015, in partnership with the St. Thomas Centre Nursery and various Nursery and Primary schools across the West Midlands we launched the [CREC Early Years Partnership SCITT](#) (School Centred Initial Teacher Training), delivering Early Years AND Early Primary focused Teacher Training with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Since then over 40 teachers have successfully gained QTS through the programme.

CREC has a strong reputation for undertaking reviews, reports, evaluations and consultancy work with many UK local authorities, NGOs and countries.

Examples include the British Council, QDCA, OECD, Portugal, Qatar, South Australia, Birmingham and Gloucestershire.

CREC has also been [EECERA's](#) strategic partner supporting the delivery of the [annual conference](#) since 2009.

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## **WELCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

Dear friends and colleagues,

The theme of this year's BECERA Conference addresses challenges that have been magnified by the COVID 19 pandemic: Inequality, Diversity, Sustainability and the distribution of Power, Voice and Participation in Early Childhood.

We invite all friends and members of CREC's community to contribute to a dialogue addressing these fundamental questions in their work, thinking and interactions. This two-day event will provide a forum for delegates to not only problematise these contested issues but also encourage them to ambitiously suggest ways to resolve them and move forward.

To help us frame our discussions we have been fortunate to obtain the input of two outstanding speakers:

Nancy Stewart, the Birth to 5 Matters Project Lead, will deliver the first keynote of the Conference, providing information on the work of the project to date, including information on the latest draft.

Tina Bruce, will close the Conference by considering how we can use current research and practice such as that presented at BECERA, and reflections on Froebelian themes, to take pedagogy forward.

Delegates will be able to engage with all speakers through dedicated Q&A sessions and interact through the Zoom chat function for the duration of each session.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Bertram C. Pascal', written in a cursive style.

***Professor Tony Bertram and Professor Chris Pascal***

## CONFERENCE INFORMATION

### LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, CREC, Birmingham, UK

Professor Christine Pascal, CREC, Birmingham, UK

**BECERA CONFERENCE 2021 IS HOSTED BY CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC).**



## CONFERENCE ZOOM JOINING INSTRUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING NOTES

1. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this year's Conference will be delivered online via Zoom across two days. Delegates have the choice to attend all sessions or pick and choose the sessions they wish to attend.
2. All registered attendees will receive 6 separate Zoom generated emails with links to 6 sessions that comprise the conference programme this year: Keynote 1 and 2, plus Symposia 1, 2, 3 and 4.
3. All those registered by the end of the day Thursday (11 February) should receive all six links on Friday (12 February). If you don't, please email us and we will investigate and resend the links.
4. Anyone who registers on Friday or later will receive their links by the end of Monday 15<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Note: Booking received less than 2 hours before a live session won't get access to this next session but only the one after.**

5. The Zoom links we'll send are unique to the email address you provided at registration (i.e. email you'll receive the links on) so please do not forward the links to colleagues who can't find or have not received their links as they won't work for anybody but you.
6. Once you receive the Zoom links, you will get email reminders an hour before each session starts.
7. When joining the Conference, you will initially be held in a Zoom waiting room; please be patient whilst we register and admit everyone.
8. Please ensure your Zoom ID is representative of your name to ensure smooth admittance. We reserve the right to refuse admittance if we are unable to identify you from your Zoom ID.
9. If you lose internet connection please re-join using the original link.
10. Registered delegates will have secure access to recordings of all sessions to watch later at their convenience. These will be shared with delegates on the evening of Wednesday 17 February and will be available for 7 calendar days.
11. If you encounter connectivity or other issues during our event, please email [enquiries@becera.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@becera.org.uk) and we will endeavour to respond asap and provide support where possible.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

You can follow the BECERA conference on both Facebook and Twitter (@BECERAssoc). We encourage everyone to post and tweet using hashtag #BECERA2021.

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

## TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

9.30 – 10.30

**Keynote 1: Birth to 5 Matters - Nancy Stewart**

12.30 – 14.00

**Symposium 1** – Rapid Research papers\* on the strand of **Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19**

7 x 10-minute rapid research papers delivered supported by max 4 slides, followed by group discussion and Q&A with audience.

15.30 – 17.00

**Symposium 2** – Rapid Research papers on the strand of **Leadership and Workforce**

6 x 10-minute rapid research papers delivered supported by max 3 slides, followed by group discussion and Q&A with audience.

## WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

9.30 – 11.00

**Symposium 3** – Rapid Research papers\* on the strand of **Pedagogy**

7 x 10-minute rapid research papers delivered supported by max 4 slides, followed by group discussion and Q&A with audience.

12.30 – 14.00

**Symposium 4** – Rapid Research papers\* on the strand of **21st Century Education**

7 x 10-minute rapid research papers delivered supported by max 4 slides, followed by group discussion and Q&A with audience.

15.30 – 16.30

**Keynote 2: Pedagogical reconnections: past, present and future - Tina Bruce**

\*Rapid Research Papers are condensed symposia presentations that must be completed within 10 minutes and must be based on academic research (rather than opinion or think pieces). Presenters are asked to distil an aspect of their current research into a short, focused presentation which addresses the overall conference theme but also the chosen symposium strand. Once all presentations have been received, the Chair will facilitate a discussion among the panel drawing out saliences and differences, and by bringing in questions submitted by the watching audience.

# KEYNOTE PRESENTATION SYNOPSES

TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

09:30 – 10:30 Keynote I

## **Birth to 5 Matters - Guidance by the Sector, for the Sector**

*Nancy Stewart*

Birth to 5 Matters is being developed as non-statutory early years practice guidance, in response to government changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated practice guidance which sparked English early years professionals' concerns that their values and expertise were not sufficiently reflected in the government's framework and guidance. Using a highly democratic, consultative and collaborative approach, 16 major early years sector organisations have joined together to develop guidance which meets the needs of practitioners and reflects both practical expertise and academic research. Central issues of pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and education for the 21st century have all been debated, and the current consultation seeks further professional views on how to maximise the benefits of the guidance.

**Nancy Stewart** is a writer, consultant and trainer with nationally recognised expertise in early years development and learning. She has wide experience across early years sectors in schools, nurseries, local authority advisory service, and National Strategies where she was Senior Early Years Adviser and wrote guidance materials including 'Learning, Playing and Interacting'. She has worked to implement national programmes and advised on curriculum and assessment in the 2012 EYFS review. Key areas of interest and expertise are early communication and language for thinking, along with children's development as self-regulated learners and the central place of play, and playful teaching and learning. Nancy co-authored Development Matters with Helen Moylett and wrote "How children learn - The characteristics of effective early learning", amongst other publications. She is currently Project Lead for the Early Years Coalition's development of non-statutory guidance for the EYFS, Birth to Five Matters.

WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

15:30 – 16:30 Keynote II

**Pedagogical reconnections: Past, present and future**

*Tina Bruce*

There is a silent revolution underway evidencing the importance of the social brain. This is empowered by relationships, feelings and meaning seeking, with the predictive use of previous experience. Cultural and community belonging is central, triggering and supporting the nuanced journey into symbolic functioning. Learning to observe gives a mechanism in getting to know a child, tuning into families, and the interconnectedness of knowledge. The way we spend time with children will impact on what we provide educationally. Pedagogy (how we provide) needs to be consistent within our professional lives, but also to be part of the way we live as a whole. How we engage with others, and the way in which we expand our knowledge and collaborate with others affects our lives. This is early childhood pedagogy. This is life. It matters.

