



British Early Childhood Education
Research Association

Researching Children's Lives: Questions of Practice & Methods



**'mac birmingham', Cannon Hill Park
Birmingham**

20th & 21st February 2013



The 3rd BECERA Conference is hosted by:

Centre for Research in Early Childhood

St Thomas Children's Centre

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Attwood Green

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www.crec.co.uk

The BECERA Conference is taking place at the **mac birmingham**



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 third BECERA Conference. Many previous delegates have indicated that in only 3 years 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. The conference is inclusive of all those who operate or who have an interest in the real world of service delivery. The harsh times we are experiencing economically makes the need for support and deep thinking about the future of early childhood services even more vital.

This third conference has as its theme:

'Researching Children's Lives: Questions of Practice & Methods'

In format and content we are again foregrounding the importance of Practice Based Research with the particular aim of encouraging and supporting the development of Practitioner Researchers who study in the 'real world' of early childhood services. It aims to make research meaningful and relevant to practice and to capture the perspectives and knowledge of professionals and other service participants 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 develop evidence based practice, which can show the impact and outcomes of this 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, rigorous and deeply ambitious for ourselves and the children and families for whom we work. We believe that learning realised most effectively when we are both nurtured and deeply engaged. We hope this conference will challenge you, inspire you and support your development 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



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Day 1: Wednesday, 20th February 2013

08:00 - 09:30	Registration & refreshments	Foyer
09:30 – 11:00	Opening session & Keynote I	Cinema

Dr Elly Singer - 'The teacher as Homo Ludens: The central role of play in early childhood care and education'

11:00 - 11:30	COFFEE BREAK	Performance Studio
11:30 - 13:00	Symposium Set I	A Pinsent Masons 2, B Deloitte, C Pinsent Masons 1, D Bryant
13:00 - 14:00	LUNCH	Performance Studio
14:00 - 15:30	Symposium Set II	A Pinsent Masons 2, B Deloitte, C Pinsent Masons 1, D Bryant
15:30 - 16:00	COFFEE BREAK	Performance Studio
16:00 - 17:00	Round Table	Cinema

'Transforming the Early Years Workforce in the UK: the implications of recent research on the role and impact of EY Professionals following the Government's response to Nutbrown's review (2012)'

17:00 **Drinks sponsored by Wolverhampton University**

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

19:30 Conference dinner at the French restaurant Le Truc in the Arcadian/Birmingham City Centre.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Day 2: Thursday, 21st February 2013

08:00 - 09:30	Registration & refreshments	Foyer
09:30 - 10:30	Keynote II	Cinema

Professor Chris Pascal & Professor Tony Bertram on 'Praxeology as a participatory paradigm for early childhood research'

10:30 - 11:00	COFFEE BREAK	Performance Studio
11:00 - 12:30	Symposium Set III	A Pinsent Masons 2, B Deloitte, C Pinsent Masons 1, D Bryant
12:30 - 13:30	LUNCH	Performance Studio
13:30 - 15:00	Symposium Set IV	A Pinsent Masons 2, B Deloitte, C Pinsent Masons 1, D Bryant
15:00 - 15:30	COFFEE BREAK	Performance Studio
15:30 - 16:30	Plenary	Cinema

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Day 1: Wednesday, 20th February 2013

09:30 - 11:00 Keynote I

Cinema

'The teacher as Homo Ludens: The central role of play in early childhood care and education'

Dr Elly Singer,

Recent studies of the brain and evolutionary psychology underpin the importance of play in mammal development (Bjorklund, 2007). Without play, surviving in our complex social world would be difficult. Social behavior, survival, and group life vary in relation to local conditions. Play is one of the major ways to learn specific skills, knowledge and communication adapted to specific birth circumstances. "The urge to play is a primary process. It helps achieving the programming of higher brain regions" (Panksepp, 2010, 268). Enculturation by play starts from the very beginning. According to Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) this playful communication with the baby has the character of music and dancing. "As they play and make sense together, a baby and parent learn to act their part in a set of performances and mannerisms that grow as the beginnings of a cultural life" (Trevarthen, 2011, p. 180).

In this keynote the value of play and the teacher's role in young children engagement in play will be discussed. Attention will be paid to the importance of the teacher's attitude of playfulness, especially during caring activities.

Day 2: Thursday, 21st February 2013

09:30 - 10:30 Keynote II

Cinema

'Praxeology as a participatory paradigm for early childhood research'

Professor Chris Pascal & Professor Tony Bertram, CREC

The practice of participatory, practice-led research has grown rapidly in recent years and it is now widely accepted as making an important and serious contribution to the knowledge base of early childhood. Despite this progress there has been a continued professional critique of the robustness of participatory research methods. This critique, and a consequent critical self analysis of our work, has led us to accept that praxis in itself is not enough, and that to realise authentically a participatory paradigm in our research requires us to develop a worldview in which reflection (phronesis) and action (praxis) done in conjunction with others, needs to be immersed within a more astute awareness about power (politics) and a sharpened focus on values (ethics) in all of our thinking and actions. This mix of phronesis, praxis, ethics and power is at the heart of our developing 'praxeological' worldview of early childhood research. This paradigm is helping us to shift our research work into what we hope will be a more profound and intensely participatory, and thus more authentically democratic, phase. In this keynote we aim to share our developing vision of 'praxeological research'. We look at its key elements; trace its roots, theoretically and conceptually; and explore the particular contribution it can make in research. We consider what methodologies a researcher might use and what challenges they might face in attempting to make praxeology a part of their 'life of inquiry'. Finally, we shall explore issues of power, status, visibility and progress within the research world of early childhood.

Keywords: *Praxeology, Practice Based Research, Ethics and power, research methodologies*

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOST

The host of the third 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 20th & 21st February 2013.

COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCHES

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

This is taking place on Wednesday 20th February 2013 at the restaurant Le Truc in Birmingham (Ladywell Walk, The Arcadian, Birmingham, B5 4ST). Starting at 19:30.

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 (1st floor).

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.

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.

3rd BECERA Conference

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00

	Symposium Title	Room
I/A	Comparative studies of socio-cultural factors in child development	Pinsent Masons Room 2
I/B	Exploring Learning: Children's Play	Deloitte
I/C	Helping Children's Social and Emotional Development through Music and Humour	Pinsent Masons Room 1
I/D	Language & Communication Development in Young Children	Bryant Room

WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30

	Symposium Title	Room
II/A	Tackling Life Issues with Young Children	Pinsent Masons Room 2
II/B	Children's Voices & Participation	Deloitte
II/C	Effective Change in the EY workforce	Pinsent Masons Room 1
II/D	Exploring Barriers and Opportunities in Transition and Parental Engagement	Bryant Room

WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2013

Round table discussion: 16:00

'Transforming the Early Years Workforce in the UK: the implications of recent research on the role and impact of EY Professionals following the Government's response to Nutbrown's review (2012)

Professor Mark Hadfield & Dr Martin Needham (Wolverhampton University), Professor Denise Hevey & Dr Eunice Lumsden (Northampton University), Professor Tim Waller & Dr Geraldine Davis (Anglia Ruskin University)

WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2013

Drinks sponsored by Wolverhampton University: 17:00



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

THURSDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET III: 11:00 – 12:30

Symposium Title	Room
III/A Developing Effective Leadership	Pinsent Masons Room 2
III/B Developing Reflective Practice and Observation in EY	Deloitte
III/C Practitioner Research: Methodological Approaches and Interpretations	Pinsent Masons Room 1
III/D Research is everybody's business	Bryant Room

THURSDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET IV: 13:30 – 15:00

Symposium Title	Room
IV/A Listening and Working with Children in Practical Research	Pinsent Masons Room 2
IV/B Developing Practitioner Research and EY Professionalism	Deloitte
IV/C Building Inclusive Environments in EY settings	Pinsent Masons Room 1
IV/D Using Action Research for Practice Improvement	Bryant Room

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00

SYMPOSIUM I/A

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, University of Hull

Engaging Intercultural Principles in the Pedagogy of Early Years

Nektaria Palaiologou (1) & Ioanna Palaiologou (2), (1) University of Western Macedonia; University of Hull (2)

Socio-cultural analysis of early childhood practitioners' role in fostering peer relations: Cross-cultural insights using case studies from India and England

Janbee Shaik-Mopidevi, Anglia Ruskin University

SYMPOSIUM I/B

Exploring Learning: Children's Play

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: IRENE GUNNING, Early Childhood Ireland

Neighbourhood Play

Irene Gunning & Marlene McCormack, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

The Blockplay Research Project

Daniel Spry & Pauline Latchford, Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority

SYMPOSIUM I/C**HELPING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MUSIC AND HUMOUR**

