



British Early Childhood Education
Research Association

Evidencing Practice through Professional Inquiry



**Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park
Birmingham**

15th & 16th February 2012



The 2nd BECERA Conference is hosted by:

Centre for Research in Early Childhood

St Thomas Children's Centre

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www.crec.co.uk

BRITISH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (BECERA)

BECERA is a new independent organisation for those early childhood practitioners, researchers and practitioner 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 on-line, 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 hopes to attract sponsorship from several major UK organisations.

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC)

CREC is a charitable organisation established in 2007 and located in the St Thomas Children's Centre, near the centre of Birmingham, in the UK. CREC is dedicated to raising the quality of early childhood and family provision in order to enhance outcomes for children. CREC's central focus, as expressed in its Governing Constitution, is *"to promote and carry out for public benefit, research into issues relevant to early childhood provision and to publish or otherwise disseminate the useful results of such research."* CREC achieves this objective by specialising in early childhood research which has relevant and meaningful outcomes for practice and policy. Some of its research is transformed in to development programmes by its sister organisation Amber Publications and Training (APT). These programmes include:

- Effective Early Learning (EEL, 3-6 years)
- Baby Effective Early Learning (BEEL, birth to 3 years)
- Accounting Early for Life Long Learning (AcE, assessing and supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy from birth to 5 years)
- Opening Windows (creating open and equitable dialogues with parents)
- Leadership & Management in Early Childhood Settings

CREC also delivers undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees through its close affiliations with three Midlands universities, the University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University. It is also a strategic partner with the City of Birmingham's Children and Young People's Directorate.

CREC has a strong reputation for undertaking reviews, reports, evaluations and consultancy with central government and many UK local authorities, NGOs and overseas countries. It has also made a significant contribution to Government policy for early childhood in England through its contributions to many national committees and professional associations.

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WELCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the second BECERA Conference. In one year previous delegates tell us that BECERA has become a special place for those who are passionate about developing their knowledge and understanding about early childhood and care and who wish to collaborate in sharing ideas, thinking and dialogue.

This second conference again foregrounds the 'real world' of research (Robson, 2002) undertaken by practitioners as participant observers in their own settings. It aims to make research meaningful and relevant to practice and to capture the perspectives and knowledge of professionals in co-constructing our understanding of the quality of experience for families and young children. Reflective practitioners have wide-ranging knowledge and BECERA provides a forum where this can be presented and held for systematic peer-review and examined for its transferability and relevance to others.

BECERA offers you a wonderful opportunity to network and become part of a new sector wide 'community of learners' aiming to inform and enhance the quality of service to children and families. We are hoping that the conference will provide delegates with the confidence and skills to become evidence based practitioners who are able to show the impact and outcomes of their work. The knowledge we generate, including all presentation abstracts, will be posted on a new online database on the BECERA website for wider dissemination. Practice based inquiry has become increasingly important to policy makers and during this conference you will be able to explore it creatively, curiously and companionably.

We at BECERA believe that shared learning can be fun and that we learn most when we are comfortable and engaged. We hope this conference will challenge you, inspire you and support you both personally and professionally.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Bertram & Chris Pascal

CREC Directors

CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), Birmingham, UK

Professor Chris Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), Birmingham, UK

LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham

Professor Christine Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham

MAJOR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)
& Amber Publications & Training Ltd (APT)
www.crec.co.uk



KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Day 1: Wednesday, 15th February 2012

09:30 - 11:00 Keynote I

Cinema

'Praxeological Research within a Learning Community: Developing Evidence Based Practice'

Professor Chris Pascal, Professor Tony Bertram & colleagues from the CREC Learning Circle

This keynote will challenge traditional keynote presentational formats, aiming to 'come down from the balcony and onto the dancefloor'. It will be presented by a community of learners (Wenger, 2008) based at CREC and aims to make explicit the principles of praxeological research and foreground the importance and value of Practice Based Research in the UK. It will also challenge the ownership of the term 'evidence based' by positivist, RCT design research studies and make a claim for practice based research to have an equal claim to this status. The presentation will model and exemplify the development of Practitioner Researchers with a clear focus on developing evidence based practice.

Practice based research has the key intention of advancing practice through a process that is more than trying out new ideas or showing that something works but rather looks systematically into questions of 'why' or 'how'. The validity of this kind of research is enhanced because it is grounded in real life situations and is based on a strong and robust ethical code of action. Practice based research is often carried out by people involved in the situation, not outsider observers, and Practitioner Researchers might include anyone is involved in the service being studied eg professionals, administrators, officers, leaders, students.

This presentation sets out some characteristics and principles of practitioner research and the contribution it can make to our professional and scholarly knowledge base. Through the modelling of a Learning Community generating robust and ethically secure research evidence, it will make a case that, within a developing climate of intense expectations, all practice should be 'evidenced' and that all practitioners should be engaged in systematic professional inquiry about the processes, outcomes and impact of their work. It is hoped that the ideas and issues set out by this active, committed and passionate community of learners will set the agenda for an intense dialogue during the conference about how knowledge generation and knowledge transfer in early childhood research can be rigorous, participatory, democratic and ethically sound.

Keywords: *Praxeology, Practice Based Research, Evidence Based Paradigms, Communities of Practice*

Day 2: Thursday, 16th February 2012

09:30 - 10:30 Keynote II

Cinema

‘Praxiological research for change in early childhood contexts and practices’

Professor Júlia Formosinho & Professor João Formosinho

The power of action-research as a strategy for change has been largely acknowledged (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Noffke & Somekh, 2010).

Within the action-research family it is possible to meet different paths according to different theoretical foundations which mean different aims, focuses and processes.

This keynote will begin reflecting on both the importance of change and the importance of developing the knowledge about the focus of change.

Then it will present the two family branches of action research, focusing on praxiological research path.

It will describe the research development procedures: the choice of a topic, the development of collaborative team, the creation of a baseline data, the documentation of the processes of change, the analysis of its impact.

The fusion of action and research in praxiological research should be made also through the fusion of ethics and rigour in its development.

The keynote will end with the acknowledgement of the need to make visible the lessons learned in terms of the developments of practical professional knowledge. This should be followed by sharing these lessons and disseminating these developments¹.

¹ As an illustration of praxiological research project see Oliveira-Formosinho, J. (2009). Togetherness and play

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOST

The host of the second BECERA Conference is the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (<http://www.crec.co.uk>).

REGISTRATION DETAILS

The conference fee for participants includes: admission to the conference, documentation, coffee breaks and lunches on 15th & 16th February 2012.

COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCHESES

Tea, coffee and lunches are served at the Midlands Arts Centre (**mac**) Arena Bar or the Performance Studio (1st floor).

During the last 5 minutes of your break, please move to the room in which your chosen symposium is located. Coffee/Tea will be served in disposables so you can take it with you.

CONFERENCE DINNER

For those who registered and prepaid for the conference dinner there will be a pick up coach leaving the **mac** car park at 18.15. If you are going directly, the venue is 'The Jam House' in St Paul's Square in Birmingham (0121 200 3030).

INFORMATION DESK

The 'Registration Desk'/'Help Desk' will be located in the foyer of the mac. After 10 am on both days queries should be directed to the CREC stand that is located in the Performance Studio.

MESSAGES

There will be a messages board near the main CREC stand where you can put your messages to participants.

STAFF ASSISTANCE

The CREC team will be happy to provide assistance with practical matters during the conference. The team will be stationed around the venue during the conference and there will always be one member of the team at the CREC stand. CREC phone number is 0121 4640020.

NOTE FOR PRESENTERS

Each symposium room is equipped with a PC and a data projector. We recommend you save your presentations as a Microsoft PowerPoint document, Office 2003 version to avoid any compatibility issues. We also recommend that you locate your symposium room in advance and arrive at your symposium room at least 15 minutes prior to your symposium start time in order to load your presentation and ensure a prompt start. All PCs are fitted with USB drives and we recommend you load your presentation on a USB memory stick (also known as a 'pen drive', or a 'flash drive'). We hope you will have dialogue with your symposium co-presenters and Chair before the Conference by email or a social network.

NOTE FOR CHAIRS

Please be present in your symposium room at least 15 minutes prior to your session. It is important that the sessions stay on schedule so that individuals who want to listen to a specific talk may do so, and each presenter gets an equal opportunity to present their work. If a presentation is cancelled you may either convene a general discussion or instead call a recess.

SYMPOSIUM ROOMS

Symposiums will take place across 4 rooms. Depending on which room your intended symposium is in, it may take up to 2 minutes to walk between rooms. We recommend you make your way to the symposium rooms in advance to make sure you get there in good time and that you can find a seat.

POSTERS

The following time has been allocated for poster sessions in the conference programme: Thursday, 16th February 2012 15:00 – 15:30. At registration, please let the organisers know that you're a poster presenter so you can be shown where to place your poster. Poster presenters are asked to be at their display during the entire Poster Presentation session. Please note that the conference host only provides the display space and it is your task to bring and display the title of your poster and any additional information relating to your presentation. You should also ensure that all your materials are removed at the end of the conference.

CONFERENCE BADGES

Your personal badge is your entry ticket to all keynotes, symposia, lunch, refreshments and workshops. We ask that you wear your badge at all times whilst at the venue.

TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE CONFERENCE VENUE

The mac is located in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, opposite the County Cricket Ground on Edgbaston Road, off Pershore Road (A441) and Bristol Road. (A38). The **mac** is easily accessible using all the major city road routes and is served by a number of buses from Birmingham City Centre including 1, 35, 45, 47, 62 and 63.

For those who wish to call a taxi we can recommend the following local firms:

TOA taxis: 0121 427 8888

Castle Cars: 0121 472 2222

Falcon Cars: 0121 603 6666

LIABILITY INSURANCE

The conference cannot accept any liability for personal injuries or for loss or damage to property belonging to the delegates, either during, or as a result of the meeting. Please check the validity of your own personal insurance before travelling.

2nd BECERA Conference

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00

	Symposium Title	Room
I/A	Supporting Creative Development	Pinsent Masons Room 2
I/B	Reflecting on Practice with Young Children	Deloitte
I/C	Leadership & Mentoring	Pinsent Masons Room 1
I/D	Targeted or Universal Services?	Music Room 1

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30

	Symposium Title	Room
II/A	Early Years Professionals: Their Development and their Impact on Practice	Pinsent Masons Room 2
II/B	Inclusive Practice and Early Development	Deloitte
II/C	Pedagogical Documentation and Display	Pinsent Masons Room 1
II/D	Gender and the Early Years Workforce	Music Room 1

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET III: 16:00 – 17:30

	Symposium Title	Room
III/A	Workforce Training: EYPS and Foundation Degrees	Pinsent Masons Room 2
III/B	Continuing Professional Development: New Approaches & Understandings	Deloitte
III/C	Developing Pedagogy with Babies	Pinsent Masons Room 1
III/D	Developing Pedagogy for the Outdoors	Music Room 1

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET IV: 11:00 – 12:30

Symposium Title	Room
IV/A Working with Parents: Challenges and Opportunities	Pinsent Masons Room 2
IV/B Developing Intercultural Understandings	Deloitte
IV/C Evidencing Effective Practice	Pinsent Masons Room 1
IV/D Developing Reflective EYFS Professional Practice	Music Room 1

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET V: 13:30 – 15:00

Symposium Title	Room
V/A Comparative Studies of Early Years Curriculum and Pedagogy	Pinsent Masons Room 2
V/B Practitioner Research and Collaborative Working	Deloitte
V/C Reflective Professional Development and Emotional Wellbeing	Pinsent Masons Room 1
V/D School Readiness and Transitions	Music Room 1

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00

SYMPOSIUM I/A **SUPPORTING CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC

Grounding Reception

PATRICIA AUSTIN, Queens Park Academy Early Years, East of England

Making Waves: A Study of Affect Attunement in Young Children's Musical Play

MAUREEN BROOKSON, UEA, East of England

Children Under Five and New Technologies: Implications for Early Years Pedagogy

IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, The University of Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber

SYMPOSIUM I/B **TARGETED OR UNIVERSAL SERVICES?**

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: CAROLINE SHARP, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

Targeting the Most Needy - Research into Children's Centres and Local Authorities

PIPPA LORD & CAROLINE SHARP, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

Do Nurseries Designed to Ensure a Social Mix of Children Ensure Better Outcomes for All?