**Tina Bruce CBE** is Honorary Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Roehampton. She trained as a Froebel teacher at the Froebel Educational Institute and as a teacher of children with hearing loss at the University of Manchester, teaching in both mainstream and special school contexts. She was head of the Froebel Nursery Research Project and was appointed Director of the Centre for Early Childhood Studies at Roehampton, working with the British Council in New Zealand and Egypt and awarded Outstanding Woman Scholar in Education by the University of Virginia Commonwealth. She advised the British Army schools on early childhood education at the request of HMI. She directed the Froebel Blockplay Research Project, a collaborative initiative working with Pat Gura the Research Assistant and five schools. She was co-ordinator of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Education and is an executive committee member of the International Froebel Society, Patron of the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education and a Vice President of Early Education.



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# Symposium 1

Tuesday 16th February | 12.30 – 2.00pm

## CURRICULUM, DOCUMENTATION AND COVID-19

TITLE	PRESENTER(S)
<b>Virtually Pen Green</b>	KAT CLARK AND SANDRA MOLE Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, UK
<b>The Impact of COVID-19 in ECE in Spain. Implications for ECE Education Policy</b>	NOELIA CEBALLOS AND ÁNGELA SAIZ-LINARES University of Cantabria, Spain
<b>The Impact of a Literacy Playshop on Children's Literacy Practices and Engagement in a Kindergarten</b>	MAY ALKHUNAIN Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia / The University of Sheffield, UK
<b>Supporting Children with Identified Speech, Language and Communication Needs at Two- years-old: Voices of Early Years Practitioners</b>	NYREE NICHOLSON Bishop Grosseteste University, UK
<b>Entanglements with Quality: Deconstructing Early Years Quality Documents in the Light of Covid</b>	LINDA SHAW AND NIUMAI HAMILTON-PEACH Oxford Brookes University, UK
<b>An Exploration of English and Swedish Pre-School Teachers' Perspectives on Their Roles and Values</b>	FAYE STANLEY University of Wolverhampton, UK
<b>The Voices of Preservice Early Childhood Teachers about Online Practicum</b>	NADA ALWADAANI Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia



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# Symposium 2

Tuesday 16th February | 3.30 – 5.00pm

## LEADERSHIP AND WORKFORCE

TITLE	PRESENTER(S)
<p><b>Acknowledging the Emotional Aspect of Leadership and Considering the Role That Collaborative Clusters Can Play in Providing a Supportive and Nurturing Space</b></p>	<p>CARLA SOLVASON University of Worcester, UK</p>
<p><b>Relational Pedagogy and the Need for an Embedded Ethic of Care</b></p>	<p>ZOE RAVEN Royal Holloway, University of London, UK</p>
<p><b>Exploring Supervision as a Means to Building Communities of Practice in the Early Years Profession</b></p>	<p>RAFAELLE MONTEIRO AND AOIFE PRENDERGAST Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland</p>
<p><b>Early Childhood Educators' Perceptions of Peer Relationships as a Pre-Condition for Children's Happiness, Social &amp; Emotional Wellbeing, School Success, Life Preparation and Learning: Cross-cultural Perspectives from India and England</b></p>	<p>JANBEE SHAIK MOPIDEVI ITRAC, UK</p>
<p><b>Exploring Chilean Early Years Educators' Professional Identities through Their Figured Worlds</b></p>	<p>MARIA-JOSE OPAZO University of Chile, Chile</p>
<p><b>Preservice Childhood Educators' Perceptions of Outdoor Play for Children</b></p>	<p>AMANDA NORMAN University of Winchester, UK WENDY CROCKER Northeastern University, Boston, USA</p>

# Symposium 3

Wednesday 17th February | 9.30 – 11.00am

## PEDAGOGY

TITLE	PRESENTER(S)
What's My Pedagogy	JANE REYNOLDS University of Hull, UK
The Ever-present Potential Within a Play-based Pedagogy	TANSY WATTS Canterbury Christchurch University, UK
What Happens When We Talk to Girls about Block-Play?	CATRIONA GILL Greengables Nursery & Family Centre / Edinburgh University, Scotland
Exploring Forest School Practitioners' Perspectives on the Pedagogical Principles of Forest Schooling Within an English Early Years Context.	HAYLEY BULLARD University of Huddersfield, UK
Taking Account of the Voice of the Child Within the Regulatory Inspection Process of Early Years Services	DEIRDRE MOLLOY TUSLA Child and Family Agency, Ireland
Exploring the Benefits of Supporting the Development of Self-Regulation (SR) in Young Children.	MINE CONKBAYIR Mine Conkbayir Consultancy, UK
What Do Young Children Have to Say? Recognising their Voices, Wisdom, Agency and Need for Companionship During the COVID Pandemic	CHRIS PASCAL AND TONY BERTRAM Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), UK

# Symposium 4

Wednesday 17th February | 12.30 – 2.00pm

## 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION

TITLE	PRESENTER(S)
<b>SOS: Researching Uncomfortable Spaces: Conceptions of Power, Agency and Pedagogies for the 21st Century - Practitioners as Experts</b>	HELEN LYNDON Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), UK
<b>SOS: Researching Uncomfortable Spaces: Conceptions of Power, Agency and Pedagogies for the 21st Century - Developing Ethnic Identity</b>	SHARON COLILLES Birmingham City University / Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), UK
<b>SOS: Researching Uncomfortable Spaces: Conceptions of Power, Agency and Pedagogies for the 21st Century - Refugee Voices</b>	DONNA GAYWOOD Birmingham City University / Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), UK
<b>A Mixed Methods Study of Introducing Social Justice Issues to Early Years Practitioners in Higher Education</b>	ANNA COLGAN Abingdon and Witney College, UK
<b>Ordinary Lives; Extraordinary Circumstances</b>	SANDRA MOLE AND EMMA HEWITT Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, UK
<b>Exploring Early Years STEM Engagement with Museum Objects: Radicalising Practice at the Science Museum, London, UK</b>	MARIA SERVETA Science Museum Group, UK
<b>Colour as a Meaning Making Tool for Young Emergent Bilinguals</b>	SALLY BROWN Georgia Southern University, USA

# SYMPOSIA PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

16/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 1: Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19

## VIRTUALLY PEN GREEN

**KAT CLARK AND SANDRA MOLE**, Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, UK

### **Research aims**

The 'Pen Green Experience' is rooted in critical pedagogy, experiential learning, and dialogical relationships formed. 2020 required adaptations to teach online overnight, educators needed to facilitate learning in an unfamiliar virtual world, with no previous training. Research gathered feedback about the experience of virtual classrooms for mature students.

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

Literature and research regarding virtual teaching and andragogical practice were considered (Benford, 2013).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Along with theoretical frameworks of Synchronous Teaching (Hrastinski, 2008) and Adult Learning (Knowles, 2005).

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

An interpretive stance was embraced, qualitative research aimed to comprehend the subjective views of students. Data was gathered through storytelling of 8 students and evaluations from around a further 100 more.

### **Ethical considerations**

Attention to details such as confidentiality, the right to withdraw, power differentials and anonymity all formed part of the overall undertaking to do no harm to those students we involved. The work of Freire (1993) and Holman (1987) inspired our approach.

### **Main findings**

In adapting to the circumstances, an awareness of Self (Winnicott, 1960) was developing in both students and tutors. Engaging in pastime (Berne, 1964) was enabling each to connect within a virtual experience. Learning via this platform became a liberating experience for some.