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: MICHAEL REED, University of Worcester

Interactive Music-Making for Practice: Working with the Under 5s

Tim Twomey, Music as Therapy International

Humour and its Relationship to Social and Emotional Development

Laura Tallant, University of East Anglia

SYMPOSIUM I/D**LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN**

Room: Bryant Room

CHAIR: TIM WALLER, Anglia Ruskin University

More than words can say: the diverse communication needs of young children in the foundation stage

Carolyn Blackburn, Birmingham City University

Vocabulary acquisition through story-reading: A case study

Katie Waudby, University of Hull

WEDNESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30

SYMPOSIUM II/A
TACKLING LIFE ISSUES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, University of Hull

The relationship between young children's understanding the concept of death and their astronomical knowledge

Ghada Zamka, University of Hull

Sex Education in Early Childhood: A study Investigate its Importance and Potential Introduction within Educational Systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Amal Banunnah, Umm Al-Qura University & University of Hull

SYMPOSIUM II/B
CHILDREN'S VOICES & PARTICIPATION

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC

Visual Culture: Children's participation in the development of a shared perspective through multimedia technologies

Rebecca Heaton, The University of Northampton

Children's participation : the place of compassion in shaping ethical practice

Chandrika Devarakonda and Frances Atherton, Univesity of Chester

SYMPOSIUM II/C
EFFECTIVE CHANGE IN THE EY WORKFORCE

Room:Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: TIM WALLER, Anglia Ruskin University

What a difference a professional makes: researching the links between confidence and changing practice in early years settings

Tim Waller and Geraldine Davis, Anglia Ruskin University

The Phenomenon of Placements as a Vehicle for Developing Early Years Students' Professional Identity

Helen Perkins, Solihull College

Gender in the Early Years

Hazel Wright, Anglia Ruskin University

SYMPOSIUM II/D
EXPLORING BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TRANSITION AND PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Room: Bryant Room

CHAIR: MIKE GASPER, Starfish Enterprise

Exploring barriers and opportunities for parental engagement in day nurseries

Claire Schofield, National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

Young Children Brokering Transitions for Others

Megan Taddeo, University of Winchester

THURSDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET III: 11:00 – 12:30

SYMPOSIUM III/A
DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, University of Wolverhampton

An exploration of the concept of pedagogical leadership in early years education in Saudi Arabia

Lubna Alshanjiti, The University of Hull

Leadership and impact: case studies from the longitudinal study of Early Years Professional Status

Martin Needham, Mark Hadfield & Michael Jopling, University of Wolverhampton

SYMPOSIUM III/B
DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND OBSERVATION IN EY

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC

Facilitating group reflective thinking using a shared reflective journal

Jennifer Colwell, University of Brighton

“Helping me to notice more things in children’s actions”: How early years practitioners responded to a short-term project to develop the ways they talked about children’s learning

Julian Grenier, Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre (doctoral research student at the IOE)

SYMPOSIUM III/C**PRACTITIONER RESEARCH: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: MICHAEL REED, University of Worcester

Seeing and knowing: making meanings from evidence

Paulette Luff, Anglia Ruskin University

Researching 'with' and not 'on ' students

Rosie Walker and Michael Reed, University of Worcester

SYMPOSIUM III/D**RESEARCH IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS**

Room: Bryant Room

CHAIR: EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton

A 'Jigsaw' Methodology for Early Childhood Research: A flexible and reflexive approach

Jane Murray, University of Northampton

Mixed Methods: Adding numbers to detail to create change

Eunice Lumsden, University of Northampton

A Lens into Practice: The role of qualitative research

Eunice Lumsden (1), Donald Simpson (2), (1) University of Northampton, (2) Teesside University

Research impacting on Practice

Andrea Price & Eunice Lumsden, University of Northampton

THURSDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2013
SYMPOSIUM SET IV: 13:30 – 15:00

SYMPOSIUM IV/A

LISTENING AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN PRACTICAL RESEARCH

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 2

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, University of Wolverhampton

Participatory practices in Early Years; An action research project to improve listening to children

Helen Lyndon, CREC

Festival of Movement: Empowering Young Children

Angela Walker (1) & Gillian Sykes (2), (1) Jiminy Crickets Preschool/University of Northampton, (2) University of Northampton

SYMPOSIUM IV/B

DEVELOPING PRACTITIONER RESEARCH AND EY PROFESSIONALISM

Room: Deloitte

CHAIR: DONALD SIMPSON, Teesside University

Together We Can: How an Early Years Professional (EYP) Network set the foundations for a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and impacts on practice in nurseries across the UK

Caroline Wright, Kidsunlimited Limited

Moving beyond 'evidencing practice' to praxis – making a case for academic research which does not 'feed' smoothly into practice

Donald Simpson (1) and Eunice Lumsden (2), (1) Teesside University and (2) University of Northampton

Investigating the early years workforce perceptions on observations

Adele Last and Ioanna Palaiologou, The University of Hull

SYMPOSIUM IV/C
BUILDING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS IN EY SETTINGS

Room: Pinsent Masons Room 1

CHAIR: JACKIE MUSGRAVE, University of Worcester

How are inclusive environments created in day care settings for children aged 0-3 years with common chronic conditions (anaphylaxis; asthma; diabetes, eczema; epilepsy)? The practitioners' perspectives

Jackie Musgrave, University of Worcester

Minority Voices: Are the Voices of Ethnic Minority Children and Parents Being Heard in our Primary Schools?

Christian Winterbottom & Allyson Leedy, The Ohio State University

SYMPOSIUM IV/D
USING ACTION RESEARCH FOR PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT: CASE STUDIES FROM PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHERS

Room: Bryant Room

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY, University of Northampton

Can working parents involvement in their children's Learning be enhanced through the use of ICT?

Karen Locke, Peach Tree Pre-school, Banbury

Raising the awareness of healthy eating on parents, staff and children

Susan Wigley, Little Wiggles Pre-school, Northamptonshire

Communication and speech development in the forest school: can a natural environment make a difference to speech and language?

Tanya Richardson, Touch of Eden Nursery, Northamptonshire

WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2013

SYMPOSIUM SET I

11:30 – 13:00

SYMPOSIUM SET I/A

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CHAIR: IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, University of Hull

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 2

Engaging Intercultural Principles in the Pedagogy of Early Years

NEKTARIA PALAIOLOGOU (1) & IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU (2), (1) University of Western Macedonia; University of Hull (2)

Research aims and questions:

Over the last decade, research related with the importance of socio-cultural factors in child's personal, social and emotional development has offered insights into how to promote effective relationships with the family, school and the community. Intercultural Education has an important role especially as societies are becoming multicultural and should be embedded in the early years curriculum. One of the key aspects in intercultural education is about personal beliefs that reflect individuals' (educators and immigrant families) views about what should be done in early years pedagogy. Although there is a vast number of research in relation to early years pedagogy and intercultural education, there is limited research that specifically investigates the relationship between personal beliefs of educators and immigrant families in the early childhood practice. So far what we are experiencing in early years education is a top down approach from the curriculum to children rather than a synergistic relationship between beliefs and early years practice.

Thus, this paper aims to explore a conceptual idea on how the principles of intercultural education can be embedded in early years pedagogy considering the relationship between personal beliefs of educators and immigrant families in the early years practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Some indicative studies from the international bibliography will be presented which highlight the importance of the socio-cultural factors on child's development.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This conceptual presentation aims at highlighting the importance of Intercultural Education principles in early childhood and pedagogy. Based on the first theoretical model about the intercultural axes in education (Essinger 1991), we expand on these axes presenting some intercultural principles which are very important in the pedagogical praxis since the early years.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This is a conceptual paper and it is based on literature review which critically examines a number of research projects that have taken place in relation to intercultural education.

Ethical considerations:

As this is a conceptual paper and it does not involve empirical research, there were not any ethical issues to be considered.

Main findings or discussion:

Effective intercultural early years education should reflect on the personal beliefs of educators and families and attempt to engage in constructive practices and seek to develop active partnerships with all involved (educators, families children). Intercultural education stems from awareness of “others” and how we are related to others. The dualistic approach to intercultural education (from curriculum to learners) ignoring personal beliefs and experiences is less likely to engage everyone involved in a deep reflection on key issues of intercultural education.

Implications, practice or policy:

Intercultural Education (IE) principles are very important in early childhood and pedagogy both in its theory and practice. This presentation shows that IE principles are very crucial in pedagogy, as a new dimension within it; also, it shows the importance of educating early childhood teachers on IE issues so that they reflect on and maybe reconstruct their own beliefs.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Learning environment, intercultural education, immigrant families*

Socio-cultural analysis of early childhood practitioners’ role in fostering peer relations: Cross-cultural insights using case studies from India and England.