JUNE O'SULLIVAN, London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

SYMPOSIUM I/C
LEADERSHIP & MENTORING

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: MICHAEL GASPER, Starfish Enterprise, East Midlands

An Investigation of Western Perspectives of Effective Leadership in Chinese Early Childhood Education

XIAOHUA CHEN, The University of Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber

Mentoring: a Mutual Process

MICHAEL GASPER, Starfish Enterprise, East Midlands

The Role of Mentoring in Early Years

MARION BRENNAN, Early Childhood Ireland

SYMPOSIUM I/D
REFLECTING ON PRACTICE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: NICOLA SMITH, CREC

Environments for Listening

KAREN WICKETT, Plymouth University, South West England

Developing a Learning Community for Practitioners Working with Babies

JAN GEORGESON, Plymouth University, South West England

No Laughing Matter: An Exploration of the Significance of Children's Humour

LAURA TALLANT, University of East Anglia, East of England

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30

SYMPOSIUM II/A

EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS: THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR IMPACT ON PRACTICE

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, University of Wolverhampton

Assessing the Impact of EYPS: Exploring the Methodology of a Large-scale National Evaluation

SANDRA MATHERS, ARJETTE KAREMAKER, HELEN RANNS, University of Oxford (Mathers, Karemaker), NatCen (Ranns), South East England

Using Case Studies to Evaluate the Impact of Early Years Professional Status on Practice.

MARK HADFIELD, MARTIN NEEDHAM & TIM WALLER, University of Wolverhampton (Hadfield, Needham), Anglia Ruskin University (Waller)

SYMPOSIUM II/B

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: CATH ARNOLD, Pen Green Research, Development & Training Base & Leadership Centre, East Midlands

Coordination Disorders in the Early Years

MARY CHAMBERS, University of Leeds, Yorkshire and the Humber

A Framework for Action: Supporting Inclusive Practice in the Early Years

EUCHARIA MCCARTHY AND MARY MOLONEY, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

SYMPOSIUM II/C
PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION AND DISPLAY

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JAN DUBIEL, Early Excellence, Yorkshire and the Humber

The Role of Visual Displays in Early Years

OLAMIDE PHILLIPS, University of Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber

Pedagogical Documentation: A Dialogue

PAULETTE LUFF, Anglia Ruskin University, South East England

SYMPOSIUM II/D
GENDER AND THE EARLY YEARS WORKFORCE

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: PAOLA PEDRELLI, CREC, WEST MIDLANDS

Merging Motives: Childcare and Childcare Work

HAZEL WRIGHT, Anglia Ruskin University, East of England

Men In Childcare: Reality V Rhethoric

DAVID STEVENS, London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

WORKSHOP:

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND BEYOND

Room: Cinema

CAROLINE SHARP and **PIPPA LORD**, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET III: 16:00 – 17:30

SYMPOSIUM III/A

WORKFORCE TRAINING: EYPS AND FOUNDATION DEGREES

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Individual and Collective Perspectives on Early Years Professional Status Converged: A Mixed Methods Study

EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Can completing the Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies Ensure Reflective Practice: A Case Study

MINE CONKBAYIR, London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

SYMPOSIUM III/B

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NEW APPROACHES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY University of Northampton, East Midlands

What Counts as CPD in Early Years in England? An Analysis of Confusion

DENISE HEVEY, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Webinars : An Innovative Pedagogical Approach to Workforce Development (Online, Live and Fully Interactive)

SANDY EDWARDS, Staffordshire County Council, Learning and Development Arm, West Midlands

SYMPOSIUM III/C
DEVELOPING PEDAGOGY WITH BABIES

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JAN DUBIEL, Early Excellence, Yorkshire and the Humber

Valuing, Engaging and Empowering; Developing the Professional Confidence of Practitioners Working with Children Aged Birth - 3

JAN DUBIEL, Early Excellence, Yorkshire and the Humber

Symbolic Gesturing: How Practitioners' Narratives within Research can inform Practice

AMANDA NORMAN, Roehampton University, Greater London

SYMPOSIUM III/D
DEVELOPING PEDAGOGY AND THE OUTDOORS

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: TIM WALLER, Anglia Ruskin University

Outside All Day, Every Day: Investigating the Desirability and Feasibility of Providing an Outdoor Nursery in England with Forest School Trained Nursery Managers

ANN WHITEHOUSE, Staffordshire University, West Midlands

Learning Inside and Outside: An Exchange of Early Years international Practitioners' Views

SARAH MACQUARRIE, Centre for Rural Childhood, Scotland

WORKSHOP:

A ROUGH GUIDE TO PROJECT RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND THE HUMAN SCIENCES

Room: Cinema

PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC, West Midlands

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET IV: 11:00 – 12:30

SYMPOSIUM IV/A

WORKING WITH PARENTS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: NICOLA SMITH, CREC, West Midlands

Generating Knowledge Through the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP)

BETH FAGAN, National College of Ireland, Ireland

Creating a Space for Parents' Voices. Methodology in a Practitioner Research Project

NICOLA SMITH, CREC, West Midlands

SYMPOSIUM IV/B

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, Wolverhampton University, West Midlands

What are the Barriers Related to Language and Culture that Japanese Immigrant Mothers Face in Making Decisions about Early Education?

CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM, The Ohio State University, USA

What Does Cultural Capital Mean?

GARY SIMPSON, The London Early Years Foundation, South East England

SYMPOSIUM IV/C

EVIDENCING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: MARGY WHALLEY, Pen Green Research, Development & Training Base & Leadership Centre, East Midlands

'How Did We Make a Difference'? A Tracer Study Engaging with Children and Families Who Used our Centre 6-10 Years ago

MARGY WHALLEY, CATH ARNOLD, SALLY PEERLESS, PENNY LAWRENCE, Pen Green Research, Development & Training Base & Leadership Centre, East Midlands

Childminding Practice in England: Key Elements of Effective Practice for Children Under Age of Five

HELENA JELICIC, BECKY FAUTH, SUE OWEN, JOANNA LEA, NATASHA WILLMOTT, National Children's Bureau, Greater London

SYMPOSIUM IV/D

DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE EYFS PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: MICHAEL REED, University Worcester, West Midlands

Early Years' Pedagogy and 'Spaces' for Ethnography

LINDA SHAW, Staffordshire Council Learning and Development Arm, West Midlands

Quality Improvement: A Classification of Strategies used by Early Years Practitioners: Initial Findings and Discussion.

MICHAEL REED AND ROSIE WALKER, University Worcester, West Midlands

WORKSHOP:

LIVERPOOL NURSERY NUTRITION PROGRAMME – A SURVEY OF FOOD PROVISION IN NURSERIES AND A PROGRAMME OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT IN NUTRITION

Room: Cinema

JULIE MACKLIN, HM Partnerships, Liverpool

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET V: 13:30 – 15:00

SYMPOSIUM V/A
COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY University of Northampton, East Midlands

Exploring Approaches to Early Years Practice in Hungary: A Comparative Study

ELEONORA TESZENYI & GILLIAN SYKES, The University of Northampton, East Midlands

Comparison of Early Years Education between England and Saudi Arabia Focusing on Curriculum

IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU & LUBNA ALSHANQITI, University of Hull, East of England

From practice to practitioner research: Developing a practitioner research approach to early childhood education

CARMEL BRENNAN, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

SYMPOSIUM V/B
PRACTITIONER RESEARCH AND COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: WENDY MESSENGER, University of Worcester, West Midlands

The Struggle of Analysis in Practitioner - Based Research

WENDY MESSENGER, University of Worcester, West Midlands

Using Community Action Research to Improve Early Mathematical Outcomes

JOSEPHINE BLEACH, National College of Ireland, Ireland

SYMPOSIUM V/C**REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

Room:Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JUNE O'SULLIVAN London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

The Facilitators View of Addressing Children's Emotional Well-being through the Professional Development of Practitioners: The Emotional Well Being, Strong Teams Project

JULIA MANNING-MORTON, DILYS WILSON, London Metropolitan University, Middlesex Univesity, Greater London

The Participants View of Addressing Children's Emotional Well-being in Professional Development: The Emotional Well Being, Strong Teams Project

JO VICKERS - WEAVERS FIELDS COMMUNITY NURSERY AND SAJIDA MALIK-BARKANTINE NURSERY, EYNTH-Weavers Fields Community Nursery, Greater London

SYMPOSIUM V/D**SCHOOL READINESS AND TRANSITIONS**

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: COLETTE GRAY, Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Transitions: Through the Eyes of a Child

COLETTE GRAY, Stranmillis University College: A College of The Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Pre-school: A Scaled Down Version of School: The Impact of School Readiness on Children's Agency within Early Childhood Care and Education Settings

MARY MOLONEY, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, Ireland

POSTER PRESENTATIONS Q & A

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012

15:00 - 15:30 PERFORMANCE STUDIO

Phonics or Fun?

HELEN HORTON, University of Sunderland, North East England

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00

SYMPOSIUM I/A
SUPPORTING CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC

Grounding Reception

PATRICIA AUSTIN, Queens Park Academy Early Years, East of England

Research aims & questions:

To investigate: how we can foster the opportunities for creativity in an outdoor area for reception aged children; what we mean by creativity outdoors; How it is possible to include elements of forest school practice into an on-site outdoor area.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

An interest in the forest school approach (Knight, 2009 and Louv, 2005) originally lay at the centre of the study and it soon became apparent that what the focus was becoming was based on possibility thinking and creating a framework for that to flourish (Craft, 2007).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This was a small-scale project funded through Creative Partners which enabled the setting to benefit from working with an artist-practitioner - in discussion with practitioners and children leading to, firstly more emphasis on play outside and, secondly, opening the space for the children both physically and creatively.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

An action research project that took place over a short period from February to June 2011. The artist visited regularly, worked with both staff and children and informal weekly reviews were undertaken to see how the work was progressing.

Ethical considerations:

Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity in accordance with the setting's policy.

Main findings or discussion:

Discussion by staff around what we meant by creativity meant development of a shared understanding in working outside with children.

Implications, practice or policy:

More awareness within the unit on the opportunities for possibility thinking within outdoor play, improved staff confidence - both practically and in their interactions. Shared thinking and some experiences with other staff and wider early years community. Stimulus for PhD research application.

Keywords: *Action Research, Outdoor Play, Creativity*

Making Waves: A Study of Affect Attunement in Young Children's Musical Play

MAUREEN BROOKSON, UEA, East of England

Research aims & questions:

This study explored an area of music play with nursery-aged children, related to the concept of affect attunement, and in particular, vitality affect (Stern 1998). The research was part of a project to engage practitioners in a children's centre into tuning into their children musically.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Internationally presented research on children's disposition to play music.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Framing the research within the nursery was the Effective Provision of Effective Practice Report (EPPE 1997-2003) which raised many issues related to quality in early years' provision, key amongst them the concept of sustained shared thinking in order to build firm relationships which support and develop children's thinking skills. Daniel Stern's work informed the research.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

This study was ethnographic, qualitative, interpretive and reflexive. The methods used to gain data consisted of a baseline questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, observations and keeping reflective journals.