Three predominant themes emerged: The importance of pastime (Berne, 1964), the interactions between student and tutor, the potential possibilities and opportunities of virtual learning.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

The research supported organisational recognition of virtual classrooms, developing an understanding of andragogical isomorphism and the opportunities well facilitated synchronous teaching may offer to a female/parent/practitioner dominated student body and sector.

**Keywords:** life of inquiry, early childhood professionalism, authenticity, practice based inquiry, technology and ICT

16/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 1: Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19

## **THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN ECE IN SPAIN. IMPLICATIONS FOR ECE EDUCATION POLICY**

**NOELIA CEBALLOS AND ÁNGELA SAIZ-LINARES**, University of Cantabria, Spain

### **Research aims**

We analyse the actions and impact of COVID-19 pandemic the carried out in ECE schools in Spain.

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

Research has shown some recommendations to reduce the impact of the pandemia in each different stages (Formoshino, 2021).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

After contextualising the situation of the ECE schools (0-3) (Spain), we address the actions that have been carried out at a national level and in the autonomous communities in Spain at each of the moments of the pandemic (during confinement and in the "return to normal")

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

Analysis of the national and autonomous communities' documents that established the measures to be developed in the ECE schools during confinement and "return to normal life". Analysis of the documents of the platforms on children's education rights in Spain.

### **Ethical considerations**

This research is based on secondary data so ethical consideration has been given to ensuring fair representation of documents, with identification of authorship.

### **Main findings**

During the confinement, the actions deployed were varied depending on whether the management was public or indirect (subsidising private centres). In relation to teaching work, it should be noted that indirect management led to a massive suspension of contracts. Direct management was maintained. Attendance was suspended and teachers developed educational proposals and support for families virtually.

The 2-year classrooms followed the rules of the primary schools: the teachers' contracts were maintained and attendance was suspended.

At the time of "return normal life", schools 0-3 were the first to open (June), while the other stages (including 3-6) did not open until September.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

We establish some challenges in education policy, children's right and teacher work.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, early childhood professionalism, birth to three

16/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 1: Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19

## **THE IMPACT OF A LITERACY PLAYSHOP ON CHILDREN'S LITERACY PRACTICES AND ENGAGEMENT IN A KINDERGARTEN**

**MAY ALKHUNAIN**, Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia / The University of Sheffield, UK

### **Research aims**

This study explored the influence of a 'Literacy Playshop' on children's literacy engagement and practices in one Saudi kindergarten classroom.

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

The study adapted Karen Wohlwend's 'Literacy Playshop' curriculum design (Wohlwend, 2013). Wohlwend developed new connections between play and literacy in an approach aimed at children aged three to eight.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

This study draws from several theoretical frameworks, including socioculturalism (Vygotsky, 1978), New Literacy Studies (Street, 1985) and multimodality (Kress, 1997) in which the meaning of literacy has been expanded.

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

A case study approach was used in which a 'Literacy Playshop' model was undertaken in one kindergarten. Observations of eight children aged five to six were undertaken using field notes and videos. Semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents were undertaken. The Leuven Involvement Scale was used to measure child engagement.

### **Ethical considerations**

An informed consent form and information sheets were provided to participants. Upon parents' prior consent, children's assent was continually negotiated through talk and observations. All participants were given pseudonyms.

### **Main findings**

Findings revealed that children's engagement and involvement in literacy was enhanced through an approach which involved play and multimodal creativity. The children's increased engagement in literacy extended to the home.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

These findings suggest that a Literacy Playshop approach engages children in literacy practices suitable for the 21st century. This has implications for the early childhood curricula in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** play, curriculum

16/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 1: Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH IDENTIFIED SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS AT TWO-YEARS-OLD: VOICES OF EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS**

**NYREE NICHOLSON**, Bishop Grosseteste University, UK

### **Research aims**

What are the experiences of early years practitioners in relation to the identification process of speech-language and communication needs (SLCN) in two-year-old children? What are the experiences of early years practitioners concerning how SLCN are assessed? What are the experiences of early years practitioners concerning how SLCN needs are supported? What are the differences and similarities in experiences between early years practitioners in two different counties?

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

This research links to other research on SLCN in early childhood (Mroz; 2006; Mroz & Hall, 2003; Blackburn, 2014). The research also explores assessment processes in the early years building on the work of Roberts-Holmes (2012) & Bradbury (2019).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The literature was formed using a Bronfenbrenner (1979) Ecological Model to explore the factors that influence how practitioners support the children. A subsequent conceptual framework was developed using three aspects of Foucault's work to explore and analyse the findings of the research.

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

A qualitative Narrative Inquiry approach was used and conversational interviews were used to collect data in the form of experiences told through stories.

### **Ethical considerations**

Consideration was given throughout the research of the responsibility of the narrative researcher in ethically representing the stories shared by participants.

### **Main findings**

Training & assessment tools were key to identification and support. Inconsistency in local authority (LA) support between different locations. Pressure to send data to LA's. Lack of confidence in assessment tools.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Assessment and local authority support is inconsistent and can result in different levels of support for children with speech and language needs.

**Keywords:** assessment, methodological approaches, multiple narratives, research paradigms, communication language and literacy

16/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 1: Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19

## **ENTANGLEMENTS WITH QUALITY: DECONSTRUCTING EARLY YEARS QUALITY DOCUMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF COVID**

**LINDA SHAW AND NIUMAI HAMILTON PEACH**, Oxford Brookes University, UK

### **Research aims**

The aim of this paper is to consider the methodologies and findings of two research projects which use documentary analysis within an ethnomethodological paradigm to consider the concept of quality in early years education and care. The first was part of a PhD thesis completed in 2017 in England. The second draws on a MA dissertation project carried out during the Covid 19 pandemic in Malaysia but supervised and awarded by a UK based university.

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

Heterotopia and hauntings: troubling the spaces and artefacts of early years education and care in England (Shaw, 2017) and Pedagogical Documentation amid Covid-19- An auto-ethnographic analysis of the challenges (Hamilton-Peach, 2020)

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The research draws on auto-methodology as a framework through which to theorise reflective pedagogy and pedagogical leadership (Coffey, 1999; McRae (2011)); It seeks to construct a lens through which to consider praxis and articulate reflexive turns.

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

We employ auto-ethnographic methods in order to rethink pedagogical relationships, resilience(s) and interactions (Ellis and Bochner, 200; Chang, 2008).

### **Ethical considerations**

Sensitivity to power relationships within social spaces, as well as adherence to university and sector ethical codes are central to the methodology.

### **Main findings**

Key findings focus on the dynamic relationship between documentation, research and practice. It also highlights opportunities for rethinking pedagogy in response to unforeseeable challenges in both local and international contexts.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

The projects advocate for the power of multi-disciplinary practitioner engagement with research and with reflective practice. It argues that these concepts are never static and therefore should not be constrained by a striving towards set standards.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, authenticity, methodological approaches, real world, technology and ICT

16/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 1: Curriculum, Documentation and COVID-19

## **AN EXPLORATION OF ENGLISH AND SWEDISH PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR ROLES AND VALUES**

**FAYE STANLEY**, University of Wolverhampton, UK

### **Research aims**

This study explores the values of an English and Swedish pre-school teacher focusing on their roles and the experiences they provide for three and four-year-old children.