JANBEE SHAIK-MOPIDEVI, Anglia Ruskin University

Research aims and questions:

There is strong evidence that children’s peer relations greatly benefit children’s social and intellectual development and the case for children’s peer relations has been made conclusively in developmental theory and research. However, there are growing concerns over the increasing trend of ‘schoolification’ or pre-primary focus in early childhood and its potential negative effects on young children’s peer relationships, and these concerns are more pronounced in England and also in India.

In both the countries, there are clear policy guidelines emphasizing on play-based curriculum allowing for children to forge and enjoy peer relationships. Yet, in England, there are contradictions between policy documents and the prescriptive legal requirements creating a tension between the two. In India too, ongoing research studies confirm that there is a downward extension of primary school curriculum into early years proving huge challenges to children’s forging and enjoying of peer relationships and their overall well-being in general.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Although there is a lot of research on the positive benefits of peer relationships, only a few studies have focused on understanding the teacher's role in fostering peer relations especially at the center-based early childhood care and education settings. Yet their focus is limited in that most of the studies have focused on teachers practice at the individual level and haven't researched the practice in relation to the wider social, cultural and policy context and there is limited focus on cross-cultural studies. This study attempt to fill the gap by understanding the early childhood practitioners' role in fostering peer relations and at the same time endeavors to examine the contributory/constricting factors which impinge on their practice and while doing so contributes to the cross-cultural understanding of practitioners' roles.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

In understanding the attitudes and perceptions of the early childhood practitioners which influence the ways and means adopted by them in fostering peer relations and in exploring the factors infringing on their practice, it has been understood that the specific perceptions, practices and experiences are embedded and interpreted within the particular social and cultural contexts. Hence the study adopts the Socio-cultural perspectives as a theoretical construct and as a strategy for data analysis.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The research was carried out as a qualitative case study in the Reception class of a local primary school and at a philosophically 'different' school in India. The aim was to explore the role of early childhood professionals in fostering peer relations in their settings. Participants were two reception class teachers and four learning support assistants for the class from England and four early childhood practitioner's from Indian setting. The research took an ethnographic approach using participant observation and semi-structured interviews to understand the ways and means adopted by early childhood professionals in fostering peer relations and to examine the affordances and challenges while doing so and thereby exploring their role as a whole.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical considerations formed an integral part of the study at every stage of the study. Cross-cultural nature of data collection entailed a different approach and illuminated the concept of 'Ecological Ethics'

Main findings or discussion:

The study concluded that while Barbara Rogoff's three foci of analysis is excellent for classroom research yet it is insufficient in this study's context and advocated the need to modify and extend the third foci to the fourth foci-*ecological* to the original Rogoff's framework (i.e. *personal, inter-personal, Institutional foci*). Findings from both the settings conclude that despite of the cultural and contextual variations early childhood professional do play a mediating role; while his/her role fluctuates at times in the continuum of roles largely influenced by wider cultural ecological context.

Implications, practice or policy:

The study has demonstrated how early childhood practitioners roles are defined and dictated by the wider policy and cultural context and emphasized the need for early childhood centers as spaces of trust rather than accountability -which can facilitate creative and collaborative curriculum and fluid pedagogy with implications for positive peer relationships as has been demonstrated from the Indian setting with a different philosophical orientation and altogether different image of children, different purpose for schools and altogether different roles of both teachers and schools.

Keywords: *Peer relationships, early childhood education, qualitative study, ethnography, socio-cultural theories, teacher's roles, International and Comparative Research*

SYMPOSIUM SET I/B**EXPLORING LEARNING: CHILDREN'S PLAY**

CHAIR: IRENE GUNNING, Early Childhood Ireland

ROOM: Deloitte

Neighbourhood Play

IRENE GUNNING & MARLENE MCCORMACK, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

Research aims and questions:

The aim of this research is to better understand children's lives and to discover patterns, trends and attitudes towards neighbourhood play for young children aged 5-11 years.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Play is a universal right of all children (UNCRC, Article 31), but research (Hillman et al, 1990; O' Brien, 2000; Tandy, 1999) indicates a decrease over the last thirty years in children's access to neighbourhood spaces.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This work is based on the premise that all children engage in and benefit from play (Pellegrini and Smith, 1998); that neighbourhood play is a strong force for community cohesion (Greatorex, 2011) and that through neighbourhood play children extend their social networks, build relationships and develop a sense of community (Gleave, 2010).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This study adopted a mixed method approach which drew on a series of naturalistic observations of children playing in designated neighbourhoods across multiple geographic areas. Questionnaires completed with a randomised sample of 1,700 parents and the results analysed and themed.

Ethical considerations:

Fundamental principles of minimising harm; ensuring anonymity/confidentiality and safeguarding children (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2012) were central to the study.

Main findings or discussion:

Evidence suggests while parents enjoyed play in their own neighborhoods, there are constraints for and changes in play patterns for children in modern Ireland. It is evident from the research that a substantial proportion of children are missing out on essential benefits that playing outdoors, near their homes can bring.

Implications, practice or policy:

Areas for further research emerge from the study, namely: Play patterns in affluent areas; Connection with nature; Risk in Play ; Urban apartment living.

Keywords: *Play, Outdoor Play, Parents perspective*

The Blockplay Research Project

DANIEL SPRY & PAULINE LATCHFORD, Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority

Research aims and questions:

The effect on children's learning of extended training and completion of a research-based project on the quality of blockplay.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The Froebel Blockplay Project (1987-90) 'Exploring Learning: Young Children and Blockplay' provided the foundation for the research project-based training. The training, projects and EYFSP data allowed the training team to collate and produce their own findings on the outcomes for children

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This is an educational action research project. The practitioners have self-selected an area that interests them around which they develop their own research.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The findings are presented through case studies, practitioner projects and through EYFSP data. The project has allowed practitioners to explore the boundaries of their own knowledge around adult-child interactions, child-initiated learning and child development by providing adequate time for practitioners to discuss, reflect and formulate their own philosophies.

Ethical considerations:

The training package provided practitioners with the tools to deliver high quality blockplay. This included providing practitioners with the time and resources for real experiences of playing with the blocks, both individually and in teams, ensuring a reflective approach and a deeper understanding of children's learning .

Main findings or discussion:

The research submitted by the practitioners suggest this project has helped to underpin knowledge, give confidence in reflecting on practice and has developed a deeper understanding of the value of blockplay in children's learning and how this fits with EYFS.

Implications, practice or policy:

Use practitioner evaluations and analysis of the research projects to broaden the range of practitioners who have the opportunity to engage with and develop children's learning through Block Play.

Keywords: *Action Research, Impacts, Practice based inquiry, Leadership, Creativity*

SYMPOSIUM SET I/C**HELPING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MUSIC AND HUMOUR**

CHAIR: MIKE REED, University of Worcester

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 1

Interactive Music-Making for Practice: Working with the Under 5s

TIM TWOMEY, Music as Therapy International

Research aims and questions:

Interactive Music-Making (IMM) is a child-centred approach to music-making, which establishes positive relationships and fosters the child's individual potential. It makes music-making a more integral part of all children's early development opportunities and promotes skills which develop social communication.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

IMM is informed by clinical studies spanning fourteen years and by music therapy research/practice in the field of early intervention and social and communication needs. Accordingly it is indebted to attachment research.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Credit-rated by the University of Greenwich, IMM training comprises 12 weekly seminars, a written assignment and 8 weeks' supervised practice, evidenced by submission of a portfolio.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Weekly Course evaluation (by students and tutors); Supervised practice; Impact questionnaire/workshops undertaken by an independent consultant involving practitioners and managers.

Ethical considerations:

How to:

Create a model of safe practice for Early Years practitioners and children; Ensure IMM is part of the care pathway for an individual child triggering appropriate onward referrals when required; Ensure there are clear parameters between what IMM and clinical music therapy offer.

Main findings or discussion:

IMM enhances what early years care settings can offer by way of targeted early intervention.

Implications, practice or policy:

"IMM reaches communities served by numerous early years service providers. Its impact is being closely monitored. Evidence includes "IMM means that can offer targeted support.