Ethical considerations:

The children's parents and practitioners engaged in this research were all able to give informed consent.

Main findings or discussion:

There were rich moments of opportunity for the musician and practitioners to engage in sustained shared thinking, but the moments of affect attunement for the most part occurred between musician and child. The dyad of researcher/musician had an impact on the study which created a ripple effect with the practitioners who responded more musically to the children.

Implications, practice or policy:

There is more work to be done in exploring the concepts of mirroring, echoing and empathy, possibly through abstract dance and music to explore the expressiveness of vitality affects and how this can be successfully translated into effective practice

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Personal social and emotional development, Practice based inquiry*

Children Under Five and New Technologies: Implications for Early Years Pedagogy
IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, The University of Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber**Research aims & questions:**

This research project was based in four European countries. A mixed method approach was employed to investigate what types of technologies children under five use. Parents of children under five completed a questionnaire. From the analysis of the questionnaires, a series of interviews with focus groups of parents and focus groups of children followed. The main aim was to investigate what technologies children under five use.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Kalantzis, M., and Cope., B., (2008) *New learning: Elements of a Science Education*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Early years' pedagogy should rethink learning under key concepts of engagement; Transition/transformation; Collaboration; Relationships; Exploration; and Conventional versus Unconventional.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Mixed methods were used.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical clearance by my university was obtained.

Main findings or discussion:

The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches. Learning comes from a constant dialogue between teachers and students but technology plays a crucial role. Children and teachers are jointly responsible for the learning process. Learning does not happen in isolation and it does not happen in the barriers of a building (school/classroom/ setting) but the virtual learning environment that children are exposed can become a platform for learning.

Implications, practice or policy:

Support for a culture of innovation where risk taking is encouraged. Provide sensitive contexts to see beyond, being flexible and creative, and be conscious that practice is constantly constructed and being able to be responsible. Encourage problem posing and thinking through duality of production and conversation, sharing and communication of ideas using multimodal methods and the use of new technologies.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Impacts, Children's perspectives, Learning environment, Technology and ICT*

SYMPOSIUM I/B**TARGETED OR UNIVERSAL SERVICES?**

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: CAROLINE SHARP, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

Targeting the Most needy - Research into Children's Centres and Local Authorities

PIPPA LORD & CAROLINE SHARP, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

Research aims & questions:

The main purpose of the project was to investigate the different approaches which LAs and early years settings can take to targeting support on the neediest families. It aimed to; summarise findings from policy and practice on needs identification in early childhood; identify what information LAs and children's centres currently have available to define, assess and prioritise need.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Relates to research into Sure Start (e.g. Anning, 2007), early intervention and risk (e.g. Dodds 2009).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Grounded theory, realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), ecological model (Belsky, 1980)

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Rapid review of policy and research, case studies in six LAs, including interviews with LA and CC staff and parents.

Ethical considerations:

Potentially sensitive issue of 'needy families'. All interviewees given full information about the project (voluntary participation). Draft report sections sent to participants for verification. Client requested that LAs are named.

Main findings or discussion:

Staff preferred to think of their work as supporting the needs of children, parents and families, rather than in terms of targeting groups. They argued for offering services to all as a way of identifying hidden needs and avoiding stigmatising families. CCs used a range of data for planning, but some experienced barriers in accessing key data.

Implications, practice or policy:

The team devised a 'concept map' based on the literature, which was reviewed by research participants. The map aims to help practitioners consider the issues involved in targeting. The research offers examples of good practice and highlights workforce capacity and development needs.

Keywords: *Data gathering, Early Childhood Professionalism, Integrated Services, Leadership*

Do Nurseries Designed to Ensure a Social Mix of Children Ensure Better Outcomes for All?

JUNE O'SULLIVAN, London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

Despite a range of universal and targeted policy initiatives, data continues to show that children from disadvantaged families and neighbourhoods in the UK continue to receive poorer quality ECE contributing to poorer educational outcomes. (Ofsted 2009/10).

This paper examines existing international research on the benefits of ECE models and policy decisions designed to include a social mix of children leading to better outcomes for all children but particularly those children from disadvantaged and poorer backgrounds.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The project draws on a range of research including Jenson (2009), Bourdieu (1990), DECET and Feinstein (2008).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The paper operates within the principles of OECD (2006) requesting that policy makers and pedagogues together create early childhood systems which respect diversity and enhance access to learning to support all children prepare for the future.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The main method will be an evaluation of the secondary research of current UK and international research which has addressed the issue.

Ethical considerations:

Ghate (2001) quoted in Farrell (2005) defines the ethical issues of this research in terms of trust, collaboration and sharing information within the greater challenge of marrying design requirements to feasibility issues especially when balancing practice.

Main findings or discussion:

Sufficient evidence to support the assertion that planning services to include a social mix of children is beneficial for all children and leads to better parental engagement and social capital.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research will be used to examine whether policy makers need to support social enterprise childcare models based on social mix as one means of addressing ECE for disadvantaged children.

Keywords: *Practice based inquiry, Knowledge, Outcomes, Leadership*

**SYMPOSIUM I/C
LEADERSHIP & MENTORING**

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: MICHAEL GASPER, Starfish Enterprise, East Midlands

An Investigation of Western Perspectives of Effective Leadership in Chinese Early Childhood Education

XIAOHUA CHEN, The University of Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber

Research aims & questions:

An investigation of the applicability of Western leadership theory to the Chinese education system 2. An investigation of the characteristics of effective leadership in China.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Theories of effective leadership in organisations and education systems in Western countries were studied with particular references to the work of Bennet et al 2002, Moyles 2006 and Rodd 1998.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Effective leadership in early childhood education in Western countries was examined with a particular focus on democratic and authoritarian leadership. The Chinese context was examined and it was found that leadership in China tends to be authoritarian rather than democratic. It was also found that leadership awareness is lacking in Chinese education systems. Xiang 2007 claims teachers are expected to obey the leader unconditionally.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Mixed methods approach to construct a Case study based in Beilei Kindergarten in China.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical approval from my institution was given.

Main findings or discussion:

The main results indicate: 1. leadership theory is a mixture of Western leadership theories on ECE and traditional Chinese leadership theories 2. the characteristics of effective leadership are similar to those in Western countries 3. communication skills are more typically found in the research site as compare with the western counties 4. there is lack or limited emphasis on vision 5. leadership in China is influenced by the paternalistic leadership and the authoritarianism of Confucianism.

Implications, practice or policy:

The Chinese government should formulate relevant policy to encourage projects that investigate leadership in ECE as well as to clarify the characteristics of effective leadership. Policy regarding investment in the private sector needs to be formulated to promote effective leadership.

Keywords: *Data gathering ,Authenticity, Case study, Knowledge,Leadership*

Mentoring: a Mutual Process

MICHAEL GASPER, Starfish Enterprise, East Midlands

Research aims & questions:

An exploration of the process and effects of mentoring as experienced by participants on the National Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) and their mentors. The research focused on perceived gains and new understandings from the reflective process and interaction.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This research builds on previous research conducted by Thorpe and Gasper (2003) and Watling and Gasper (2010). The focus on mutuality is a new dimension.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research is essentially qualitative and draws on principles of Action Research, as a small scale intervention in the real world, recognising the value of the personal understanding of those engaged in the exploration of 'what do mentees and mentors gain?'

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The research is grounded in the interpretive paradigm. It was conducted by questionnaire. The questions for participants and mentors focused on similar areas although phrased slightly differently for each.

Ethical considerations:

The research took account of the British Education Research Association code of practice. Participants and mentors were invited to respond and had the option of not doing so. Anonymity was offered but the majority chose to provide their names.

Main findings or discussion:

The shared nature of the process was revealed showing a high level of commonality between the responses. Key learning and new understandings were closely parallel and the mutual benefits were clearly identified. Although there was an opportunity for negative aspects to be identified, none were.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research reinforces the importance of trust and the value of active listening and critical incident analysis in deepening reflection.

Keywords: *Personal social and emotional development, Impacts, Practice based inquiry*

The Role of Mentoring in Early Years
MARION BRENNAN, Early Childhood Ireland

Research aims and questions:

To explore how onsite mentoring supports professional learning in early year's services. Early Childhood Care and Education in Ireland has experienced constant change. Relentless policy documents push down on service providers and the introduction of the free preschool year ECCE scheme has increased demands for accountability on governance, quality and professionalism. In addition the Workforce Development Plan (2010) advocates the need for mentoring and guidance support for learners. Levels of accredited training have increased over the last ten years yet evidence suggests that practitioners still struggle with transfer of learning into practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This study draws on previous personal research into the topic and on the work of Uttley and Horn 2008, and Rodd 2006.

Paradigm, Methodology & methods

This small scale qualitative study, using semi structured interviews and focus group discussions, gathers and analyses the thoughts and reflections of practitioners and mentors.

Ethical considerations:

Anonymity of practitioners and mentors is protected.

Main findings or discussion:

Analysis of data suggests that despite participating in accredited training practitioners value the more intimate encounter with the mentor on site. From the mentor's perspective the opportunity to validate good practice and provide encouragement was positive.

Implications, Policy or Practice:

This study has implications at resource level for Early Childhood Ireland re time and intensity of the work. While at policy level mentoring is seen as an important strategy for supporting early year's practitioners (Siolta 2006, Aistear 2009, Workforce Development Plan, 2010) it is time to see commitment and resources put in place to implement the aforementioned policies.

Keywords: *Mentoring, Professional Learning, Practitioner/Practice*

SYMPOSIUM I/D

REFLECTING ON PRACTICE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: NICOLA SMITH, CREC

Environments for Listening

KAREN WICKETT, Plymouth University, South West England

Research aims & questions:

The research aimed to investigate how nursery practitioners listened to the youngest children, when the pedagogical spaces were adapted, in three Children's Centres.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The environments provided and interactions between practitioners and young children are crucial for young children's development. (Goouch & Powell, 2010; Goldschmidt & Jackson, 1994)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

It is widely recognised that babies and young children are effective communicators and active participants in the co-constructing of new knowledge (Bleakley, 2006, Eun, 2010). Therefore practitioners need to find ways of listening to the child's voice when developing provision for them (UN 1989).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Under 3s key-persons, teachers and child-care managers were invited to take part in interviews, sharing their experiences of providing spaces/provision and being/working with babies and toddlers. These were supplemented with photographic evidence of the pedagogical environments. Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing were used to analyse the data.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical approval was granted by Plymouth University's ethics committee. It was the intention of the researchers to maintain confidentiality. Although all transcripts were anonymised it was explained, internally participants could identify each other.

Main findings or discussion:

Changes to the environment led to changes in practitioner's beliefs and understanding of the child, learning and their role, which influenced how they listened to the children. The process of change was unique to each setting. Bernstein's analytical tools successfully illuminated the structures within settings that strengthened/weakened the opportunities to actively listen to the children.

Implications, practice or policy:

Practitioners can benefit from reflecting if the environment enables them to listen to young children.