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

This study builds on the work of (Tobin and Hayashi 2012) using polyvocal ethnography to film two 'day in the life of' videos to capture two teachers' 'voices' through ongoing dialogue, telling and retelling of their 'stories' provoked by their reflections on the video footages.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

This research stems from a socio-cultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) and that early years practitioners' underlying beliefs and the transmission of values (Bernstein, 2000) must be scrutinised through critical reflection and made 'explicit' and brought to the surface of their practice (Brookfield, 2017). It is recognised that values are personalised and shaped by the social, cultural and political contexts in which the teachers' are situated.

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

It sits within an interpretivist paradigm and makes use of socio-cultural methodological approaches to enable the voice of two teachers' to speak directly to the research.

### **Ethical considerations**

This research was underpinned by a strong ethical conduct which involved children, all practitioners within the setting, parents and the setting managers. Ethical approval followed both EECERA and BERA guidelines and was provided by University of Wolverhampton.

### **Main findings**

Many similarities were revealed in the teachers' values especially in relation to relationships, learning experiences and valuing the voice and the rights of the child and also the role of the adult. However, in terms of how children learn this is where the significant differences were between the two teachers' and the processes behind this.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

This investigation has generated a framework 'situated pedagogy' which offers early years practitioners the opportunity to make their values more visible

**Keywords:** pedagogy, values, role of the adult, learning experiences

## THE VOICES OF PRESERVICE EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS ABOUT ONLINE PRACTICUM

**NADA ALWADAANI**, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

### **Research aims**

The study aims to explore the experiences and listen to the voices of preservice EC teachers about online practicum. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, learning and teaching have become online around the world, including KSA. However, there is a little known about how preservice teachers experienced online practicum, how did they feel about it? what are the advantages and disadvantages? were there any challenges faced? this study aims to explore Preservice EC teachers' experiences and bring their voices to the forefront.

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

Sepúlveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) stated that teacher education programs were affected by many challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Kalloo, Mitchell and Kamalodeen (2020) acknowledged that although of the challenges teachers faced, online teaching allowed the emergence of creativity and imaginative responses.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is based on the sociocultural theory in which it views learning as social processes caused by people interacting with their society and surroundings. Social interaction allows acquisition of knowledge and skills.

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

this is a qualitative case study, used audio interviews with 3 participants.

### **Ethical considerations**

information sheets were provided and consent forms were signed. Participation was voluntary.

### **Findings**

Participants expressed frustration of social isolation during practicum. They felt that they are not prepared for working with children. Needed onsite training. Lacked of feedback absence of emotional rewards they were encouraged to creative thinking and imaginative responses.

### **Implications for policy and practice**

Children participation is important during online practicum. Online practicum encourages expression of creative ideas and thinking. the importance of interaction and social surroundings for learning and teaching.

**Keywords:** early childhood professionalism, case study

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## **ACKNOWLEDGING THE EMOTIONAL ASPECT OF LEADERSHIP AND CONSIDERING THE ROLE THAT COLLABORATIVE CLUSTERS CAN PLAY IN PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE AND NURTURING SPACE**

**CARLA SOLVASON**, University of Worcester, UK

### **Research aims**

This presentation explores the isolation and emotional exhaustion that leaders, now more than ever, experience and considers collaborative leadership clusters as a means of providing safety and nurture.

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

It draws on previous research exploring the supportive role of leadership clusters within schools (Solvason and Kington, 2020) and also the extreme demands that many maintained nursery school leaders endure (Solvason, Webb and Tsang, 2020).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The presentation's focus is the emotional aspect of leadership, often overlooked, with the unreasonable expectation that leaders can consistently exude care and support for others without flagging (Solvason and Kington, 2020). It considers the support that peers in similar positions can offer one another in the absence of formal support structures (Solvason, 2017).

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

As this research aims to explore thoughts, feelings and individual experiences it takes an interpretivist approach and presents 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) collected through focus group and individual interviews with leaders of schools and nurseries.

### **Ethical considerations**

The lead university and BERA (2018) ethical guidelines were followed meticulously. All research participants were approached sensitively and respectfully and provided fully informed consent before participating in this study.

### **Main findings**

Leaders that met together regularly valued: the opportunity to offload; the space to reflect; and support to problem-solve with peers whom they came to trust and to view as their 'safety-net' in times of crisis.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

This presentation argues that collaborative working groups should be more widely recognised as an effective mode of emotional support for leaders facing the ever-increasing demands of 21st century education in the UK.

**Keywords:** leadership, early childhood, collaboration, emotions, care

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## **RELATIONAL PEDAGOGY AND THE NEED FOR AN EMBEDDED ETHIC OF CARE**

**ZOE RAVEN**, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

### **Research aims**

This multi-disciplinary research aims to explore the benefits and process of embedding an ethic of care in early years provision to underpin relational pedagogy. In doing so, it also examines the role and influence of relational leadership and an ethical organisational purpose.

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

Previous research on caring practices in early years provision includes work by Taggart (2016), Page (2017) and Langford (2019), and the embedding (and embodying) of care in practice has been covered by Hamington (2004) and Barnes (2019)

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The primary theoretical lens is the Ethics of Care, (Noddings, 1984; Tronto, 1993), combined with Practice Theory (Nicolini, 2012; Gherardi, 2012). Relationality is a further underpinning concept (Bourdieu, 1977; Cunliffe, 2008), of relational pedagogy (Bingham and Sidorkin, 2004).

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

Within a social constructionist paradigm, the research has taken a relational methodology, with case studies, interviews and focus groups. Interviewees included sector leaders, managers, practitioners and parents.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participation was voluntary with written, informed consent, and fully anonymised, unless specific consent was obtained.

### **Main findings**

The main findings of the research so far have been the significance of relational leadership and the adoption of an ethic of care (not necessarily explicitly) in early years provision. Practitioners' ability to adopt sensitive, care-full practices are heavily influenced by the underlying purpose and intentions of leaders and managers, and by whether there is an embedded ethic of care within the provision.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Relational pedagogy is a manifestation of an ethic of care, and facilitates practitioners' understanding and ability to address inequality and meet the individual needs of every child.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, early childhood professionalism, ethics, leadership, parents perspectives

16/2/2021, 15.30 – 17.00, Symposium 2: Leadership and Workforce

## **EXPLORING SUPERVISION AS A MEANS TO BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN THE EARLY YEARS PROFESSION**

**RAFAELLE MONTEIRO AND AOIFE PRENDERGAST**, Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland

### **Research aims**

To explore an innovative approach to prepare Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) practitioners for supervision, by developing Communities of Practice (CoP).

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

Several issues have raised from Irish ECCE professionals (Moloney, 2010; Moloney & Pope, 2015). Staff supervision is a support in ECCE, but little is known about its structure and consistence. There are similarities between the benefits of supervision and the principles of CoP, as both are opportunities of sharing and learning common interests (Graven & Lerman, 2003; Ardichvili, 2008; Soni, 2013).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Policies and documents have supported Ireland-based ECCE professionals (CECDE, 2006). Staff's supervision can improve professionals' performance, but there are variations on its frame, effectiveness and opinion (EYFS, 2017; Soni, 2019). CoP is a possibility to explore supervision in ECCE, developing common sense through mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998).

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

This explanatory mixed-methods ongoing project includes ECCE professionals working across the Mid-West, Ireland, directly with children under 7 years old, holding a minimum ECCE QQI-Level 5 degree. In Phase 1, at least 20 participants will complete a quantitative survey. In phase 2, qualitative semi-structured interviews will assess participants' views on key previous findings.