Keywords: *Music Therapy, Personal social and emotional development, Early Intervention, Outcomes, Training Opportunities*

Humour and its Relationship to Social and Emotional Development

LAURA TALLANT, University of East Anglia

Research aims and questions:

This paper explores the relationship between young children's humour and their social/ emotional development and how this might influence practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This research relates to work carried out by Chapman and Foot (1980), Woods (1983) and McGhee (1989) in addition to research I carried out for my Masters degree concerning the developmental significance of young children's humour. It forms part of a PhD.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Framed within ideas generated by the research mentioned above - ideas that make available a connection between humour and social and emotional development - the research aims to explore the relationship between children's humour and early years practice (this paper focusing particularly on humour and social/emotional development); ways that children's, parents' and practitioners' perspectives can help with the co-construction of knowledge about this relationship; and finally the implications of the findings for children, parents and practitioners.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The research will take the form of a relational study (Cohen et al, 2007), following a mixed methods approach within an interpretative paradigm (MacNaughton et al, 2004). The data collection methods will include interviews, child consultations, observations and questionnaires.

Ethical considerations:

Informed consent will be gained from all adult participants and parental consent gained for the children involved in the research (Robson, 2005). Great care will need to be taken to ensure that the children's wishes are reflected and their feelings responded to sensitively.

Main findings or discussion:

The paper will discuss the link between social/emotional development and humour as well as the possible implications of this for early years practice.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research aims to have a significant influence on practitioners' facilitation of children's humour.

Keywords: *Data gathering, Pedagogy, Personal social and emotional development, Parents perspective*

SYMPOSIUM SET I/D**LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN**

CHAIR: TIM WALLER, Anglia Ruskin University

ROOM: Bryant Room

More than words can say: the diverse communication needs of young children in the foundation stage

CAROLYN BLACKBURN, Birmingham City University

Research aims and questions:

This study aims to describe and analyse the diverse communication needs of young children in the foundation stage in one Local Authority (LA) in England.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Mroz and Hall's (2003) study on early years practitioner knowledge of young children's communication development is relevant as well as the Bercow (2008) report and other early childhood intervention policy reports.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Children's communication skills are actively shaped through the intervention of other persons as mediators between the child within a social-cultural environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1962; Bruner, 1983). Speech language and communication needs can be associated with a range of factors that include social and environmental, neuro-developmental and sensory disability (Bercow, 2008).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This case study is an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life LA context (Yin, 2004: 13). Therefore, a case study design with mixed methods approach will be employed to explore the research questions.

Ethical considerations:

The British Educational Research Association's (BERA, 2004) revised ethical guidelines were consulted and have guided ethical considerations throughout the study including issues relating to researcher conduct, confidentiality and participant consent.

Main findings or discussion:

Practitioners are not always aware of the earliest signs of delay in young children's SLC. Practitioners reported a lack of training in particular to support the needs of young children with English as an additional language and speech language and communication needs. Furthermore, awareness of the need to value young children's social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1994) is not sufficiently embedded in practitioner training or practice.

Implications, practice or policy:

There may be a need for initial training and continuing professional development for practitioners needs to emphasise the importance of early child-caregiver interactions, early speech, language and communication development and valuing children's social and cultural capital.

Keywords: *Multiprofessional collaboration, Communication Language and Literacy, Parents perspective*

Vocabulary acquisition through story-reading: A case study

KATIE WAUDBY, University of Hull

Research aims and questions:

To investigate methods used in bilingual education and the effect that the language of preview and review story-reading has on L2 vocabulary acquisition.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Based on research by Elley (1989) and Ulanoff and Pucci (1999), draws upon research by Bialystok (2001, 2002).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

English is mainly taught as a foreign language in Spain using English as the instructional language (as in CLIL) but Ulanoff and Pucci (1999) suggested the important role of L1 as a scaffold in second language learning.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This case study involved observation of teaching methods, an interview with the class teacher and an intervention experiment. The experiment used vocabulary tests to assess the acquisition of

vocabulary from preview and review story reading with the scaffolding (preview and review) in either L1 (Spanish) or L2 (English).

Ethical considerations:

The tests had to be made accessible to young children, images were used (participation). The experiment was carried out so that both groups received the same treatment, control and experimental groups were switched. Parental consent gained and children informed of process.

Main findings or discussion:

The findings based on test scores showed more L2 vocabulary acquisition using L1 as a scaffold, however from more detailed analysis of actual acquisition (rather than test scores) L2 scaffolding was seen to have a slightly greater effect on L2 acquisition.

Implications, practice or policy:

Looking simply at test scores does not necessarily show the whole picture of vocabulary acquisition. This should be investigated further. More research is needed into methods used to teach EFL particularly in countries like Spain where the practice is relatively new.

Keywords: *Action Research, Methodological approaches, Practice based inquiry, Case study, Communication Language and Literacy*

WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2013

SYMPOSIUM SET II

14:00 -15:30

SYMPOSIUM II/A

TACKLING LIFE ISSUES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

CHAIR: IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, University of Hull

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 2

The relationship between young children's understanding the concept of death and their astronomical knowledge

GHADA ZAMKA, University of Hull

Research aims and questions:

The purpose of this study is to investigate young children's understanding of the concept of death through their scientific knowledge. However, it expands the scientific knowledge view to study a new scientific perspective, which is the astronomical knowledge.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This investigation was diverted through several perspectives. It was started by the psychological perspective and transferred to the cognition which developed into investigation through scientific perspective, particularly the perspective of biology. This study follows the cognition perspective on investigation the understanding of the concept of death.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The investigation through understanding, biologically, the internal organ's function in causing life and death is an abstract concept. From another point of view, scientifically, these functions could be affected by time, which is called lifespan. This depicts how life, which includes years, days and moments, transfers in particular time into disappearance and not-existence. In other words, we could understand the sub-concepts of death through scientific point of view.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This study is using a qualitative method. The sample size is 29 children between 4 and 9 years

Ethical considerations:

Among the midst of the research on young children's understanding of the concept of the death, investigating how young children could understand of the concept of the death remains a sensitive subject.

Main findings or discussion:

This study is in analysis stage. By analyzing the data, it could show us if there is/ is no relationship between understanding both concepts in the same age of their life.

Implications, practice or policy:

The data was collected in the UK by using open-ended questions through two common stories for children.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Children's perspectives, Knowledge*

Sex Education in Early Childhood: A study Investigate its Importance and Potential Introduction within Educational Systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

AMAL BANUNNAH, Umm Al-Qura University & University of Hull

Research aims and questions:

This paper explores parents' and teachers' perspectives towards the significance of sex education in the early years curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Teaching about sex and sexuality is an extremely sensitive issue (Campos, 2002). There is a lack of information and limited studies on the subject of sex education especially in early years in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study is one of few research studies investigating the perspective of parents and teachers in the Middle East.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Information given to children should focus on developing a healthy and positive understanding of gender, sex and sexuality, including human relationships (Chrisman and Couchenour, 2002). However, Parents can find it difficult to approach certain topics with their children (Dilworth, 2009). Milton (2003) also argues that some teachers fail to see the importance or struggle with discomfort about addressing this in early years.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Mixed methods were used to collect and analyse data: questionnaires for parents and interviews with specialists and teachers. Quantitative and qualitative data were used by thematic analysis.

Ethical considerations:

Approval was obtained from the University of Hull Ethics Committee.

Main findings or discussion:

Although there are many factors that could prevent adults discussing these sensitive topics with children, parents and teachers have high agreement that there is a need to provide sex education to young children in KSA as a compulsory part of the curriculum to protect children.

Implications, practice or policy:

Early years education should apply sex education in the curriculum and provide training courses in this topic for parents and teachers to help children.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Curriculum, Parents participation*

SYMPOSIUM II/B

CHILDREN'S VOICES & PARTICIPATION

CHAIR: PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC

ROOM: Deloitte

Visual Culture: Children's participation in the development of a shared perspective through multimedia technologies

REBECCA HEATON, The University of Northampton

Research aims and questions:

To identify how engagement with visual culture can provide children with a communicative tool to express their linguistic and visual voice. It investigates the implications of using multi-media technology as a tool to enhance this concept and explores the value of pupil voice in the research process.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The research builds on that in early years and primary art education (Rosen 2012, Cultler, 2010) recognising how engagement with visual culture can influence pupil development beyond academic means. Both teachers and pupils become learners recognising the role of collaborative participants as agents of change. Influences are also established from research into social interaction and the use of exploratory talk within educational contexts (Gjems, 2010, Bell, 2011).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

A socio-constructivist conceptual framework enables child participation in the development of shared pedagogical practice.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The research straddles the paradigms of post modernism and socio-cultural theory; to enable both the cultural environment, cognitive behaviours and participant voice to be valued in the social scenario. A reflexive case study explores the relationship between visual culture and linguistics in one school; a visual documentary is constructed showcasing teacher and pupil voice surrounding visual culture. Pupils become active participants in the filming process.

Ethical considerations:

Pupil/ participant/ school confidentiality/ film; Power relationships.