Keywords: *Birth to Three, Learning Environment*

Developing a Learning Community for Practitioners Working with Babies

JAN GEORGESON, Plymouth University, South West England

Research aims & questions:

We aimed to investigate the development of a learning community using Developmental Workshops for practitioners who work with the youngest children in three settings.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Practitioners who are working with babies need recognition of their expertise, and dedicated spaces to articulate their knowledge in-practice and generate new ideas to share with colleagues, because of the relatively low status which they often occupy (Goouch and Powell, 2010; Georgeson and Wickett, 2012).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Practitioners learn about practice through participation (Lave and Wenger, 1998) but in day nurseries, the low status of baby work can mean that knowledge-from-practice about working with babies is less often the focus of pedagogical discussions, which limits professional development.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Discussions were stimulated by adapting processes used in Developmental Workshop Research (DWR), a structured intervention with origins in Activity Theory, in which ethnographic evidence is shared with participants to reveal tensions within the systems in which they work, and so enable the transformation of these systems (Engestrom, 2005). Carefully selected quotations, photographs and extracts from documentation are reflected back to practitioners to explore concerns and contradictions that emerge from the participants' own data collection during focused visits to each others' settings.

Ethical considerations:

We have established a safe space for the exchange of ideas with clear procedures for agreeing what can be shared outside the workshops, to retain confidentiality but acknowledge contributions as appropriate.

Main findings or discussion:

Early findings suggest that the workshops do indeed encourage participants to share and reflect on data.

Implications, practice or policy:

This process therefore supports the creation of new knowledge and new ways of working together.

Keywords: *Data Gathering ,Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Methods, Birth to Three*

No Laughing Matter: An Exploration of the Significance of Children's Humour

LAURA TALLANT, University of East Anglia, East of England

Research aims & questions:

How is humour manifested in children's experiences at home and in early year's settings? How do early years practitioners understand children's humour? How significant is children's humour, and adults understanding of it, when considering its role in effective early years practice?

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The research formed part of an MA in Early Childhood Studies.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The study was framed within a number of theories, the key ones being those of McGhee (1989) concerning the development of children's humour and the interconnectedness of children's humour and incongruity. Research into types of humour by Groch (1974) was also drawn upon to facilitate the development of a quantitative data record. Conceptually, the study was concerned with the nature and significance of children's humour, particularly when considering it as playing an integral role in facilitating children's development.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The study employed an Interpretive paradigm and used interviews, child consultations and observations. Data grounded theory was employed to code the data which generated a number of themes.

Ethical considerations:

All of the necessary permissions from adult participants and parents of the children involved were gained. All names and identifying features within the study were anonymised.

Main findings or discussion:

The study's overarching conclusions were that early years practitioners should be made aware of the developmental significance of young children's humour, and that incongruity underpins all children's humour.

Implications, practice or policy:

The study suggested that more needs to be done to raise awareness of the significant role that humour plays in children's development and how practitioners can facilitate it.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Play, Children's perspectives, Creativity, Parents perspectives*

WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30

SYMPOSIUM II/A

EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS: THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR IMPACT ON PRACTICE

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, University of Wolverhampton

Assessing the Impact of EYPS: Exploring the Methodology of a Large-scale National Evaluation

SANDRA MATHERS, ARJETTE KAREMAKER, HELEN RANNS, University of Oxford (Mathers, Karemaker), NatCen (Ranns), South East England

Research aims & questions:

This large-scale national study assessed the impact of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) on the quality of early year's provision. This paper explores both key findings and methodology, with the aim of identifying common research challenges and possible applications to practice-based research.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The study builds on other national evaluations carried out by the authors and colleagues, exploring the impact of government policies on quality or child outcomes (e.g. Mathers & Sylva, 2007, Smith et al, 2009).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

It also extends existing work exploring the impact of qualifications on quality and outcomes (e.g. Sylva et al, 2010; NICHD, 2000).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

This paper will address the methodological issues involved in designing and carrying out a large-scale national evaluation of impact. The mixed methods, pre and post design provides a rich source of material for exploration of issues such as: defining and measuring quality and impact; developing an effective mixed methods study; and ensuring consistency and participation in a long term study.

Ethical considerations:

The paper will discuss the ethical issues involved in research of this nature, for example the challenges involved in observing practice without influencing it.

Main findings or discussion:

The study concluded that settings which gained an EYP made significant improvements in quality compared with those which did not. Improvements related most strongly to direct work with children and to the quality of support for learning.

Implications, practice or policy:

The evaluation itself has had significant impact nationally since its publication in July 2011. This paper will explore the application of methodological lessons from the evaluation to practice-based enquiry.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methods, Impacts, Case study, Leadership*

Using Case Studies to Evaluate the Impact of Early Years Professional Status on Practice.

MARK HADFIELD, MARTIN NEEDHAM & TIM WALLER, University of Wolverhampton (Hadfield, Needham), Anglia Ruskin University (Waller)

Research aims & questions:

This 3 year longitudinal study records practitioners developing identity in relation to Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and how this influences career choices and actions. The study records how EYPs seek to change elements of practice which previous research (Sylva et al 2010) demonstrated to lead to quality outcomes for children.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The study focuses on EYP's views of quality interactions and their ability (agency) to realise these within their settings. EYP's views and enactments of quality learning environments are compared to the EPPE and REPEY studies (Sylva et al. 2010).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This paper will address the design of case studies of practice that consider issues of impact and agency (Giddens, 1984, Corsaro, 2005).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The mixed methods evaluation includes qualitative in-depth studies of over 40 EYPs in 30 different settings. The notion of impact is mapped through the use of ECERS and ITERS scales. The more personal aspects of agency are mapped through a series of interviews, reflections and observations. The paper explores notions of causality within small-scale qualitative research.

Ethical considerations:

The paper will discuss the development of an informed participation and shared trust in the data collection process between practitioners and university based researchers.

Main findings or discussion:

The study indicates the variety of leadership roles that EYPs are engaged in, together with some the levers of change, which practitioners have identified for improving quality.

Implications, practice or policy:

In addition to the categories and levers of change indicated in the findings, possible implications for practitioner research will be considered such as defining baselines, impacts and quality.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological Approaches, Impacts, Case study*

SYMPOSIUM II/B

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: CATH ARNOLD, Pen Green Research, Development & Training Base & Leadership Centre, East Midlands

Coordination Disorders in the Early Years

MARY CHAMBERS, University of Leeds, Yorkshire and the Humber

Research aims & questions:

The main aim of this study was to examine the efficacy of low level intervention programmes for young children identified with coordination difficulties.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The years from three to six are a time when children develop fundamental movement skills and by six years of age a typically developing child will have in place a full range of movement skills. These will not necessarily be performed in a competent manner but the rudiments are there to be developed through refinement, combination, adaptation and exploration. However, some children on entry into school do not have a full range of these fundamental skills and this lack of competence in motor skills often affects their academic work and activities of daily living

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The work of Bronfenbrenner (1992) on ecological systems theory provides the underpinning theoretical framework.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

36 children with coordination difficulties were involved in the research. There were two phases of intervention: one group of children worked with teachers for 10 weeks and this was followed by a second group of children who worked with teachers. The children were assessed regularly throughout the project using the Early Years Movement Skills Checklist (Chambers & Sugden, 2006).

Ethical considerations:

Ethical procedures of the university have been followed and approval for the study given by the University Ethics Committee. Permission of the Local Authority, the early years settings and the parents/carers have been obtained.

Main findings or discussion:

All 36 children improved their coordination skills during the intervention phase.

Implications, practice or policy:

Teachers are able to provide effective intervention for young children displaying coordination difficulties.

Keywords: *Data Gathering, Assessment, Physical Development, Outcomes*

A Framework for Action: Supporting Inclusive Practice in the Early Years

EUCHARIA MCCARTHY AND MARY MOLONEY, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

Research aims & questions:

To explore the impact of the development of a research based Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs upon practice within Early Childhood Care and Education settings in Ireland.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This study is the second phase of a national targeted research study (Moloney and McCarthy, 2010) that explored the challenges associated with inclusion in ECCE. Coupled with extensive research with practitioners, parents of children with SEN and support agencies and is informed by previous Irish studies (e.g. Duignan and Fallon, 2004; Cederman, 2006; Quigley, Moloney and McCarthy, 2007) this study culminated in the development of a Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with SEN. This framework was piloted over a three month period in 14 ECCE settings catering for children with SEN.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Using an ecological conceptual framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), this study is located at the confluence of multiple perspectives on the inclusion of children with SEN in ECCE settings.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

A qualitative methodology including reflective journals, focus group discussions, parent feedback forms, on site visits, observations and mentoring was utilised.

Ethical considerations:

Informed consent was sought from all research participants. Anonymity was assured.

Main findings or discussion:

Practitioner qualifications and training is a critical factor in implementing inclusive early years practice ; Availability of resources (especially Pre-school Special Needs Assistants) for children with SEN; Timely Assessment and developing a continuum of provision.

Implications, practice or policy:

National ECCE Inclusion Policy ;National Roll-out of the Framework for Action

Keywords: *Assessment, Multiple Narratives, Communication Language and Literacy, Learning Environment, Curriculum*

SYMPOSIUM II/C

PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION AND DISPLAY

Room:Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JAN DUBIEL, Early Excellence, Yorkshire and the Humber

The Role of Visual Displays in Early Years

OLAMIDE PHILLIPS, University of Hull, Yorkshire and the Humber

Research aims & questions:

This research points out the role of visual displays so that its effects on children in the early years can be exposed. This project has investigated the effect of visual displays in children's learning as well as teachers and early years' practitioners' perceptions of the use of visual displays in early year's settings.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This inquiry builds on work by a range of researchers (Sumner, 1951; Green, 1960; Dwyer, 1978; Whiteford and Fitzsimmons, 1988; Romiszowski, 1988; Jackson, 1993; Cooper et al., 1996; Schotz, 2002; Patricia, 2004; Jewitt, 2008; Yilmaz-Soylu and Akkoyunlu, 2009). It intends to fill the vacuum on the existing knowledge of visual displays in early years.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Understand the role of visual displays in learning in the early years stage and to encourage its use in the classroom.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

For this research, a case study was used in which interviews and questionnaires were used in gathering data. For the interview, grounded theory was used for the analysis where emerging themes were grouped into categories. Questionnaires were analysed numerically.

Ethical considerations:

Approval was obtained from the University before embarking on the research. Participant consent and anonymity were adhered to in the research.

Main findings or discussion:

Visual displays strengthen teaching and learning, showcase children's achievements and demonstrate the standard expected. Cost and time in making visual displays were stated. Radiators were also stated to limit the available wall space for visual displays.

Implications, practice or policy:

Early years settings should encourage teachers' efforts in making visual displays, have policies regarding visual displays to maximise the benefits to the children, government policies need to be clear regarding visual displays.

Keywords: *Methods, Case study, Learning environment*

Pedagogical Documentation: A Dialogue

PAULETTE LUFF, Anglia Ruskin University, South East England

Research aims & questions:

How is documentation understood and used in one pre-school setting? An exploration of the potential of documentation for evidencing practice and stimulating professional enquiry.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

In contemporary early childhood education, there is a trend towards documenting learning in meaningful ways. Originating from work in the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia, this approach to working with young children involves using written notes, transcriptions of talk, photographs, video, and children's drawings, to record, understand and promote learning processes.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research is informed by socio-cultural theory, particularly the Vygotskian view that human actions and interactions are mediated by cultural tools. Documentation is understood as a tool to support and extend processes of knowledge construction with and for young children.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Rinaldi argues that theory and practice must be intertwined in a search for meaning; accepting this view, we present a dialogue in the form of exploratory questions and answers. The protagonists are an early year's professional and a university teacher.

Ethical considerations:

This work developed from mutual respect and a desire to inquire in order to benefit ourselves and the wider early childhood community. Informed consent has been given for the use of illustrative examples (including photographic and video evidence).