### **Ethical considerations**

A consent form and information sheet will be provided to participants. Pseudonyms will replace their names, and they will have the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Preliminary Ethical Approval: 20/2109 (Research Ethic Committee-LIT, Ireland). Full version's approval is ongoing.

### **Main findings**

It's expected to detail a CoP-based supervision framework to support ECCE professionals, and to describe Ireland's current ECCE supervisory scenario.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

It will impact contemporary Irish pedagogy concerning supervision's conceptualization, and professionals' supporting on developing skills and knowledge through a supervisory process.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, early childhood professionalism, multiprofessional collaboration, knowledge, leadership

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF PEER RELATIONSHIPS AS A PRE-CONDITION FOR CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS, SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING, SCHOOL SUCCESS, LIFE PREPARATION AND LEARNING: CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES FROM INDIA AND ENGLAND**

**JANBEE SHAIK MOPIDEVI**, ITRAC, UK

### **Research aims**

This study particularly aims to explore early childhood educators' perceptions about the significance of peer relationships across the cross-cultural contexts of India and England.

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

Corsaro (1985, 2004) considers children as active agents of their own socialization who take cues from the adult world and produce their own unique peer culture by actively co-constructing shared meanings, conflict strategies and understandings. In early childhood settings, children spend time in different pedagogical worlds and spend most of the time with the same peer group rather than with the teacher (Kutnick, 2007). Given that children spend a lot of time with each other immersed in their own cultures, the study particularly aims to understand how practitioners perceive and practice children's peer relationships as their perceptions inevitably will have consequences for how they make efforts to foster them.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

In order to understand and illuminate the educators' roles in the contexts of culture, the study adopted socio-cultural theoretical perspectives and framed the data analysis through Rogoff (2003) Three Plane Analysis.

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

The research took an ethnographic approach, adopted interpretative qualitative methodology and employed observations and semi-structured interviews to explore educators' perceptions and their practice.

### **Ethical considerations**

The study adhered to all ethical considerations like privacy, anonymity and informed consent.

### **Main findings**

Findings indicate that across the cultural contexts, educators prioritised the significance of peer relationships but variations have been linked to the overall cultural contexts like policy and social contexts that they inhabit and the availability of cultural tools.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

The implications of these findings for policy and practice are further explored.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, early childhood professionalism, personal social and emotional development, case study, curriculum

16/2/2021, 15.30 – 17.00, Symposium 2: Leadership and Workforce

## **EXPLORING CHILEAN EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH THEIR FIGURED WORLDS**

**MARIA-JOSE OPAZO**, University of Chile, Chile

### **Research aims**

This doctoral research aims to explore the professional identities of Chilean early years educators, understanding identity as an ongoing and dynamic process.

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

Teachers' professional identity studies have been a well established research area for the last thirty years (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). However, the study of early years' teachers' professional identities in socio-economically disadvantaged educational settings is an emergent research field, and few studies exist in the Chilean context.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

To understand how Chilean early years teachers experience their professional identities this doctoral research draws on the concept of figured worlds (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte & Cain, 1998). Figured worlds are defined as the contexts of meaning or frames of understanding that people have.

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

Research design is qualitative with a phenomenological framework (Creswell, 2013). Visual and narrative methodologies were employed: a) semi-structured interviews; b) observation in the educational setting, and c) photo-elicitation interviews. The sample is purposive and involves 9 participants.

### **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent was sought from all participants, and their right to privacy was assured.

### **Main findings**

Findings show that early years educators are constructing an ethical caring professional identity by developing emotional relationships with children, and by pursuing broader educational purposes, even though they are working in a highly market oriented educational system in Chile. Findings also show that the educators are forming distinctive professional identities, informed by the meetings they have with their colleagues, alongside the training courses they have undertaken.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Promotion of such professional collaboration within early years education is recommended.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, early childhood professionalism, methods

16/2/2021, 15.30 – 17.00, Symposium 2: Leadership and Workforce

## **PRESERVICE CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS PERCEPTIONS OF OUTDOOR PLAY FOR CHILDREN**

**AMANDA NORMAN**, University of Winchester, UK  
**WENDY CROCKER**, Northeastern University, Boston, USA

### **Research aims**

This qualitative study is part of a larger international research project that explores the value of outdoor play in the experiences of student childhood educators in England and in Ontario, Canada. This presentation captures the UK perceptions of “What does outdoor play mean to you?”.

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

Outdoor play environments are generally considered essential to support all areas of development (Dodge, Colker & Heroman, 2010; Milteer & Ginsburg, 2012) and offer opportunities for learning (Moss, 2014). Outdoor Play and the adults role (EYFS, 2017; Tovey, 2010).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Drawing on a Reggio inspired approach, the research was informed by Wenger's (2013) Community of Practice framework and Kolbs (1984) Experiential Learning cycle with students gaining empowerment and autonomy in their reflections of outdoor practices as a group.

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

A combination of qualitative tools including: focus group, artifact sharing, and mural creation and photo elicitation was used in this research.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study was conducted under university ethical approval. Participants were first year students and pseudonyms for each participant will be used in dissemination and the institution will not be identified.

### **Main findings**

Our core findings were focused on;

- The purpose of outdoor play
- Personal and Professional knowledge
- Community of Practice and the Research Process of students as participants

### **Implications for policy or practice**

A need for childhood educators to have more focused attention paid to the outdoors as an important milieu for young children as part of their preservice curriculum. Voice in the discussion and Community of Practice to support dialogue among preservice students.

**Keywords:** life of inquiry, pedagogy, multiple narratives, practice based inquiry, curriculum

17/2/2021, 9.30 – 11.00, Symposium 3: Pedagogy

## **WHAT'S MY PEDAGOGY**

**JANE REYNOLDS**, University of Hull, UK

### **Research aims**

The research seeks to deconstruct understanding of pedagogy in Early Childhood Education (ECE), and how practitioner's knowledge of pedagogy develops during work placement.

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

Research establishes the significance of an effective pedagogical approach to support early child development and learning (Wall, 2015; EPPSE DfE, 2012, Moyles, 2003). The transformational nature of a work placement is recognised (Meiroz, 2000) however, less is known about how placement shapes pedagogical practice.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The theoretical framework of cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engestrom, 1987) was applied to support the multiple contributing factors influencing the placement experience.

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

A case study approach focused on experiences of a group of second year ECEC under-graduates, combining theoretical and experiential learning experiences with placements in early year's settings. It explored the relationship between the placement experience and the developing understanding of pedagogical approaches. An interpretative qualitative approach (Horrocks, King & Brooks, 2019) saw data collected using WhatsApp (García, Welford, & Smith, 2015) and online methods to record the students' personal journey over a 3 month period.

### **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent was negotiated with the students and followed the University of Sheffield guidance.

### **Main findings**

The data was analysed using a thematic approach and explored through literature using policy analysis to reach a shared understanding of 'pedagogy'.

The pandemic influenced preliminary findings and showed the significance of placement as a transformational learning opportunity for future graduates and the potential longer-term risks to the sector if such experiences are limited.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

The importance of planning and supporting placements to ensure the development of effective pedagogy in ECEC undergraduates.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, early childhood professionalism, case study

17/2/2021, 9.30 – 11.00, Symposium 3: Pedagogy

## THE EVER-PRESENT POTENTIAL WITHIN A PLAY-BASED PEDAGOGY

**TANSY WATTS**, Canterbury Christchurch University, UK

### **Research aims**

This research explores the contribution of a holistic perspective to understanding the influential relations between children, adults and a natural environment.