Main findings or discussion:

Participants, adults and children, became more aware of their positions as learners and of the visual culture they encountered. Correlations between linguistic, social and cognitive processes of understanding were made; technological engagement fuelled this providing participants' with a means of accessing their visual literacy.

Implications, practice or policy:

Volume of data generation; Teacher Researcher

Keywords: *Life of inquiry, Practice based inquiry, Creativity, Technology and ICT*

Children's participation : the place of compassion in shaping ethical practice

CHANDRIKA DEVARAKONDA AND FRANCES ATHERTON, University of Chester

Research aims and questions:

This paper explores whether the bureaucracy of ethics is a lived reality in the lives of young children in early years settings. It questions the perceived tensions around adult's decisions about children's participation and the place for compassion in shaping ethical practice in research with young children. The issues around children's voice, participation, power and children's rights will be discussed and the extent to which they influence the decisions which adults make about children's participation in any research. The paper hopes to share our tensions and dilemmas in this continuing debate.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Ethical dilemmas around informed consent and children's participation in research

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

children as competent and active participants (James and James Informed consent and children's participation (court, Einarsdottir and Perry, 2012)

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

interpretivist approach

Ethical considerations:

informed consent and children's participation

Main findings or discussion:

We hope to raise awareness of practitioners when engaged in research with children by identifying the competency of children to make decisions.

Implications, practice or policy:

practitioners empower children by enabling them to express their consent to participate in research

Keywords: *Ethics, Methods, Practice based inquiry*

SYMPOSIUM II/C**EFFECTIVE CHANGE IN THE EY WORKFORCE**

CHAIR: TIM WALLER, Anglia Ruskin University

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 1

What a difference a professional makes: researching the links between confidence and changing practice in early years settings

TIM WALLER AND GERALDINE DAVIS, Anglia Ruskin University

Research aims and questions:

Drawing on findings from two recent investigations concerning Early Years Professional Status in England, one national longitudinal study and one regional study in a Local Authority, the presentation aims to demonstrate that professional status impacts on practitioners, settings and children, increasing the confidence of EYPs to lead practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The presentation is directly related to other recent studies in England: the Longitudinal Evaluation of the Role and Impact of EYPS (Hadfield, Jopling, Needham and Waller, et al, 2012); the Graduate Leader Fund (Mathers, Sylva, et al 2012); Davis (2012); and Lumsden (2012). It is also related to studies about the political, economic and practical challenges of professionalisation (for example, Osgood, 2009; McGillivray, 2008; Adams, 2008; Miller, 2008; Simpson, 2010).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The paper draws on theoretical concepts from the field of sociology to explore issues of impact and agency (Corsaro, 2005; Giddens, 1984).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The paper examines perceptions of confidence and links to impact within small-scale qualitative research using a variety of methods.

Ethical considerations:

Both research projects were approved by the relevant university ethical boards.

Main findings or discussion:

The paper argues that improving outcomes for children occurs through improving the confidence of the workforce to enact change. Examples are provided from both studies of the ways in which this confidence is evident in early childhood settings. The paper discusses factors that contribute to the development of confidence and how this empowers practitioners.

Implications, practice or policy:

The findings have implications for the continued development of the workforce and will be discussed in the light of the government's 2013 policy for this workforce.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Impacts, Practice based inquiry, Leadership*

The Phenomenon of Placements as a Vehicle for Developing Early Years Students' Professional Identity

HELEN PERKINS, Solihull College

Research aims and questions:

The role of early years qualifications is in the spotlight following the Tickell Review (2011) and the resulting Nutbrown Review of Early Years Qualifications: Foundations for Quality (2012). The quality of early years placements in supporting practitioners' professional development is one of Nutbrown's recommendations. The extent to which placement encultures students' professional identity and practice is one which needs further investigation

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The professional identity and professionalisation of the workforce is well documented (see Osgood, Brock, Moss, Urban) however the role of work placement for pre-service student practitioners (aged 16-18) is less well reported.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This paper is a summary of my initial thoughts and discussions which will culminate in my thesis for my EdD.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This will be a phenomenological study, using a qualitative and interpretivist paradigm

Ethical considerations:

The impact on the placements' and our relationship with them as the outcomes could be negative as well as positive.

A sensitive approach to students' commentary as they are still developing their practice will be considered.

Main findings or discussion:

My experience working with 16-18 year old school leavers wishing to enter the ECEC profession leads me to believe that placement is where they learn how to be an ECEC practitioner. The importance of the quality of experience is one worth exploring

Implications, practice or policy:

At the time of writing the Government response to the Nutbrown Review is imminent. There are potential changes to the content and structure of qualifications including the placement element. In understanding how placement contributes to students' professional identity will inform how this element can best be delivered

Keywords: *Life of inquiry, Early Childhood Professionalism, Real world, Learning environment*

Gender in the Early Years

HAZEL WRIGHT, Anglia Ruskin University

Research aims and questions:

Dr Hazel Wright, with colleagues from Anglia Ruskin University, Leeds Metropolitan and the University of East London, is joining with key nursery provider the London Early Years Foundation to seek funding for a project that will bring up-to-date our thinking and experiences around gender issues in the Early Years.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The study will partly replicate and update earlier work on childcare as a gendered occupation (Penn and McQuail, 1997, RR23), and on men and women working in day care (Thomas Coram Research Unit) later summarised by Cameron, Moss and Owen in *Men in the Nursery* (1999). It will also be informed by the later studies of entry, retention and loss among childcare workers and students (Cameron, Owen and Moss, 2001, RR275).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research is underpinned by Sen's Capability Approach. This argues that people will choose opportunities that benefit themselves and the broader society if those opportunities are presented in ways that make them attractive.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The study/ies will be real world research, using questionnaires, interviews, observational and simple investigative methods to establish where the barriers to gender equality currently lie and those practices that can work to bring about change.

Ethical considerations:

The partnership of university researchers and social enterprise network will ensure that the study is carried out in ways that are ethically robust. The use of multiple geographical sites will offer a system of checks and balances, within the process and its reporting.

Main findings or discussion:

The research will explore gender issues fully.

Implications, practice or policy:

It will seek innovative practices that will encourage greater gender equality.

Keywords: *Data gathering, Applications, Early Childhood Professionalism, Multiple narratives, Real world*

SYMPOSIUM II/D**EXPLORING BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TRANSITION AND PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT**

CHAIR: MIKE GASPER, Starfish Enterprise

ROOM: Bryant Room

Exploring barriers and opportunities for parental engagement in day nurseries

CLAIRE SCHOFIELD, National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

Research aims and questions:

The aim of the present study was to explore barriers and potential solutions around parental engagement and their feasibility in nurseries where most parents lead busy working lives. Focus groups and online surveys were conducted to identify best practice in nurseries and highlight innovative methods to engage families.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Previous findings in research literature have shown that engaging parents in learning at home at an early stage leads to more positive engagement in learning at school

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The UK Early Years Curriculum stresses the importance of parent/ professional /provider partnerships as a feature of childcare quality (Harrist, Thompson & Norris, 2007). However, providers, parents and professionals often report on how difficult this is to realise (Mooney & Munton, 1998).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Two focus groups and an online survey (n= 17; n=32) were undertaken with childcare managers from centres awarded an outstanding Ofsted rating and/or those who have completed the National Day Nurseries Associations (NDNA)'s e-Quality Counts quality improvement programme.

Ethical considerations:

We followed ethical guidelines as set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) when conducting focus groups and the online survey. Written informed consent was obtained by participants.

Main findings or discussion:

The main barriers in linking nursery and home included parent's limited time and attitudes, staff training and social skills, jargon and unfriendly language. Potential solutions were flexibility and convenience for families, empathy, face-to-face communication and innovative use of the Internet and special 'family friendly' events.

Implications, practice or policy:

This research study may help the sector in new ways to communicate and engage with busy parents who may be very different from the usually disadvantaged parents studied in previous research.

Keywords: *Parents participation*

Young Children Brokering Transitions for Others

MEGAN TADDEO, University of Winchester

Research aims and questions:

What really matters to children about transition?

How can they help others who are about to experience transition?

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Building on the work of Dockett and Perry (1999) and Clark and Moss (2001).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research recognises children's voice; draws on the concept of brokerage (Wenger, 1998) and Bernstein's theories (1990) relating to knowledge and control; explores power balances within the community and how children's positions within this balance change when they graduate to become brokers.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Child friendly methods establish a context of multiple listening in which 22 Reception children demonstrate their perspectives. Children (who have recently experienced transition) are encouraged to inform new children about school and, hence, to become brokers in the transition.

Ethical considerations:

University of Winchester clearance obtained. BERA guidelines followed (eg informed consent, anonymity). Children's rights to participate or not considered.