Main findings or discussion:

Discussion will focus on three advantages of documentation, highlighted in present literature: knowing and valuing children; making learning visible; and challenging and changing adults thinking.

Implications, practice or policy:

Recognising the requirement to base curriculum planning upon observations children's interests, we want to seek out and model approaches that draw upon and expand existing practices in order to enhance early childhood education.

Keywords: *Life of Inquiry, Pedagogy, Assessment, Practice Based Inquiry, Case study*

SYMPOSIUM II/D

GENDER AND THE EARLY YEARS WORKFORCE

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: PAOLA PEDRELLI, CREC, WEST MIDLANDS

Merging Motives: Childcare and Childcare Work

HAZEL WRIGHT, Anglia Ruskin University, East of England

Research aims & questions:

This doctoral study used a real world approach to explore the experience of ten successive cohorts of adult women training to work in childcare.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

It challenges sociological stereotypes (derived from Skeggs (1997) and Colleys (2006) work) that view childcare as a classed and stratified occupation and supports Osgoods (2009) call for an alternative version of professionalism.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The study advocates equality, choice, and satisfaction with current lives making Amartya Sens (2005) capability approach an appropriate conceptual framework.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The research was interdisciplinary and predominately qualitative but also gathered background data on the population of 150 students to ensure that the interview sample of 33 was representative. An original recall methodology, merging the roles of investigator and former tutor, enabled the use of psychosocial questioning strategies and introduced conversation analysis techniques to evidence, and therefore legitimise, co-constructed understandings. Analysis-through-writing facilitated both structured thematic scrutiny and holistic interpretation.

Ethical considerations:

The research carried full university ethical clearance and examined in detail the power issues that need to be considered when an insider researcher is both investigator and gatekeeper. Former students volunteered to take part and expressed their enjoyment.

Main findings or discussion:

That mature women, entering childcare, chose to integrate their lives and sought opportunities to merge the roles of mother, worker and student. That professionalism can be achieved without losing sight of human caring values.

Implications, practice or policy:

That an imposed and narrow pursuit of professional standards may inadvertently undermine grass roots initiatives that have developed over a considerable period and that benefit society in a range of unanticipated ways.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological Approaches, Case Study, Real World, Research Paradigms*

Men In Childcare: Reality V Rhethoric

DAVID STEVENS, London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

To explore the knowledge, reports and general findings about having men in childcare with regards to the benefits men bring to the sector and if this should be more proactively supported.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

I previously conducted a small-scale research study of our nursery - as the case study in point. I conducted semi-structured interviews with all staff which I supported with relevant theories and other related research studies, for example, Islington Council's Engaging with Boys. I also built an effective working relationship with the Men in Child Care Network in Ireland- who I still liaise with concerning matters around advocacy for more men in child care and the barriers faced by men who might be considering entering the profession.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

I mainly referred to the work carried out by the Men in Child Care Network as well as reinforcing my argument with both nationwide and international statistics. The Fatherhood Institute also provided me with invaluable case studies which enabled me to draw parallels with our experiences in our setting.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

This is a qualitative study, mainly drawing on findings from semi-structured interviews that I carried out (for the second time) with staff. This enabled me to identify any areas of provision that have changed as a result of my previous study, as well as providing a platform for further investigation. I also explored findings from my semi-structured interviews with members of the Men in Childcare Network in Ireland - which served to support my argument.

Ethical considerations:

In line with the values of ethical research (Farrell 2009) collaboration and trust will be critical in my approach and permission will be sought from participants and copies of the paper made available.

Main findings or discussion:

The paper concludes with reference to the underachievement of boys' gender issues and with the view that stereotypical responses will inhibit a proper debate.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research should influence policy by using action research to frame key responses regarding the professionalisation of the sector to include men and target young people from secondary education. This research will suggest a broader debate about men's contribution to the wider issues of education.

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Practice Based Inquiry, Case Study, Multiprofessional Collaboration*

WORKSHOP:

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND BEYOND

Room: Cinema

CAROLINE SHARP and **PIPPA LORD**, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

Are you interested in the characteristics of highly effective children's centre leaders? How are current shifts in policy and practice affecting centre leaders? What leadership skills will be at a premium in the future?

We are looking at highly effective leadership as part of a research study for the National College. The study is focusing on both centre leadership and on wider system leadership (i.e. leadership to secure improvements across the sector, for example through centre-to-centre and peer-to-peer support). We have identified two sets of leadership behaviours, knowledge, skills and attributes, based on a review of policy and research, and we are keen to see whether they make sense to people on the ground. This practical session is intended to share experiences, generate discussion and inform the research.

SYMPOSIUM III/A

WORKFORCE TRAINING: EYPS AND FOUNDATION DEGREES

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Individual and Collective Perspectives on Early Years Professional Status Converged: A Mixed Methods Study

EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Research aims & questions:

This research aims to explore the concept of professional identity through a critique of the concept, implementation and impact of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) as a new professional model. What is meant by separatist versus integrated models of professional identity? How does the EYPS fit with wider policy and professional roles, in England and internationally? How has the achievement of EYPS impacted on candidate's roles and practice and on perceptions of their professional identity? What is the success and limitations of the EYPS model for developing a profession (as opposed merely to professional development), and how to assess the potential implications for future policy and practice?

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This research has been undertaken with the first candidates completing EYPS in 2006 and 2007. Research into this new professional is emerging and this research provides new insights into the development alongside confirming some of the findings from national evaluations.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research design was underpinned by Bronfenbrenner (1979) Bioecological Theory of Human Development, the model being envisaged with the Early Years Professional in the centre, rather than a child.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Mixed methods have been used with the analysis drawing on quantitative data gathered from questionnaires and qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with Early Years Professionals and stakeholders.

Ethical considerations:

The research has ethical approval and has followed BERA guidelines.

Main findings or discussion:

EYPS is occupying a 'new space' in the early years that needs to be recognised, valued and celebrated.

Implications, practice or policy:

EYPS needs to be fully embedded in the children's workforce and be afforded with all the characteristics of a profession.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological Approaches, Knowledge, Outcomes, Research Paradigms*

Can Completing the Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies Ensure Reflective Practice: A Case Study

MINE CONKBAYIR, London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

This paper aims to elicit whether practitioners who have completed the Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies become more reflective concerning their practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self & Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The work of Schön (1983), Kolb (1984) and findings from the Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL, 2002) are just some of the works that will be referenced to frame the question as to whether the completion of the Foundation Degree ensures reflective practice.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

This small-scale research study is based on semi structured interviews within a qualitative paradigm. The data has been coded, collated and analysed.

Ethical considerations:

All participants were informed of this small-scale research and of its purpose. Permission was sought via a letter requesting participation, along with an explanation of how the findings would be used.

Main findings or discussion:

The paper explores the role of the Foundation Degree in ensuring reflective practice amongst those practitioners who complete the programme. Findings are produced both on an individual basis and within nursery teams within an organisation (LEYF). Findings showed that on the whole, a majority of the group did develop personally but that this was not readily translated into practice within nursery teams, across nurseries.

Implications, practice or policy:

Examples of reflective practice used in the LEYF nurseries will also be included, in order to make recommendations for practice. These recommendations are devised to ensure that the organisation can take greater responsibility and control of the reflective practice that takes place across its nurseries.

Keywords: *Parents Perspectives, Technology and ICT, Curriculum, Parents Participation, Transitions*

SYMPOSIUM III/B

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NEW APPROACHES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY, University of Northampton, East Midlands

What Counts as CPD in Early Years in England? An Analysis of Confusion

DENISE HEVEY, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Research aims & questions:

To explore definitions, patterns of provision and accreditation for CPD in early years in England.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Part of a wider six country case study of Continuing Professional Development in the Early Years Workforce led by Pamela Oberhuemer under a German initiative called the WiFF project (www.weiterbildungsinitiative.de)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The concept of CPD was problematised and respondents invited to define terms in order to reveal their conceptual frameworks.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The approach was largely exploratory making use of a range of mixed methods including desk/internet research and questionnaires.

Ethical considerations:

Permission letters included explaining the aims and scope of the project. Individuals were not cited as sources and, where requested, direct quotes from the organisational response were not used.

Main findings or discussion:

There was considerable confusion over the use of the term CPD in early years which was found to refer to almost any type of learning by any practitioner at any time in their career from induction to HE level. Two main themes emerged from the self-definitions - learning which benefits individuals and learning with organisational benefits the majority of definitions containing elements of both. Alarming, several key workforce/ regulatory bodies are being disbanded and LA cuts combined with HE fee increases threaten funding for training at higher levels.

Implications, practice or policy:

Without agreed definitions it is difficult to establish a clear picture of CPD in early years, to incentivise practitioners or argue for funding. Without systematic accreditation, the development of individual practitioners goes unrecognised and experienced practitioners may be overtaken by those with formal but less relevant qualifications.

Keywords: *Data Gathering, Early Childhood Professionalism*

Webinars: An Innovative Pedagogical Approach to Workforce Development (Online, Live and Fully Interactive)

SANDY EDWARDS, Staffordshire County Council, Learning and Development Arm, West Midlands

Research aims & questions:

The presentation will draw upon research to evaluate the technology-enhanced (webinar) Early Years CPD Training Programme.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The benefits of webinars for CPD/Workforce Development currently used in corporate and global organisations is well researched. Our innovative pedagogical approach has been to apply this within the Early Years Sector, from an initial small scale pilot study with EYPs to the ever developing mainstream Early Years Core/CPD Training Programmes.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The Early Years Sector, more so than ever before, is faced with the dilemma of how to release staff for CPD whilst maintaining the quality of continuity of care for children and maintain the EYFS adult:child ratios. Building on the traditional face to face learning approaches of Honey & Mumford (1982), Gardner (1983) and Fleming & Mills (1992), Paivio (2006) and Courville (2009) suggest online training requires a different approach; to engage, interact with, connect and motivate learners.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The ADDIE instructional design approach (Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) has been deployed to embed webinars into our mainstream approach to Workforce Development. Data is gathered from a wide range of methods and sources.

Ethical considerations:

All webinar learners are fully aware and compliant with the data capture, which has been anonymised to maintain confidentiality.

Main findings or discussion:

In this interactive webinar-style presentation, we will share the perspectives of learners, managers and trainers, all of whom suggest the webinar technologies significantly enhance the existing pedagogical approaches.

Implications, practice or policy:

Webinar delivery is embedded into the design of all CPD Training Programmes to offer Early Years Practitioners choices that best suit their individual needs.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Leadership, Learning Environment, Technology and ICT*

SYMPOSIUM III/C**DEVELOPING PEDAGOGY WITH BABIES**

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JAN DUBIEL, Early Excellence, Yorkshire and the Humber

Valuing, Engaging and Empowering; Developing the Professional Confidence of Practitioners Working with Children Aged Birth - 3

JAN DUBIEL, Early Excellence, Yorkshire and the Humber

Research aims & questions:

To explore the impact of focussed training and support projects on practitioner knowledge, understanding and professional confidence through the use of Treasure Baskets.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The project was funded by an English LA through the ECAT initiative to support practitioners working with children aged Birth - 3 to develop effective practice.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

That the period from birth to 3 is a time of rapid developmental growth that requires specialised, informed professionals to ensure effective outcomes for children That appropriate training and support empowers practitioners and develops their self-confidence and self-perception as professionals.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

A group of practitioners working with children aged birth - 18 months were trained in the use of Treasure Baskets and provided with resources. The practitioners were supported on site by Consultant visits and case studies of their experience recorded and produced. Practitioners then presented their own findings to the group.