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

This is motivated by a contemporary concern about children's nature contact associated with their increasing reliance on adults in accessing outdoor play (Chawla, 2015, Soga et al, 2018, Gill, 2020).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

A Froebelian holistic perspective has been drawn upon in highlighting an opportunity in these conditions and that is according to its play-based pedagogy in which both child and adult may learn from each other (Froebel, 1887).

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

Sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009) has framed use of child-worn Go-Pros during a programme of pre-school organised family trips to local nature sites. This footage has formed the basis for adult reflections on children's perspectives, and analysis has drawn upon a vocabulary of holistic relations that can encompass both adult and child (Gebser, 1949).

### **Ethical considerations**

Children have led the data collection and understood alongside their families that participation was entirely their choice (Robson, 2011).

### **Main findings**

This process has illuminated children drawing adults into immersive sensory experiences, big questions and storied relations with wider life. This can be held in balance with an adult potential to draw children towards their abstract capacities and that together these constitute our holistic relations.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Froebelian pedagogy can offer a source of guidance through contemporary conditions by drawing attention to our capacity to form a relational richness with surroundings. This can align with a sustainability agenda through linking immediate experience to whole global context, and through this, redirecting human-environment relations.

**Keywords:** children's perspectives, parents' perspectives

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## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE TALK TO GIRLS ABOUT BLOCK-PLAY?**

**CATRIONA GILL**, Greengables Nursery & Family Centre / Edinburgh University, Scotland

### **Research aims**

Observations of block-play revealed that girls rarely used the block area. This practitioner enquiry explored the impact of creating opportunities for girls to share their thoughts and ideas about block-play.

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

This research formed part of a wider project across 19 early years settings, supporting practitioner knowledge and understanding of block-play and practitioner enquiry. It draws on Gura's (1992) block-play project.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The study is located in a Froebelian pedagogical approach (Froebel, 1826) which embraces participatory pedagogy (Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012) and emphasises the role of the adult in consciously creating opportunities for children's participation (Flekkøy, 1991).

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

The research was carried out within an interpretive practitioner research paradigm. Methods included quantitative systematic time sampling, and qualitative focus groups and observations.

### **Ethical considerations**

A consent form was provided to all parents/carers. In addition, specific consent for those taking part in focus groups was sought both from parents and discussed with the children.

### **Main findings**

Creating opportunities for girls to talk about block-play and valuing their opinions, enabled the girls to go into the block play area and feel entitled to the shared space. They were able to feel more confident in their block-play, trying things out and working co-operatively with boys.

In addition, practitioners felt more able to support gender equal play in the block area and understood some of the barriers to participation that girls might feel.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Enabling children to contribute to processes of change and be actively involved in decision making can have a significant positive impact on both children and adults in the setting.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, practice based enquiry, Froebelian pedagogy, block-play, children's participation

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## **EXPLORING FOREST SCHOOL PRACTITIONERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF FOREST SCHOOLING WITHIN AN ENGLISH EARLY YEARS CONTEXT.**

**HAYLEY BULLARD**, University of Huddersfield, UK

### **Research aims**

Through a systematic chronological analysis of English Early Years history, this research explores how patterns and tensions between historical educational discourses are presented in current challenges facing Forest School pedagogy.

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

Tokenistic uses of Forest Schooling have emerged (McCree, 2019) causing the defining pedagogical principles of Forest Schooling, child-initiated and play-based learning, to become diluted (Leather, 2018). Alignment of mainstream educational agendas undermining principles is a crucial stage in historical developments of alternative education.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

This study's historical exploration highlighted fluctuation between two perspectives of child-led and play-based learning, instrumental and revisionists perspectives, forming the study's conceptual framework. Patterns of educational discourse, from the Victorian Kindergarten movement (Brehony, 2000) to current policy (DfE, 2017), may indicate the development of instrumental and revisionist perspectives within Forest Schooling.

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

This research follows an inductive, interpretivist approach (Gary, 2014). A case study was carried out before the pandemic, employing qualitative methods, focusing on a Forest School practitioner working with a nursery.

### **Ethical considerations**

Consent forms were presented to the Forest School practitioner and nursery owner involved (BERA, 2018; paragraph 8). Parents were informed and children were given opportunity to ask questions (BERA, 2018; paragraph 23).

### **Main findings**

Findings emerging from the case study could suggest Forest School practitioners hold a revisionist perspective of Forest Schooling, however, external factors may influence instrumental perspectives in practice.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Findings will identify how Forest School practitioners perceive Forest School's pedagogical principles and how this may impact on the progression of the approach in early years contexts.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, Forest School, child-initiated learning, play-based learning, early years history

17/2/2021, 9.30 – 11.00, Symposium 3: Pedagogy

## **TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE VOICE OF THE CHILD WITHIN THE REGULATORY INSPECTION PROCESS OF EARLY YEARS SERVICES**

**DEIRDRE MOLLOY**, TUSLA Child and Family Agency, Ireland

### **Research aims**

The research aimed to establish if children hold views on their preschool experience while exploring the possibility of including these within the regulatory inspection process.

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

Research was part of M.A. inspired by Hanafin (2014) suggestion that consideration be given to child's views and later Einarsdóttir (2015) lamenting the lack of literature on subjective experiences of children in early years settings.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

This research is underpinned by Bronfenbrenner (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, the UNCRC (1989) reflecting Children's Rights Perspective, Article 12 UNCRC (1989), explores participation Lundy (2007) the pedagogy of listening and theory of children's competency Edwards et al (1998)

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

This ethnographic study focused on the collation of qualitative data in two preschools using Mosaic Approach (Clarke and Moss 2001). Data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) The research asked how can we listen to the voice of the child within the regulatory inspection process? with a social constructivism research design feeding into the analysis

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations included informed child assent ,parental consent, freedom to withdraw from study, anonymity, participant welfare including application of Ethical Radar (Skånfors 2009) .

### **Main findings**

This research found children have views on their preschool experience and are prepared to share these. It identifying that a culture of listening to children could be extend to regulatory inspection process.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

This study showed listening to children is possible, extending current regulatory thinking. It recommended children's voices be heard. It highlighted the need for review of regulatory inspection practice ,suggested further research required and policy level discussion was recommended within TUSLA

**Keywords:** action research, assessment, methodological approaches, real world, children's perspectives

17/2/2021, 9.30 – 11.00, Symposium 3: Pedagogy

## **EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION (SR) IN YOUNG CHILDREN.**

**MINE CONKABYIR**, Mine Conkbayir Consultancy, UK

### **Research aims**

To document the changes that one Head of Early Years (EY) has made across her organisation's 42 nurseries, as a result of engaging with an online training programme. All settings have since eschewed behaviour management policies and procedures in favour of designing/embedding SR-informed policies and approaches.

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

Diverse perspectives (Shanker, 2020, Cozolino, 2013; Siegel, 2017; Rose, et al., 2015; Cozolino, 2013) are drawn upon.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Predominantly SR theory, proposed by Dr Stuart Shanker (2017).

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

This is a small-scale qualitative case study, using interviews, observation and documentary analysis.

### **Ethical considerations**

Principles of ethics guided each step of the study. In particular: informed consent from individuals and institutions; rules governing anonymity and confidentiality; full disclosure of the research process; protected participants from harm.