Main findings or discussion:

Children's accounts illustrate what really matter to them with regard to transition; their understanding of school community practices and how they can help new children to become part of the school community. Four recurring and interdependent themes emerge: school as a site of multiple communities; brokerage across the school; power balances within the community; children's voices in educational research.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research argues that young children are capable and expert in providing support to other young children during the transition and provides examples of how that can be facilitated. The key implication is that adults need to make time to listen and hear the children's voices with regard to transition, research and other issues that are important to them.

Keywords: *Children's perspectives, Transitions*

THURSDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2013

SYMPOSIUM SET III

11:00 – 12:30

SYMPOSIUM SET III/A**DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, University of Wolverhampton

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 2

An exploration of the concept of pedagogical leadership in early years education in Saudi Arabia

LUBNA ALSHANQITI, The University of Hull

Research aims and questions:

The research explores the concept of pedagogical leadership in Saudi preschool settings, focusing on vision, mission and decision-making, relationships with the local community and learning in a digital age.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The research draws on Male and Palaiologou's (2011) Learning-centred leadership or pedagogical leadership? and Heikka and Waniganayake's (2011) Pedagogical leadership from a distributed perspective.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Pedagogical leadership is underpinned by capacity building, knowledge creation and relationship building.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Within an interpretive approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five preschool leaders with varied experiences and different nationalities, in five settings implementing different curricula, in Riyadh.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical consents were obtained through the university and participants.

Main findings or discussion:

Some leaders, mainly owners, practise a full leadership role: forming the vision and mission, making all kinds of decisions, flexibly building relationships and involving others in decision-making. Non-owners play more managerial role.

The application of pedagogical leadership in Saudi preschools is influenced by the school's programme and leaders' relationships with the school community. The former influences the school community's mission relationships with others; the latter, influences the effectiveness of the setting and children's learning and development. Relationships with teachers and parents, mainly mothers, were encouraged.

Technology helps in linking home and school, and developing relationships with parents and the community.

Implications, practice or policy:

The findings show the importance of synergistic relationships among stakeholders for school effectiveness.

Keywords: *Leadership, Technology and ICT*

Leadership and impact: case studies from the longitudinal study of Early Years Professional Status

MARTIN NEEDHAM, MARK HADFIELD & MICHAEL JOPLING, University of Wolverhampton

Research aims and questions:

The longitudinal study of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) investigated the impact of EYPS on practitioners and their settings.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The study builds on research into quality, leadership and outcomes for children in preschool education (Sylva et al, 2010; Mathers et al, 2011, Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2006).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The study drew on established notions of quality in early years provision (Fenech, 2011; Mathers et al, 2012) and theories of agency, professionalism (Cable & Miller, 2011) and early years leadership (Whalley, 2008).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Largely qualitative, the study was based on case studies of settings and a repeated national questionnaire survey of over 25% of all Early Years Professionals' (EYPs). The survey focused on workforce development and EYPs' professional identity and career aspirations. The case studies used observation (Harms et al, 1998; Pascal et al 1996), in conjunction with social network analysis and qualitative interviews with EYPs, setting leaders and staff, to explore quality improvement and practice leadership in 30 settings in England.

Ethical considerations:

The study was overseen by advisory group made up of policy-makers, researchers and practitioners, an internal reference group and the university's ethics committee.

Main findings or discussion:

The study explored how EYPs improved pedagogical processes and led practice to improve and sustain the quality of provision. This paper focuses on two case studies in detail: one which showed significant improvements in terms of overall quality and one which maintained high quality during the study.

Implications, practice or policy:

The case studies highlighted demonstrate effective practice leadership in settings which achieved or maintained high quality provision during the study.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological approaches, Leadership*

SYMPOSIUM III/B

DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND OBSERVATION IN EY

CHAIR: PHILIP GAMMAGE, CREC

ROOM: Deloitte

Facilitating group reflective thinking using a shared reflective journal

JENNIFER COLWELL, University of Brighton

Research aims and questions:

The research has two primary aims, to consider: The benefits and challenges of using a shared reflective journal; whether the use of a shared journal can lead to high-level reflective thinking and changes in practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This work is influenced by key theories of reflective practice (e.g. Schön, 1983) and builds upon 'reflective team models' used with students (e.g. Andersen, 1991; Eubank, 2001).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This worked is shaped by a conceptual framework of the potential of shared reflective thinking.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Adopting a social constructive perspective and an exploratory case study design, the research had three phases. The first, involved the use of observation and interview to capture the level of reflective thinking used within the setting. The second involved the practitioner team keeping a shared reflective journal and audio recording their staff meetings for one year. The final phase involved analysis of the journal and audio recordings and follow up interviews with the staff.

Ethical considerations:

BERA ethical guidance (2011) was considered throughout the research design and process. Ethical tensions include: gaining consent from practitioners and ensuring that information on children was kept confidential.

Main findings or discussion:

It is concluded that a shared reflective journal promotes high-level reflective thinking which leads to changes in practice. There are a number of barriers which need to be overcome in including making time, training and overcoming anxieties associated with using the journal.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research suggests that team reflections are a crucial and underutilised element of reflective practice. Guidance for developing models of shared reflection using a shared reflective journal is offered.

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

“Helping me to notice more things in children’s actions”: How early years practitioners responded to a short-term project to develop the ways they talked about children’s learning

JULIAN GRENIER, Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre (doctoral research student at the IOE)

Research aims and questions:

This research considers how nine early years practitioners, working with two-year olds in three contrasting settings, talked about the children during fortnightly discussion groups over a four-month period. The participants were trained to use the Target Child Observation (TCO) tool and brought their observations to the discussion groups.

The key aim of the research was to explore whether there was any development in the ways that participants talked about the children.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This builds on my Institution-Focussed Study, submitted towards my doctorate in education at the IOE. A summary and the full report are available at <http://juliangrenier.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/instead-of-just-implementing-best.html>

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

This research is an exploration into how three team of early years practitioners talk about their work, drawing on constructivist grounded theory.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

This is qualitative research. Participants discussed their TCOs in the discussion groups, which were audio recorded. The transcriptions were coded and analysed, drawing on constructivist grounded theory.

Ethical considerations:

The BERA (2011) guidelines were followed in full; in addition, I was mindful of the extended ethical approach proposed by Webster and Lunt (2002, p.104), that research should support “the broader collegial function of improving ... practice as a whole”.

Main findings or discussion:

As the project proceeded, the participants noticed more about the children they worked with. They put more emphasis on the children's interaction with each other, and with adults.

Implications, practice or policy:

The findings of this small-scale study suggest that practitioners can fruitfully take a more active role than is usually described in order to develop their understanding of the children and the ways that they learn.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Ethics, Methodological approaches, Birth to Three*

SYMPOSIUM III/C

PRACTITIONER RESEARCH: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND INTERPRETATIONS

CHAIR: MICHAEL REED, University of Worcester

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 1

Seeing and knowing: making meanings from evidence

PAULETTE LUFF, Anglia Ruskin University

Research aims and questions:

The study, on which this paper is based, set out to explore understandings and uses of pedagogical documentation in early years settings. The aim here is to consider parallels between collection and interpretation of data in a qualitative research project and uses of evidence in professional practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The work is inspired by ways of listening to children and documenting their learning in the municipal pre-schools of Reggio Emilia and the Learning Story approach used in the Te Whariki curriculum in New Zealand.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

It takes a sociocultural-historical approach, recognising context and seeing knowledge as collectively constructed.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

In this small-scale, interpretive study we explored evidence of everyday practice in documenting care and learning from the perspectives of members of staff, parents and children, using field notes, photographs and interviews. In our analysis we are looking across the three participating settings to identify the methods of documentation used; how these are implemented; and understandings that underpin the work.

Ethical considerations:

The project was given ethical approval by a Faculty Research Ethics Panel. All adult participants gave informed consent and assent was also negotiated with the children who took part.

Main findings or discussion:

There are many similarities between the acts of researchers who observe, take photographs and ask questions and practitioners who engage in similar acts for pedagogical purposes. Multi-faceted decision making, interpretation and representation are common to both activities.

Implications, practice or policy:

Questions are raised about who participates at each stage of the processes of collecting evidence and making meaning and about the depth of analysis and explanations and their utility.

Keywords: *Data gathering, Pedagogy, Assessment, Methodological approaches, Knowledge*

Researching 'with' and not 'on ' students

ROSIE WALKER AND MICHAEL REED, University of Worcester

Research aims and questions:

The research illustrates the work of two university tutors and students who collectively explored the drivers of quality within the students' early years settings. It deconstructs the research process and shares our learning on the research process.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

This research builds on work by Reed and Walker on early childhood practitioners developing an academic voice and tutors making sense of the research process.