Ethical considerations:

That the role of practitioners working with children aged Birth - 3 needs to be valued and supported to ensure good outcomes for children.

Main findings or discussion:

That practitioners responded positively to the supported training and were able to reflect on and develop their practice. Participation in the project supported an increase in practitioners professional confidence and enabled them to transfer skills and knowledge and adopt more creative and innovative approaches to their practice and provision.

Implications, practice or policy:

That policy makers, LAs and agencies need to ensure that practitioners are provided with appropriate training and support and sufficient opportunities for high quality CPD to continue developing their knowledge and understanding.

Keywords: *Action Research, Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Case study*

Symbolic Gesturing: How Practitioners' Narratives within Research can inform Practice

AMANDA NORMAN, Roehampton University, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

Practitioner views on the use of symbolic gesturing when considering emotional interactions with infants in nursery.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This is part of a doctoral study.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This study is based on: attachment theory (Bowlby date?) emotional labour (Hochschild date?) biographical accounts within research (Erben date?).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Qualitative: This research used a case study approach involving three key practitioners biographical accounts of their journey and experiences using symbolic gesturing. Methods: semi structured interviews, reflective journals and observations.

Ethical considerations:

Practitioners, parents consented to the research following University ethical guidelines for doctoral study.

Main findings or discussion:

Through thematic analysis, the three practitioners voices concluded symbolic gesturing was a credible approach in enhancing infant, key person relationships.

Implications, practice or policy:

Valuing the voice of the key person within research when reflecting on the use of symbolic gesturing.

Keywords: *Multiple narratives, Case study, Real world*

SYMPOSIUM III/D

DEVELOPING PEDAGOGY AND THE OUTDOORS

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: TIM WALLER, Anglia Ruskin University

Outside All Day, Every Day: Investigating the Desirability and Feasibility of Providing an Outdoor Nursery in England with Forest School Trained Nursery Managers

ANN WHITEHOUSE, Staffordshire University, West Midlands

Research aims & questions:

The study aims to document the initial perceptions of a small group of nursery managers and any changes they make to their outdoor pedagogy after exploring different 'outdoor nursery' models during visits in Denmark and the UK.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

It follows on from an earlier study on the impact of the Forest School approach on early years' pedagogy (Whitehouse, 2009) which found practitioners with Forest School experience considered increasing the frequency and time spent in a natural outdoor environment a way to improve the quality of learning experiences offered to nursery children, even to the extent of turning nurseries 'inside out'.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

As qualified Forest School practitioners, the participants' pedagogy is underpinned by Forest School principles set within the EYFS framework (DCSF, 2008).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Positioned within an interpretive paradigm, this is a small, ongoing longitudinal study where participants are engaging in a series of focused conversations (Nutbrown, 1999) and are collaborating in every aspect of the research process.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical procedures followed in accordance with BERA (2004) guidelines and approval was sought from the University ethics committee.

Main findings or discussion:

After visits in Denmark, participants recognised the unique nature of each setting and that their own outdoor pedagogy has already developed significantly since adopting the Forest School approach. Although cultural differences are vast, participants considered developing similar models within the context of the EYFS more achievable than they had anticipated.

Implications, practice or policy:

Although outdoor pedagogy in the UK could be enhanced by adapting aspects of Danish practice, raising awareness of the importance of early childhood education must also continue alongside.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Outdoor Play, Learning environment*

Learning Inside and Outside: An exchange of Early Years international Practitioners' Views

SARAH MACQUARRIE, Centre for Rural Childhood, Scotland

Research aims & questions:

To engage with international practitioners in a conversation regarding their experiences when going outside to learn with young children.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The activity is framed by examples from practice in settings where young children spend at least 80% of their time outside (referred to as Nature Kindergartens or Forest School environments) and research that examines such settings (Moser & Martinsen, 2010; Warden, 2010).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The activity utilised a discussion group methodology to ascertain practitioners' views regarding the implementation, maintenance and sustainability of different approaches to early years' education that each incorporate a commitment to engaging with nature. Yet, the nature of the activity was structured to allow salient findings or points of view to be considered in detail, this was evident as practitioners provided exemplars that ranged from positive examples to challenges occurring within their practice.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

A discussion group was undertaken with 7 participants. A facilitator chaired the session and when the conversation ebbed raised a question to promote the conversation.

Ethical considerations:

A small number of conference participants were invited initially by email and then in person given a consent form to complete. They were reminded that at any time they could withdraw their consent or refrain from answering any questions.

Main findings or discussion:

Emerging and experienced practitioners were able to engage and converse, sharing their varied experiences. Examples of practice from different settings were given to exemplify points made by participants. Such examples were given by each of the 7 participants, who varied in their country of practice and level of experience in learning outdoors with young children. Going outside regularly, engaging with natural materials, engaging in authentic environments and purposeful experiences were seen as contributors to effective early years' practice, which could address the curriculum.

Implications, practice or policy:

Situating such an activity within a conference allowed a range of practitioners to be involved. A less formal approach contributed to a shared experience that was valued by participants. Learning in contexts other than the classroom can contribute to addressing the curriculum.

Keywords: *Authenticity, Multiprofessional Collaboration, Real World, Outdoor Play, Learning Environment*

WORKSHOP:

A ROUGH GUIDE TO PROJECT RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND THE HUMAN SCIENCES

Room: Cinema

PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC, West Midlands

A short discussion and question and answer session using a detailed 'crib' or 'guide' provided by PG and which attempts to summarise research approaches and methodologies in a very few pages. (The crib will be provided at the session) It especially traces the pit-falls of project research and of action research and will be followed by a very short questionnaire. No knowledge of statistics required.

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET IV: 11:00 – 12:30

SYMPOSIUM IV/A

WORKING WITH PARENTS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: NICOLA SMITH, CREC, West Midlands

Generating Knowledge Through the Parent Child Home Programme (PCHP)

BETH FAGAN, National College of Ireland, Ireland

Research aims & questions:

To improve educational outcomes for participants through the co-creation of knowledge.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Research shows that early learning is the foundation of all subsequent learning (Allen, 2011). A child's intellectual development is closely linked to the amount and quality of verbal interaction they receive (Levenstein, 1971). Incorporating the findings of an independent evaluation (Share et al, 2011), success came from integrating research and practise to improve outcomes (Senge and Scharmer, 2001).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

PCHP is an evidence-based programme, which supports parent-child interactions. Community action research (Senge and Scharmer, 2001) supported the creation of a learning community of home visitors and families.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The action reflective cycle helped inform the development and implementation of the programme (McNiff and Whithead, 2006). A social, collaborative and dialogic approach (Wong 2009) added to the depth of shared knowledge.

Ethical considerations:

The National College of Ireland's Code of Conduct for Researchers was observed. Good practice in relation to action research was followed.

Main findings or discussion:

Parents were more focused on quality time with their children, they felt it made learning fun. Home Visitors expressed a great deal of satisfaction with their jobs, they are easily identified in their blue uniform and have become ambassadors for the programme and an accessible point of contact, on the street.

Implications, practice or policy:

The knowledge gained informs and enhances programme delivery and ensure ownership and buy in from both parents and home visitors - and by extension all the children involved (the home visitors own children and the families they serve).

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Play, Practice Based Inquiry, Knowledge, Parents Participation*

Creating a Space for Parents' Voices. Methodology in a Practitioner Research Project

NICOLA SMITH, CREC, West Midlands

Research aims & questions:

This paper explores the implications of the aim of a PhD research study to open up a space for participants' voices; (Haw, 1996).

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

In the research study, Bhabha's (1994) notion of a 'third space' is examined in relation to the ways in which practitioner researchers can explore ideas of parental involvement in a Nursery setting.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Particular consideration is given to the issues concerning a white practitioner researcher working with 'British Asian' participants. Identity, culture and power relationships are examined, with particular reference to the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1990, 1992). Freire's (1977) understanding of 'praxis' and dialogue is considered in relation to the ways in which practitioner researchers can work with parents in developing meaningful research studies.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The research was conducted from a social constructivist perspective. Case studies were developed which examined parents', children's and practitioners' perceptions of parental involvement in children's Nursery education.

Ethical considerations:

Responsibility to the participants, the research profession and to the public is considered (see BERA, 2005).

Main findings or discussion:

Whilst practitioner participants are well-intentioned in their work with parents, existing structures and power relationships make the construction of meaningful partnerships extremely difficult.

Implications, practice or policy:

Practitioner researchers need to develop methodologies which allow parents to create their own spaces in which they can build dialogue and involvement around issues of importance to themselves and their communities.

Keywords: *Ethics ,Methods, Practice Based Inquiry, Parents Perspectives, Parents Participation*

SYMPOSIUM IV/B
DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, Wolverhampton University, West Midlands

What are the Barriers Related to Language and Culture that Japanese Immigrant Mothers Face in Making Decisions about Early Education?

CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM, The Ohio State University, USA

Research aims & questions:

This study examined barriers related to language and culture Japanese immigrant mothers face in making decisions about early childhood education.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The research builds on previous studies of Japanese mothers involvement early childhood education and the experiences the mothers and children had in child care (e.g. Capizzano, Adams, & Sonenstein, 2000; Cote & Bornstein, 2003; Kirmani & Yeung, 2008; Matthews & Ewen, 2006; Schumacher & Rakpraja, 2003).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Individualism, collectivism, identity, and culture are examined, with particular reference to the work of Triandis (1986) and Hofstede (1980).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

This study used a multi-method case approach including interviews and observations. Moreover, pattern coding was used to analyze the phenomenon in greater detail as the informants answered questions and shared stories on their most intimate experiences in early childhood education.

Ethical considerations:

Responsibility to the participants, the research profession and to the public are considered (see BERA, 2005). Particular consideration is given to the issues concerning a white researcher working with Japanese participants.

Main findings or discussion:

Participants cited English proficiency, availability of center-based care, program eligibility criteria, parental need for flexibility in services, family fears related to immigrant status, losing Japanese culture, their expectations, a lack of awareness of programs offered, and American culture as barriers related to language and culture.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research considers those barriers cited by the informants and concludes with recommendations for future practice when working with Japanese immigrant families.

Keywords: *Ethics, Case study, Knowledge, Parents Perspectives, Parents Participation*

What Does Cultural Capital Mean?

GARY SIMPSON, The London Early Years Foundation, South East England

Research aims & questions:

My aim is to explore Early Years Practitioners understanding of the term Cultural Capital and how practice in the setting supports this.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

I will mainly draw on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and Csíkszentmihályi's (1997) research on flow and how children can become immersed in a meaningful experience.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

I will investigate practitioners understanding of cultural capital and the impact this can have on children's creative development.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

I will be interviewing practitioners about their understanding (or lack of understanding) of Cultural Capital. I will ask what they understand by supporting cultural capital and how they currently do this.

Ethical considerations:

I will ensure my questionnaires and interviews will be non leading. I will also maintain impartial throughout so as not to influence outcomes in any way. I will also adhere to my organisation's equality and diversity policy.

Main findings or discussion:

I believe practitioners have a very mixed understanding of what cultural capital is and are thus unsure how to effectively support children's understanding without relying on festivals and celebrations.

Implications, practice or policy:

Findings will be shared with participants in order to increase knowledge of cultural capital. practitioners will be empowered to raise children's cultural capital and creative experiences to develop a CPD programme based on research findings.