### **Main findings**

Adopting policies and practices that are guided by SR theory have transformed pedagogy:

- daily interactions and relationships between staff and children; children and their parents and staff and parents have improved;
- children's self-awareness of their triggers and ability to prevent themselves becoming dysregulated has improved.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

- This study demonstrates the impact of supporting SR, in children's wellbeing, behaviour and learning
- Improved educational experience of all children, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those who have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Aligns to the new Birth to Five Matters guidance.

**Keywords:** self-regulation, co-regulation, dysregulation, EYFS, policy and practice

17/2/2021, 9.30 – 11.00, Symposium 3: Pedagogy

## **WHAT DO YOUNG CHILDREN HAVE TO SAY? RECOGNISING THEIR VOICES, WISDOM, AGENCY AND NEED FOR COMPANIONSHIP DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC**

**CHRIS PASCAL AND TONY BERTRAM**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), UK

### **Research aims**

This is a trans-national, qualitative, real world study exploring how practitioners in England, Scotland and New Zealand have used Froebelian approaches to storytelling in their pedagogy to encourage young children to express and explore their COVID experiences through their sequenced play narratives.

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

Listening to young children's perspectives is congruent with our sense of an inclusive, democratic society but previous research shows the voices of young children are often excluded from consideration (Eisendottir, 2015, Pascal et al 2020, Lyndon et al, 2020).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The praxeological project (Pascal and Bertram, 2012, Formosinho and Formosinho, 2012) is informed by Freirean (1970) theoretical concepts of empowerment, conscientization, agency and voice; and on Froebelian principles and theory (Bruce et al, 2020)

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

This qualitative, praxeological study (Pascal and Bertram, 2012, Formosinho and Formosinho, 2012) generated 58 child and 22 practitioner narrative play sequences which have been observed, documented, curated and thematically analysed.

### **Ethical considerations**

Informed consent/ongoing assent was secured, and efforts made to be inclusive and respectful of plural perspectives. Contributions were anonymised and confidentiality maintained.

### **Main findings**

Storytelling pedagogy is a powerful strategy for encouraging expression of experience and acknowledging voice. Thematic analysis reveals children expressing a desire to regain daily life and routines; be with friends; have extended time to play; be outdoors; and have authentic information.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Children have powerful narratives about how COVID-19 affected them which deserve serious consideration by practitioners and policymakers. The opportunity to express their lived experiences and felt realities enables them to process these feelings and have greater confidence in participating in community life.

**Keywords:** children's voice, Froebel pedagogy, COVID-19 pandemic, sequenced play narratives, storytelling

17/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 4: 21st Century Education

## **SOS: RESEARCHING UNCOMFORTABLE SPACES: CONCEPTIONS OF POWER, AGENCY, AND PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - PRACTITIONERS AS EXPERTS**

**HELEN LYNDON**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), UK

### **Research aims**

This study utilised pedagogic mediation in three preschool settings in England to develop pedagogy through listening to children.

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

This research follows on from the development of pedagogic mediation in Portugal (Oliviera-Formosinho and Formosinho, 2012) and is inspired to seek participatory pedagogy through listening to children's voices (Clark and Moss, 2011; Edwards et al, 2012).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

This research stems from a socio-cultural tradition and makes use of the Vygotskian concept of mediation to explore the relationship between the researcher and the setting (Vygotsky, 1978). It promotes participatory pedagogy through a raised consciousness (Freire, 1996).

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

It sits within a praxeological paradigm (Pascal and Bertram, 2012) and makes use of ethnographic techniques to build case studies around three settings. Participatory practice enabled the voice of practitioners and children to direct the methods used which included observations, parental engagement, digital imagery, and drawing, both freely and within a framework (Lyndon, 2019).

### **Ethical considerations**

The praxeological paradigm provides a strong sense of ethics in this research which sought to balance potential power dynamics and support pedagogical development through flattened hierarchy. Ethical approval followed both EECERA and BERA guidelines and was provided by University of Wolverhampton.

### **Main findings**

Pedagogic mediation provided an effective vehicle for setting development and supported a participatory pedagogy which utilised children's voice (Lyndon, 2020). Practitioners provided context specific expertise which cannot be underestimated in provoking pedagogic developments.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Pedagogic mediation promotes a problem-posing (Freire, 1996) model of professional development in which practitioners can direct both the direction and pace of change. This flexible approach supports lasting change.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, professional development, power, mediation, child's voice

17/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 4: 21st Century Education

## **SOS: RESEARCHING UNCOMFORTABLE SPACES: CONCEPTIONS OF POWER, AGENCY AND PEDAGOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - DEVELOPING ETHNIC IDENTITY**

**SHARON COLILLES**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) / Birmingham City University, UK

### **Research aims**

This study investigates how play-based pedagogy supports learners mixed ethnic identity within the EYFS.

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

Barron (2014) used sociocultural and funds of knowledge theory to explore how children respond to their cultural and educational worlds. However, complexities between learner and professional agency in participatory experiences influencing identity formation is underexplored.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Bodies of knowledge from Vygotsky, 1978, Rogoff, 2003, Bradbury, 2014 and Corsaro, 2015 provide the theoretical lens of sociocultural theorising to problematise how ethnic identity is experienced and constructed in learner-practitioner interactions.

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

Qualitative collection processes used Bertram and Pascal's Praxeological principles in an EYFS setting to generate data. Phase one used semi-structured interviews with practitioners. Phase two accessed children's voices using participatory experiences associated with empowerment and development of self-efficacy (Freire, 1970).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations emerge when raising issues concerning ethnic grouping, identity, and pedagogical practice. Approaches utilised dialogic conversations to balance power dynamics, and support of pedagogical development arrangements. Engagement with participants followed institutional ethical frameworks.

### **Main findings**

Literature suggests the EYFS is premised on suppositions of valuing inclusivity, however it falls short of making explicit a pedagogical approach that supports practitioners in negotiating the complexity of power and identity. Findings contend parity between professional and learner agency is needed so that mechanisms are established for engaging with the perspectives of children with multiple identities and belongings, rather than practices relating to normalised groupings.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Identity development concepts can enable practitioners to recognise children's 'unique personal identity' and how in interaction processes children are active contributors in their perceptions of an ethnic/raced identity.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, child's voice, power, ethnicity, identity

17/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 4: 21st Century Education

## **SOS: RESEARCHING UNCOMFORTABLE SPACES: CONCEPTIONS OF POWER, AGENCY AND PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTUARY - REFUGEE VOICES**

**DONNA GAYWOOD**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) / Birmingham City University, UK

### **Research aims**

This study is an attempt to understand and tell the post migration stories of four refugee children's experiences of early education.

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

It builds on seven studies where young refugee children are the primary focus: (Kalkman and Clark, 2017; Prior and Niesz, 2013; Wihstutz, 2020; Peleman et al, 2020; Picchio and Mayer, 2019; Strekalova-Hughes and Wang, 2019; El Gemayei, 2019).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

A complex quadratic theoretical lens was developed to be responsive to the sensitive field. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel: 1979); Orientalism (Said: 1978); Social and Cultural Capital (Bourdieu: 1979) and Social Learning Theory (Vygotsky: 1978) were used.

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

This is a qualitative, real world study which employed an emergent hybrid praxeological and polyvocal methodology (Formosinho and Formosinho, 2012; Pascal and Bertram, 2012; Tobin et al:2016). Multimodal methods were used to elicit the child's voice (Clark and Moss, 2011; Edwards et al, 2012).