Walker, R., & Reed, M. (2012). Early childhood practitioners developing an academic voice and tutors making sense of the research process. *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, 15, 132-144.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Research design included embedded ethnographic inquiry (Lewis 2011) and the value of the Mixed Methods approach (Harrits 2012) consideration of researcher knowledge and preconceptions (Luca 2009) and insider/outsider considerations (Costly, et.al 2012). Also, consideration of whether the research design represented a praxeological approach (Pascal, et, al 2012).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Methods included phenomenological interviews with students, managers. Journal and diary entries, active participant observation, Focus meetings to gauge respondent views of findings and relational analysis of the students' work

Ethical considerations:

The researchers argue a need to design a framework that allows those most closely involved to articulate their professional and personal voices, for example, the ethics proposal was developed with students.

Main findings or discussion:

The interrelationship and interdependency between visible and less visible drivers of quality and reflecting on practice in order to make improvements. Many of the same features that early childhood practitioners see as important to enhance the quality of children's learning. The value of critical companions

Implications, practice or policy:

Changes in course design.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Ethics, Methodological approaches, Practice based inquiry*

SYMPOSIUM III/D**RESEARCH IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS**

CHAIR: EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton

ROOM: Bryant Room

A 'Jigsaw' Methodology for Early Childhood Research: A flexible and reflexive approach

JANE MURRAY, University of Northampton

Research aims and questions:

This study explored how warrant may be established for young children to be regarded as researchers.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The study builds on the work of Clark and Moss (2001), Fielding (2001) and Kellett (2005) in which children and young people are positioned as researchers.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Adopting the 'new sociological' stance that young children are 'experts in their own lives' (Langsted 1994: 29), this study challenges assumptions of 'evolving capacities' (Lansdown, 2005) that may exclude young children from the 'rarefied world of the academic' (Redmond, 2008:17).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

For this interpretive study, a 'jigsaw' methodology was developed, combining features of single methodologies to produce a research design responsive to the research aim whilst retaining reflexivity to participants. The present 'jigsaw' methodology comprised constructivist grounded theory, critical ethnography, case study and 'mosaic approach'. It adopted multiple methods to secure multiple perspectives.

Ethical considerations:

The study was conducted according to BERA Ethical Guidelines; its ethical protocol was approved by the University Research Ethics Committee where it was developed.

Main findings or discussion:

Professional researchers established a taxonomy of research behaviours and young children's capabilities in relation to these behaviours were recognised, providing warrant to regard young children as researchers in the academy's terms. These findings indicate that the 'jigsaw methodology' proved effective for this study.

Implications, practice or policy:

The dynamic 'jigsaw' methodology developed as the study progressed, diverting primacy to the participants and the data they co-constructed, rather than a fully planned methodological rubric. The flexibility and reflexivity afforded by the 'jigsaw methodology' may make it particularly useful for research in 'real world' ECEC contexts.

Keywords: *Methods; Methodological approaches; Children's perspectives; Knowledge*

Mixed Methods: Adding numbers to detail to create change

EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton

Research aims and questions:

To consider the role and impact of Mixed Methods for the early years community

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The presentation draws on doctoral research into the development of the professional identity of the Early Years Professional.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research draws upon the work of Bronfenbrenner (2005) to consider how a Mixed Methods research methodology supports understanding of how macro-change impacts at the micro-level.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The presentation draws upon the third paradigm 'Mixed Methods' and how both quantitative and qualitative research methods can produce rich data to support change.

Ethical considerations:

The study was conducted according to BERA Ethical Guidelines and received research approval from the relevant University Research Committee.

Main findings or discussion:

Discussion will consider how Mixed Methods provided a flexible and pragmatic research design from which to investigate the unique development of a professional role and status introduced by government. The strength of this approach has been that data has been gathered that has supported collective and individual insights into the development of EYPS at all levels of the theoretical framework.

Implications, practice or policy:

Mixed Methods research has the potential to impact on both policy and practice.

Keywords: *Mixed Methods Research, Early Years Professional, Policy, Methodology, Early Years Practice*

A Lens into Practice: The role of qualitative research

EUNICE LUMSDEN (1) , DONALD SIMPSON (2), (1) University of Northampton, (2) Teesside University

Research aims and questions:

An Exploration of Practitioner's Understanding of Child Poverty

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The presentation draws on qualitative research undertaken into the views of early years practitioners about poverty in three areas of England. It extends research undertaken in the area in NE England to explore geographical differences in understanding.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research draws on sociological concepts of child poverty policy.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The work draws on an interpretive paradigm, with a qualitative research design embracing semi-structured interviews.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical clearance was obtained for the research at Teesside University.

Main findings or discussion:

Discussion will consider how the learning from one research project led to expanding the research and the challenges and benefits of research collaboration.

Implications, practice or policy:

The importance of collaborative research in enhancing understanding and developing practice

Keywords: Qualitative Research, Early Years Practice, Child Poverty, Research Collaboration

Research impacting on Practice

ANDREA PRICE & EUNICE LUMSDEN, University of Northampton

Research aims and questions:

Improving Parent Partnership.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The presentation draws on qualitative research undertaken into the views of early years practitioners about poverty in three areas of England and Mixed Methods research into the development of a new professional identity in the early years. It considers how engagement in these two research projects has developed teaching and learning practices and promoted practitioner led research.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The presentation draws upon interdisciplinary knowledge from the social sciences.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The work draws on an interpretive paradigm, with a qualitative research design employing questionnaires and interviews.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical clearance was provided in line with the University procedures for master's level study at the participating University.

Main findings or discussion:

Discussion will focus on how engagement in research activities can impact on learners, develop practice, improve practitioner knowledge and understanding, motivate a change agenda and enhance outcomes for children and their families.

Implications, practice or policy:

The importance of researched informed teaching and research informed practice.

Keywords: *Qualitative Research, Early Years Practice, Practitioner Research, Research informed Teaching, Practice Informed Research.*

THURSDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2013

SYMPOSIUM SET IV

13:30 – 15:00

SYMPOSIUM SET IV/A

LISTENING AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN PRACTICAL RESEARCH

CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM, University of Wolverhampton

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 2

Participatory practices in early years; an action research project to improve listening to children.

HELEN LYNDON, CREC

Research aims and questions:

This masters dissertation research explored how children can participate in their own care and education.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Previous research has demonstrated children's capacity to contribute to their own care and education. This research follows RAMPS (Lancaster 2006) and the mosaic approach (Clark and Moss 2001).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Using a praxeological approach enabled children, staff and parents to contribute to the research throughout including the overall aims and methodology.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

A mosaic was built around targeted children, this consisted of children's views, peer group, sibling, parent and key worker conference. The children's learning journeys, observations and digital images also formed part of the mosaics. The children's digital images formed photo boards which proved a most successful method.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical considerations in this practitioner research were integral throughout: consent, confidentiality and ensuring all children's opinions were valued were some of the primary concerns.

Main findings or discussion:

Children's main priorities were relationships with peers and staff as well as the outdoor environment. Staff embraced the listening culture and practice was altered, they found this has a positive impact on workload. Leadership, time and overall ethos were the main facilitators of the listening culture; these also provided potential barriers.

Implications, practice or policy:

There is scope to further develop methodologies for listening to children's views particularly through the use of peers, siblings and with the aid of digital media.

Keywords: *Action Research, Ethics, Methodological approaches, Children's perspectives*

Festival of Movement:empowering Young Children

ANGELA WALKER (1) & GILLIAN SYKES (2), (1) Jiminy Crickets Preschool/University of Northampton, (2) University of Northampton

Research aims and questions:

The aim of this project was to explore different models of sharing and developing Early Years pedagogy. Through engagement with an experience which embraced children's movement as communication, as pedagogical facilitators we aimed to support the practitioners in seeing themselves as researchers and observing the impact of exploring movement with children, parents and practitioners.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The project is underpinned by documentation which is seen as a vital element in the process of co-constructing learning for all participants (Rinaldi, 1994). The importance of movement and creativity, the importance of well being and how these work together.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Reggio: documentations and provocations, Vygotsky:Zone of Proximal Development. Mollie Davis:"human movement is not only unique to the species but is also unique to each individual within it." Sally Goddard Blythe; Bernadette Duffy.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Our method was 'emerging research' (Moss and Clark, 2012) as it was led by children and practitioners. The data collected is qualitative – through focus group/documentation (poster)/observation of children's responses

Ethical considerations:

Permission was sought from all parents and the children were asked when taking photos, videos and written recordings.