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Knowledge*

SYMPOSIUM IV/C

EVIDENCING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: MARGY WHALLEY, Pen Green Research, Development & Training Base & Leadership Centre, East Midlands

‘How Did We Make a Difference’? A Tracer Study Engaging with Children and Families Who Used our Centre 6-10 Years ago

MARGY WHALLEY, CATH ARNOLD, SALLY PEERLESS, PENNY LAWRENCE, Pen Green Research, Development & Training Base & Leadership Centre, East Midlands

Research aims & questions:

As a research and nursery team, we are concerned with finding out what lasting differences our ways of working have made to the lives of children and families who became involved in our centre more than 6-10 years ago.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Our study adds to major studies on parental involvement (DCSF, 8008; EPPE, 2004) and on narrowing the gap in achievement between disadvantaged and more privileged children and families.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

We draw on: Dweck’s research on mastery-oriented learners and growth mindsets (2010); schemas (Athey, 2007); agency and advocacy (Erikson et al, 1985; Pen Green, 2004); self-regulation and emotional regulation (Whitebread et al, 2009).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

This is a small, qualitative video-based study which uses both a convenience sample and a purposive sample to gather the views of children and parents retrospectively (Cohen et al, 2000).

Ethical considerations:

Our intention has been for the process to be participatory and emancipatory. We have offered participants different ways of capturing information and have sought permission for different uses and edits of the material.

Main findings or discussion:

Relationships have been most significant. The embodied experience of walking through the setting has evoked memories of being with and of engaging in different play activities. The rocking horse and the home corner were significant to most children. In this second phase we have extended our sample to include children who have been repeatedly excluded and are reluctantly participating in mainstream school settings in order to improve our practice.

Implications, practice or policy:

Video vignettes and parents accounts are powerful tools to use in improving practice and in informing policy decisions.

Keywords: *Ethics ,Methodological Approaches, Children's Perspectives, Outcomes, Parents Participation*

Childminding Practice in England: Key Elements of Effective Practice for Children Under the Age of Five

HELENA JELICIC, BECKY FAUTH, SUE OWEN, JOANNA LEA, NATASHA WILLMOTT, National Children's Bureau, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) Research Centre was funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation to undertake an 18-month research study on childminding practice. The study aimed to gather evidence on the key elements of childminding practice, childminders' views and understanding of children's learning and development and views of the EYFS.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

There is very little research on childminders' in England and the evidence to date says very little about how childminders use their unique position as home-based providers to help young children achieve appropriate development prior to school entry.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Since 2008 childminders are mandated to work within the EYFS framework. The EYFS is quite clear on which outcomes are important for young children, yet it does not dictate how early years' providers help children achieve acceptable levels of the outcomes.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The study involved a mixed method approach: a survey with a random sample of 581 childminders across England, and interviews and observations with 25 childminders.

Ethical considerations:

Childminders were informed about the study before giving us consent for interviews and observations.

Main findings or discussion:

Our findings revealed several key elements of effective childminding practice, which were particularly observed in high-quality childminding homes. The elements included: Sustaining caring, one-to-one relationships with children; Tailoring provision to children's interests and needs; Embedding learning in play; Extending child-directed play; Using community resources; Being willing to reflect and change practice

Implications, practice or policy:

Young children are likely to benefit the most from the individual, home-based care that childminders offer and childminders' contributions to their development should be recognised.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological Approaches, Knowledge*

SYMPOSIUM IV/D

DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE EYFS PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: MICHAEL REED, University of Worcester, West Midlands

Early Years' Pedagogy and 'Spaces' for Ethnography

LINDA SHAW, Staffordshire Council Learning and Development Arm, West Midlands

Research aims & questions:

To investigate implicit and explicit pedagogies evident in settings delivering EYFS in England and to analyse the differing discourses on which these acts of teaching may be based so as to articulate, implement and evaluate alternative teaching strategies which could be used in our interactions with young children.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Previous research undertaken with a number of early years practitioners highlighted a desire to work more closely with colleagues in school and a commitment to make sense of the EYFS as a coherent stage in children's education (Shaw, 2009). This current study can be understood as its sequel where the aim is to further understand the complexities of the EYFS with an underlying intention of activating change.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The work will be informed by critical theory as articulated in the work of both How (2003) and Marshall (1996) thus allowing for possibilities of transformations in practice.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Data will be collected through auto-ethnographic recording (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Spry 2001; Jones and Barron, 2007) of participant observation during activities with children and discussions with staff; transcribed semi-structured discussions based on action research undertaken by staff; related videos of practice and semi-structured interviews with individual participants, at key points within the research process.

Ethical considerations:

Careful consideration has been given to the power and position of both adults and children within the research process.

Main findings or discussion:

Early data suggests that ethnography is a powerful tool for practitioner articulations of knowledge they generate in their work.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research has implications in relation to professional identity, pedagogy and practice in England

Keywords: *Action Research, Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological Approaches, Practice Based Inquiry*

Quality Improvement: A Classification of Strategies used by Early Years Practitioners: Initial Findings and Discussion.

MICHAEL REED AND ROSIE WALKER, University of Worcester, West Midlands

Research aims & questions:

The study revolves around the teaching of 23 students, following a Foundation Degree (FdA) in Early Years. (University of Worcester in partnership with Herefordshire LA). To examine practice based assignments from students using content and conceptual analysis to consider what forms of Quality Improvement have been employed in practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Reed and Walker have published research (2011). This focused upon ways student formed and became engaged in a 'community of practice' to publish their own research.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The intention is to consider the quality improvement process - that is the means of engagement in improving practice - rather than seeing such improvement as developing a specific product or outcome. From this to offer a classification of what may be called impact strategies on practice.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Methods of enquiry (with NOT on students) included phenomenological interviews, content and conceptual analysis, journal and diary entries, researcher notes, minutes of meetings and active participant observation. Use of critical companion in developing a critical stance. An examination of published work in the field via an analysis of selected literature

Ethical considerations:

The ethics committee at UW were consulted in order to sanction collaboration with students. Permissions and procedures with regard to students participation were gained. Hereford LA was consulted as were the EY settings.

Main findings or discussion:

Initial findings and discussion only, with the final paper to be submitted May 2012.

Implications, practice or policy:

Considerable implications for practice - especially in relation to revealing what strategies are being generated in practice - we already have information that suggest some are quite innovative.

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Leadership*

WORKSHOP:

LIVERPOOL NURSERY NUTRITION PROGRAMME – A SURVEY OF FOOD PROVISION IN NURSERIES AND A PROGRAMME OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT IN NUTRITION

Room: Cinema

JULIE MACKLIN, HM Partnerships, Liverpool

Childcare offers an important opportunity to contribute to children's health through good nutrition. Find out how a programme of training and support in nutrition for early years staff enabled them to achieve positive changes to the food they provide.

The programme was carried out on behalf of Liverpool Primary Care Trust, who recognised a need to support early years' settings across the city. An initial review showed that nursery staff had little or no access to nutrition training and analysis revealed no menus were fully compliant with reference guidelines. This led to the development of an accredited training programme for nursery staff which was specific to early years' nutrition. The programme has now been extended to include childminders and an adapted training course is currently being offered to this group. This session is intended to disseminate the learning from this programme, generate discussion and share experiences

THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY, 2012
SYMPOSIUM SET V: 13:30 – 15:00

SYMPOSIUM V/A
COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY University of Northampton, East Midlands

Exploring Approaches to Early Years Practice in Hungary: A Comparative Study

ELEONORA TESZENYI & GILLIAN SYKES, University of Northampton, East Midlands

Research aims & questions:

To explore and compare early years practice and provision in Hungary and England (in preparation for possible practitioner exchange visits).

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Hungary has a long tradition of integrated care and early education for children from 2.5 to 6 years (kindergarten) with compulsory schooling at 7. There have been a range of investigations regarding pedagogy, school readiness/schoolification and professional roles that relate to this research. eg: Suggate, (2007) Oberheumer (2011) Whitbread (2011).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

It is partly provided by the current model of the EYFS, underpinned by an integrated approach to education and care and a play-based philosophy of learning. In addition, the work of Malaguzzi (1994) and Rinaldi (1996) around the '100 languages of children' further influenced this study.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Inquiry based and largely interpretive. Three small scale case studies undertaken of settings in different parts of the country using a range of methods including observations, informal interviews and documentary analysis.

Ethical considerations:

Permissions obtained from the setting managers and staff. No information was recorded about individual children but photographs were supplied by the setting with parental permission.

Main findings or discussion:

The differences between English and Hungarian approaches in relation to the learning and care environment, use of family grouping, styles of adult engagement and fostering creativity. It was concluded that the Hungarian approach allows for better development of pre-citizenship skills and effective integration of physical development with other areas of learning but that less value is placed by practitioners on children's unique and creative expression.

Implications, practice or policy:

Encourage critical reflection, highlight good practice issues that English settings might want to consider.

Keywords: *Personal Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Play, Creativity, Learning Environment*

Comparison of Early Years Education between England and Saudi Arabia Focusing on Curriculum

IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU & LUBNA ALSHANQITI, University of Hull, East of England

Research aims & questions:

This paper aims to offer a comparison of the Early Years Education curriculum in England (EYFS) with the Saudi Arabian curriculum.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

There are limited studies in this area of comparison and this study is one of few to try to explore the preschool curriculum provided in Saudi Arabia. Some research has been conducted in SA such as Al-Ameel (2002), Alkhaldeh (2003), Alsunbul (2008). Also, DCSF (2008), DfE (2010), Siraj-Blatchford (2002) and Palaiologou (2010) were referred to when discussing the EYFS in England.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Role of adult, one of key issues presented relies on the beliefs of theorists such as Montessori, Dewey, Froebel and Vygotsky. They stated the role of adult as facilitator and advisor. Also, Play stemmed from educationists such as Froebel, Rousseau and McMillan.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Qualitative research using content analysis of Early Years Foundation Stage and Saudi Arabia curriculum.

Ethical considerations:

Project approved by University of Hull Ethics Committee.

Main findings or discussion:

Similarities; Emphasis on play; Child-centered approach; Optional enrolment in EYE; Areas of learning & development.

Differences; Centralized curriculum; Cultural and religious factors; Role of parents; Role of teacher.

Implications, practice or policy:

Curriculum does not happen in isolation. There are some factors which impact on curriculum implications such as: Culture; Teachers' or practitioners' qualification; Religion.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Play, Curriculum*

From practice to practitioner research: Developing a practitioner research approach to early childhood education

CARMEL BRENNAN, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

Research Aims:

This research project aims to develop ways of working with EC practitioners towards a more reflective, enquiry-based approach to learning with children. It is premised on the concept that the play-based curriculum is dialogic and emergent about process and praxis, rather than pre-determined learning outcomes. Presently, the research question is therefore are; How do ECI specialists support practitioners to develop as practitioner researchers?

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The research draws together and develops previous ECI research on children's learning and quality improvement. It links with the extensive body of research using learning stories and documentation carried out in New Zealand and Reggio Emilia and other hubs of practitioner research. Pascal (2011) suggests that we must create a tipping point to gain recognition and support for this research.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Children are positioned as proactive and competent participants in their own development (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998/2001). Documentation moves from an assessment of past learning to a practice that maps out and reads the complexities of learning, leading to possible actions (Taguchi 2010).

The research takes a practitioner action research approach, implemented by EC specialists researching their approach to working with practitioners as they move through observing children's learning to more systematic, collaborative research. Fler (2003) proposes the role of the expert and research circles.

Ethical considerations:

We are committed to seeking consent and the image of the competent child

Main findings or discussion:

The model developed begins with in-service practice and comes full circle to further inform practice.

Implications, practice or policy:

Practitioners find their voice and improve the learning encounter.