### **Ethical considerations**

The ECEERA ethical code has been adopted and power sensitive ethical approaches have been developed to remediate the intersectional elements which have reduced the volume of the children's voices.

### **Main findings**

Issues of power, emotion, the perception of refugees and politics have impacted the researcher, the research itself and the micro, meso, exo, and macro contexts of the children's everyday lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Understanding this impact can enable a robust pedagogical response which benefits refugee children and their host peers. By improving staff awareness and developing intercultural skills they will be more equipped to provide welcome and support feelings of belonging.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, refugees, power, lived experiences, child's voice

17/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 4: 21st Century Education

## **A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF INTRODUCING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES TO EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**ANNA COLGAN**, Abingdon and Witney College, UK

### **Research aims**

This research study aimed to ascertain how early-years practitioners respond to the inclusion of social justice content designed to transform their attitudes towards diverse children and the extent to which they are inspired to challenge prejudice and oppression in practice

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

Research has shown that white teachers in particular hold negative and stereotypical attitudes about diverse children and their families (Bhopal & Rhamie, 2014; Fives & Gill, 2014; Robertson et al., 2014). Such views influence teachers to emphasise what diverse children do not know and cannot do, leading to low academic expectations (Fives & Gill, 2014) and the adoption of deficit-based explanations for their lower academic achievement (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014; De Mulder et al., 2014; Thompson et al., 2016)

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

The theoretical orientation for this study draws upon a social justice framework for teacher education and Mezirow's theory of transformative learning (2009)

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

The study adopted a transformative research paradigm. It is an example of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design

### **Ethical considerations**

A consent form and information sheet was provided to all participants. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of participants. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Main findings**

The findings demonstrate that practitioners should be helped to establish a range of socially just teaching practices that will enable them to teach diverse children effectively and develop the confidence, inspiration and, above all, the courage to act for change

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Implications for practitioner-training practice and early childhood H.E. programmes at both foundation-degree and undergraduate levels are discussed

**Keywords:** pedagogy, ethics, impacts

17/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 4: 21st Century Education

## **ORDINARY LIVES; EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES**

**SANDRA MOLE AND EMMA HEWITT**, Pen Green Research, Development and Training Base, UK

### **Research aims**

In summer 2020 we sought initial thoughts, feelings and memories of individuals from across Pen Green Centre of the first lockdown.

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

Pen Green (McKinnon, 2013) often use ethnography to capture lived experiences of families across the community.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Our approach is underpinned by Freire's (1972) philosophy. Rather than seeking one truth, fact-finding, and objectivity/replication were given-up in favour of seeking to understand each participants perspective.

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

Researching within an interpretivist paradigm, we used semi structured interviews via online platforms asking four, open-ended questions, Transcripts were shared with participants before being edited by them. These edited transcripts were analysed by the team

### **Ethical considerations**

Feeling familiar with the demands of ethical research we recruited and treated participants with the utmost regard, conscious that we were interviewing people with whom we did not necessarily have pre-existing relationships. Details of family members, settings or locations were changed.

### **Main findings**

Contained within the ordinary lives of families in extraordinary circumstances are tales of economic instability, difficult employment conditions; the pressures of multi-generational care and working from home; the trauma of physical and emotional disconnection; benefits, and limitations, of having more time at home and the joy of spending time with loved ones. Three predominant themes emerged: Media and Personal Narratives, Family/Love and Place.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

All participants said it felt good to 'tell their story' and we recognised the value of storytelling, an opportunity for individuals to speak their truth, to craft, to embellish and to tell. This revelation inspired us to ensure we facilitate groups for everyone to have this opportunity.

**Keywords:** life of inquiry, authenticity, multiple narratives, real world, parents perspective

17/2/2021, 12.30 – 2.00, Symposium 4: 21st Century Education

## **EXPLORING EARLY YEARS STEM ENGAGEMENT WITH MUSEUM OBJECTS: RADICALISING PRACTICE AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON, UK**

**MARIA SERVETA**, Science Museum Group, UK

### **Research aims**

18-month research aiming to uncover innovative ways for engaging young children (ages 0-8) with STEM related museum objects.

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

Research shows that young children need to connect with objects on multiple levels (Hackett 2020). Many factors influence this: links with children's experiences (Anderson, 2002), agency (Griffin, 2004; Piscitelli 2001), sense-making talk (Munley 2012; Watson 2002), object manipulation and play (Rönkkö 2016; Andre 2017; Piscitelli 2015).

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

A framework drawing upon socio-cultural museum learning (Moussouri et al. 2017), posthuman (Macrae et al. 2018) and material culture theories (Dudley 2014).

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

Qualitative research (Sliverman 2016) using participatory research methods (Clark's 'mosaic approach', 2017): observations, semi-structured interviews, children's photographs, child-led tours in order to position young children as active research participants. Data represent 55 children aged 4-7 and 27 adults. The analysis employed SMG's EY framework and indicators for learning through play (Zosh et al. 2017).

### **Ethical considerations**

Consent forms and information were distributed to schools. Oral consent was obtained from families. Participants were anonymised and could withdraw from the research anytime.

### **Main findings**

Preliminary findings reveal young children engage with objects very broadly: by looking closely, interacting socially, expressing emotions, exploring physically.

Children were curious about a range of objects, especially objects with exposed mechanisms. Children's motivation to explore depended on: familiarity with the object, social interaction with others, object design features (size, shape, colour, etc.) and display.

Engagement barriers included: lack of context for unfamiliar objects, physical accessibility, text-heavy labels.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Implications for how educators can deepen children's engagement during a visit by supporting children's own interests and motivations.

**Keywords:** STEM, early years in museums, object engagement, learning through play

## **COLOR AS A MEANING MAKING TOOL FOR YOUNG EMERGENT BILINGUALS**

**SALLY BROWN**, Georgia Southern University, USA

### **Research aims**

This research investigated the ways multiple groups of five, six, and seven-year-old emergent bilinguals used color to represent their understanding of picture books in paper-based and digital drawings.

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

Arnott (2017) highlights the importance of encouraging experimentation with available resources to find the best fit between modes and materials. Agency is enacted in the sign creation process by uniquely matching signs, modes, and arrangements to realize the meaning. Mavers (2011) couples talk with drawing to fully understand child perspectives.

### **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

Theory originating from the New London Group (1996) led to a new literacy pedagogy, New Literacy Studies (NLS), that views literacy not in the singular sense but as multiliteracies. Young children learn by acquiring knowledge through shared cultural events where learning is mediated through various semiotic tools or a multimodal approach (Kress, 2010).

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

The two qualitative projects included a content analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) of digital and paper-based drawing samples along with discourse analyses (Mayer, 2012).

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical guidelines were applied not only in obtaining parent consent, but also student assent. This allowed students to have a voice in the research process.

### **Main findings**

Regardless of technology or traditional paper-crayon drawing techniques, emergent bilinguals used color to interpret story events. They used color for (a) expressing emotions, (b) showing action, (c) defining reality and fantasy, (d) voicing creativity, and (e) building on cultural norms.

### **Implications for policy or practice**

Providing children with coloring tools enhances the way they express meaning about books. Time and space must be made in the curriculum for drawing as a literacy learning experience.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, children's perspectives, communication language and literacy, creativity, technology and ICT

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