Keywords: *Action Research, Life of Inquiry, Pedagogy, Methodological Approaches, Curriculum*

SYMPOSIUM V/B PRACTITIONER RESEARCH AND COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: WENDY MESSENGER, University of Worcester, West Midlands

The Struggle of Analysis in Practitioner - Based Research

WENDY MESSENGER, University of Worcester, West Midlands

Research aims & questions:

This research examines the influence of professional culture on collaborative working in Children's Centres. It ultimately seeks to offer a new conceptual framework for understanding collaborative working in Children's Centres.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The study draws upon the work of Atkinson and Dowling (2008) and Anning et al (2006, 2010) with reference to collaborative working.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The theoretical framework is based upon cultural anthropological, (Hofstede, 1991) socio-cultural (Bourdieu 1984, 1986) and post structural perspectives (Bhaba, 1994). It also draws upon organisational theory.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The research sits firmly within the interpretive paradigm and draws largely upon qualitative methods of data collection. A questionnaire was distributed regionally in order to provide baseline data followed by semi structured interviews with staff from different professional heritages including teachers, early years practitioners, health workers and family support workers. Eighteen interviews took place within a case study Children's Centre and twelve interviews took place outside the case study. Lastly a focus group was conducted with selected participants within the case study.

Ethical considerations:

Consent and assurances of confidentiality were obtained from all participants and any possible risks to anonymity were explored where relevant and appropriate.

Main findings or discussion:

Currently the analysis of the data is still in progress and it is the intention of this paper to explore the challenges, opportunities and dilemmas the researcher has faced during this process.

Implications, practice or policy:

It is hoped it will provide a platform for debate in relation to issues of rigour, interpretation, authenticity, and ethics in practitioner based research of this nature.

Keywords: *Data Gathering, Ethics, Authenticity, Methodological Approaches, Multiple Narratives*

Using Community Action Research to Improve Early Mathematical Outcomes

JOSEPHINE BLEACH, National College of Ireland, Ireland

Research aims & questions:

The aim is to improve early mathematical outcomes through the provision of an integrated programme of activities, training and support.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Internationally, research findings highlight early learning as being the foundation for all subsequent learning (Allen 2011) and the importance of early numeracy, in particular, as an indicator of future academic success (Every Child a Chance Trust, 2009; National Academy of Science, 2009). The research methodology adheres to the ecological approach of Vygotsky (1978) and Bronfenbrenner (1979).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

A community action research approach was used to create a collaborative learning community that works together to improve the mathematical outcomes for children (Senge and Scharmer, 2001). The focus was on changing practice, understanding of practice and the conditions of practice (Kemmis, 2009).

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

The action reflection cycle (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006) informed the development and implementation of the programme. Building a learning community has required the development of trusting relationships (Herr and Anderson, 2005) and the creation of safe, yet challenging, opportunities (Li, 2008) for purposeful interactions.

Ethical considerations:

The National College of Ireland's Code of Conduct for Researchers was observed. Good practice in relation to action research was followed.

Main findings or discussion:

Awareness of the importance of early mathematical learning in the community has been heightened. The inclusive social networks established through the project have made it easier for participants to create and share knowledge, thereby improving their skills and practice.

Implications, practice or policy:

This collaborative process supports implementation in a way that enhances participants' capabilities, both individually and collectively, to produce results they truly care about (Senge and Scharmer 2001).

Keywords: *Action Research, Mathematics, Multiprofessional Collaboration, Outcomes, Parents Participation*

SYMPOSIUM V/C
REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Room:Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JUNE O’SULLIVAN London Early Years Foundation, Greater London

The Facilitators View of Addressing Children’s Emotional Well-being through the Professional Development of Practitioners: The Emotional Well Being, Strong Teams Project

JULIA MANNING-MORTON, DILYS WILSON, London Metropolitan University, Middlesex University, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

This paper presents the Emotional Well-being: Strong Teams Project; an approach to professional development that enables early childhood practitioners to develop a professional approach that combines personal awareness and reflexivity with theoretical knowledge.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

A A development programme for early years heads in Bristol, facilitated by Katy Dearnley and Peter Elfer (Elfer P and Dearnley K, 2007). The Key Times Project, Julia Manning-Morton (2006).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This emotionally containing approach to professional development draws on the psychoanalytic concepts of projection, containment and psychological defences and uses holistic child observations (Rustin, 1989) and journaling as tools to develop reflexive practice.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Praxis Intervention (Madhu, 2005); a form of participatory action research (Stringer, 1999) and Reflexive Inquiry (Oliver, 2005). The project also reflects andragogical (Knowles, 1970), humanist and feminist principles in which socio-cultural perspectives are recognized and the process is consciously understood by all participants.

Ethical considerations:

It is central to this approach that the facilitator engages in a high level of reflection and post-session peer supervision. Using reflexive inquiry means that the consultant / facilitator must position themselves in relation to others in the group with

Main findings or discussion:

Participants find this approach challenging but impacting positively on their ability to combine greater personal responsiveness with maintaining a professional perspective.

Implications, practice or policy:

Privacy and confidentiality agreements were made in relation to the written evaluations and interviews.

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Practice Based Inquiry, Leadership*

The Participants View of Addressing Children's Emotional Well-being in Professional Development: The Emotional Well Being, Strong Teams Project

JO VICKERS - WEAVERS FIELDS COMMUNITY NURSERY AND SAJIDA MALIK-BARKANTINE NURSERY, EYNTH-Weavers Fields Community Nursery, Greater London

Research aims & questions:

This paper presents the experience of participating in the Emotional Well-being: Strong Teams Project. It sets out the process of the project from the practitioners' perspective and discusses the impact on practice of an approach to professional development combining personal awareness and reflexivity with theoretical knowledge.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

A development programme for early years heads in Bristol, facilitated by Katy Dearnley and Peter Elfer (Elfer P and Dearnley K, 2007) The Key Times Project, Julia Manning-Morton (2006).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This emotionally containing approach to professional development draws on psychoanalytic concepts of projection, containment and psychological defences and by using holistic child observations (Rustin, 1989) and journaling as tools to develop reflexive practice.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Praxis Intervention (Madhu, 2005); a form of participatory action research (Stringer, 1999) and reflexive inquiry (Oliver 2005). The project also reflects andragogical (Knowles, 1970), humanist (Whitaker, 1986) and feminist (Weiler, 1991) principles.

Ethical considerations:

Participants engage in high level of personal and professional reflection. They're alerted to the feelings and needs within the group and consider their responsiveness to the reflections within the group. Each of these require clear ethical boundaries.

Main findings or discussion:

Participants find this approach challenging but with understanding that becoming self-aware, will impact positively on their ability to combine greater personal responsiveness with professional perspective.

Implications, practice or policy:

Personal anxieties surface within the process of addressing intense physical and emotional needs of infants and young children. The ability of practitioners to confront and face the challenges that surface through personal reflection and professional development is evident. Practitioners become tuned into emotional needs and of both team and children.

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Practice Based Inquiry*

SYMPOSIUM V/D
SCHOOL READINESS AND TRANSITIONS

Room: Music Room 1

CHAIR: COLETTE GRAY, Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Transitions: Through the Eyes of a Child

COLETTE GRAY, Stranmillis University College: A College of Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Research aims & questions:

In contrast to a burgeoning literature examining children's transition from preschool to primary school, much less is known about school readiness in rural Ireland. On this premise, children's (n=22) experiences were sought using two methods: drawings and small group discussions.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The present study seeks to address the dearth of literature on school readiness in rural Ireland and the paucity of literature that reports children's views on the experience of transitions.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The bio-ecological systems theory provides the overarching conceptual framework and the social constructivist model the research lens. This approach is strengthened by the social constructivist theory which places importance on the individual's ability to construct meaning from their social interactions and institutions.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Situated within a social constructivist framework, the study adopts an interpretivist ontology (Price 1994), in which reality is understood from the perspectives and experiences of the research participants (in this case children).

Ethical considerations:

Permission was sought from the school, parents and the teachers at the outset and throughout the project.

Main findings or discussion:

School transition is viewed as a natural process. Nonetheless, their preschool experience, ill-prepares children for the formality and punitive nature of the infant classroom. Synthesis is therefore required between the preschool and formal school curriculum to ease the transition process.

Implications, practice or policy:

School transition is viewed as a natural process. Nonetheless, their preschool experience, ill-prepares children for the the formality and punitive nature of the infant classroom. Synthesis is therefore required between the preschool and formal school curriculum to ease the transition process.

Keywords: *Methodological approaches, Children's perspectives, Curriculum, Transitions*

Pre-school: A scaled Down Version of School: The Impact of School Readiness on Children's Agency within Early Childhood Care and Education Settings

MARY MOLONEY, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, Ireland

Research aims & questions:

To explore understandings of school readiness from the perspectives of preschool and infant class teachers in Ireland.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This study builds upon previous research (e.g., Jalongo et al, 2004; Moyles, 2001; OECD, 2006) on school readiness. The OECD (2006) argue that while positive child outcomes are a major goal for ECCE programmes, they may result in a 'readiness for school ' approach and a resultant focus on 'assessment content that distracts teachers from the intense relational and pedagogical work that young children need' (p.127). Moreover, activities such as 'filling in the blanks [and] colouring in' (Moyles, 2001, p. 14) often hold no meaning or purpose for the child. Overall, the OECD suggest that school readiness methodologies may be 'poorly suited to the psychology and natural learning strategies of young children' (2006, p.15).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This study uses ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as a lens to explore the construct of school readiness within the micro environments of preschool and infant classes.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

Mixed methods data collection strategies were used: Qualitative: observations of practice, interviews; focus group discussions. Quantitative: IEA/PPP observation tools).

Ethical considerations:

Voluntary informed consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality, data protection.

Main findings or discussion:

Findings point to considerable ambiguity about the purpose of ECCE, resulting in a predominant focus upon school readiness within the preschool sector. School readiness was primarily associated with academic preparation for school such that pre-school was described as a scaled down version of school.

Implications, practice or policy:

Policy must focus upon the continuum of educational provision; communication between the sectors and joint pre-service training.

Keywords: *Practice Based Inquiry, Real World, Learning Environment, Transition*

POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

Phonics or Fun?

HELEN HORTON, University of Sunderland, North East England

Research aims & questions:

To explore the many dimensions of the debate around the teaching of reading skills in the Early Years.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Within the discipline of linguistics, my current research builds on previous case studies of Communicative Competence in young people with Anarthria.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

A social constructivist conceptual framework predicated on social capital theory as invested in the acquisition of literacy.

Paradigm, methodology & methods:

A literature based review in the paradigm of grounded theory.

Ethical considerations:

None at this stage although a follow-up longitudinal study into reading would require the ethical consideration commensurate with working with children.

Main findings or discussion:

There are contradictions in the recommendations of documentation such as the Rose Review (2009) and the Tickell Review (2011). Current policies seem to take little account of the raft of pedagogy that underpins our knowledge of children's reading and allow only cursory acknowledgement of children's Readiness to Learn.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research findings have relevance for all practitioners in the Early Years and implications for the review of the EYFS Framework with regard to supporting early reading skills. It questions the move away from the pragmatic Searchlights approach to that of the more prescriptive analysis approach of the Synthetic Phonics strategy. In order to encourage children's enthusiasm for engaging in literacy practices across multifarious genres and to take account of the range of children's preferred learning styles, there needs to be a re-evaluation of the over emphasis on reductionist concepts that consider reading to be one of the subset of literacy skills.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Impacts, Communication Language and Literacy*

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The Accounting Early for Life Long Learning (AcE) programme

The AcE programme has been designed specifically to support the planning and assessment of young children's development in two key areas of learning.

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