Main findings or discussion:

Positive benefits of working collaboratively with children, staff and parents.

The importance of the voice of the child.

The children showed higher levels of self esteem, confidence learning and willingness to explore not only the environment but their bodies.

Implications, practice or policy:

This had long term implications especially for the children. The project led to the children carrying out their own movement sessions and changed practice within the setting. It gave all staff knowledge and appreciation of the benefits of action research.

Keywords: *Action Research, Personal social and emotional development, Practice based inquiry, Children's perspectives, Creativity*

SYMPOSIUM IV/B**DEVELOPING PRACTITIONER RESEARCH AND EY PROFESSIONALISM**

CHAIR: DONALD SIMPSON, Teesside University

ROOM: Deloitte

Together We Can: How an Early Years Professional (EYP) Network set the foundations for a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and impacts on practice in nurseries across the UK

CAROLINE WRIGHT, Kidsunlimited Limited

Research aims and questions:

The aim was to explore the extent to which an EYP network could drive improvement and support innovative practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

We draw on research around the organisational and network conditions that support innovation in teaching and learning, (James, Black, McCormick, Pedlar & William 2006) to examine the extent to which the kidsunlimited EYP network possesses the characteristics of an effective Professional Learning Community and has the potential to support development.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Research on professional learning communities show that they become effective where:

Membership is consistent; The network enables a continuum of learning; Members are encouraged to reflect, evaluate their role and modify their practice; Members implement learning in their nurseries and beyond; The research examines the extent to which these conditions are met.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Ethnographic research presenting case studies, quantitative and qualitative data using range of methodology to triangulate and test findings:

Questionnaires – EYPs, EY managers; Documentary Analysis - reflective journals; meeting notes; action plans.

Ethical considerations:

Permission to carry out research was sought from all involved. A collaborative approach was agreed with network members to develop case studies, which illustrate findings.

Main findings or discussion:

Membership is consistent subject to attrition;

Reflection and evaluation has improved since the network was launched;

Members use learning from network events to varying degrees according to challenges they encounter.

Implications, practice or policy:

In light of reduced pedagogical support from Local Authorities and Nutbrown's (2012) recommendation for continuous professional development, we continue to develop the network and the extent to which EYPs influence practice in their own settings and others'.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Focus groups, Case study, Multiprofessional collaboration, Leadership*

Moving beyond 'evidencing practice' to praxis – making a case for academic research which does not 'feed' smoothly into practice

DONALD SIMPSON (1) AND EUNICE LUMSDEN (2), (1) Teesside University and (2) University of Northampton

Research aims and questions:

This presentation draws upon a qualitative research project supported by the British Academy which has explored pre-school practitioners' perspectives about child poverty and aims to offer an argument in regard to the direction of travel being taken to address child poverty in England.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

No other research considers pre-school practitioners' perspectives on child poverty.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The research lies within the field of policy sociology drawing on sociological concepts and ideas to make sense of child poverty policy.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The research falls within the interpretive research paradigm and therefore uses a qualitative methodology. Semi-structured interviews have been completed with 30 pre-school practitioners in Durham/Tees Valley, Northamptonshire and Worcestershire.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical clearance was obtained for the research at Teesside University.

Main findings or discussion:

An aim is to make our research accessible to practitioners. However assumptions about a neat isomorphic relationship between academic research and practice need tempering. We will show how drawing immediate practice implications from our research is not straightforward. But it will be claimed the knowledge produced continues to matter in regard to the wider notion of praxis. This is because findings potentially allow pre-school practitioners to reflect upon and question the logic underpinning their working practices with children and families living in poverty. So the findings are generating new knowledge that can stimulate new forms of choice, awareness and empowerment.

Implications, practice or policy:

In 'evidencing practice' a lack of isomorphism between research and practice is not necessarily a negative - indeed it will be argued 'practice-based research' may be overly insular compared to our own research.

Keywords: *Data gathering, Methodological approaches, Knowledge, Research paradigms, Learning environment*

Investigating the early years workforce perceptions on observations

ADELE LAST AND IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, The University of Hull

Research aims and questions:

This research project aimed to investigate the perceptions of the early year's education workforce in relation to the use of observations in early year's educational settings.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

An examination of the literature review highlighted that, although observations are frequently used in early year's education, there is relatively limited research on the early year's workforce perceptions on observation.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Qualitative methodology as qualitative research is 'fundamentally interpretative' (Marshall and Rossman, 2011:2).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

A qualitative methodology was employed to answer the research questions and, in particular, interviews were used to collect data. The researcher interviewed a sample of eight early year's practitioners who currently work in a setting and each practitioner had varying levels of training, qualifications and experience. The interviews were conducted in an early year's private nursery that children from the age of 0 to 5 years attend from within a local catchment area.

Ethical considerations:

Ethical approval was gained by the university of Hull. All participants agreed to participate and they were informed through out the project.

Main findings or discussion:

The analysis of the data suggested that, even though early year's practitioners use observations frequently in their practice, practitioners lack an in depth understanding of the method.

Implications, practice or policy:

As a result this study has found that practitioners require additional training in regards to what observations are and why they are completed in early year's educational settings.

Keywords: *Data gathering, Early Childhood Professionalism, Assessment, Practice based inquiry*

SYMPOSIUM IV/C**BUILDING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS IN EY SETTINGS**

CHAIR: JACKIE MUSGRAVE, University of Worcester

ROOM: Pinsent Masons Room 1

How are inclusive environments created in day care settings for children aged 0-3 years with common chronic conditions (anaphylaxis; asthma; diabetes, eczema; epilepsy)? The practitioners' perspectives

JACKIE MUSGRAVE, University of Worcester

Research aims and questions:

an exploratory case study to find out how practitioners in day care settings create inclusive environments for children aged 0-3 years with chronic medical conditions.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

There is limited research available about this subject with the notable exception of Mukherjee et al in 2000 who researched older children's views of having a chronic medical condition and how this was managed at school Pitchforth et al (2011) reported parents of children with anaphylaxis to nuts feel excluded from society and the effect of living with anaphylaxis should be considered a disability.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

literature relating to inclusion, how do practitioners make children feel as if they belong in their setting and how are the effects of difference minimised. For example, how are dietary restrictions because of a medical need managed to ensure children are included socially, but not put at risk of contamination of food that may be fatal if eaten?

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Mixed methods used: survey to 60 settings in a Metropolitan Borough, 6 semi-structured interviews with practitioners, series of interviews with parents of 3 children, observation of a child with asthma, eczema and food allergy over a period of 7 months

Ethical considerations:

University ethical approval was sought and given.

Main findings or discussion:

Importance of parents and practitioners working together; provision of food and snacks is problematic and stressful for practitioners; outdoor play is challenging; child studied noticed difference at the age of 20 months; implications for families of children with chronic medical conditions.

Implications, practice or policy:

Sharing practitioners' innovative practice in adapting activities for children another aspect of inclusion.

Keywords: *Birth to Three, Case study, Outdoor Play, Parents participation*

Minority Voices: Are the Voices of Ethnic Minority Children and Parents Being Heard in our Primary Schools?

CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM & ALLYSON LEEDY, The Ohio State University

Research aims and questions:

This study examines the experiences of ethnic minority children taught by white female British teachers attending a primary school in the north of England.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Previous studies (Tomlinson, 1991) have primarily focused on educational attainment in primary schools in England, rather than the experiences of ethnic minority children and families. It has been argued that some teachers have lower expectations of some of their pupils, more specifically, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Culture and Identity are examined, with particular reference to the work of Adams (1994) and Siraj-Blatchford (1996).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

The research uses a multi-method case approach including interviews and observations. Pattern coding was used to analyze the student and teacher experiences as informants answered questions and shared their experiences.

Ethical considerations:

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

Main findings or discussion:

Findings examine language proficiency levels, culturally responsive teaching strategies, teacher expectations, classroom communication, and barriers related to language and culture.

Implications, practice or policy:

The research reflects on those barriers cited by the informants and observed in classrooms while considering recommendations to inform future practice when working with ethnic minority students in the schools.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Practice based inquiry, Case study, Children's perspectives, Parents perspectives*

SYMPOSIUM SET IV/D**USING ACTION RESEARCH FOR PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT: CASE STUDIES FROM PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHERS**

CHAIR: DENISE HEVEY, University of Northampton

ROOM: Bryant Room

Can Working Parents involvement in their children's Learning be enhanced through the use of ICT?

KAREN LOCKE, Peach Tree Pre-school, Banbury

Research aims and questions:

To develop setting –wide a more informed and collaborative model of parent involvement using advantages of ICT.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Field (2010) review suggest parent involvement (PI) key to fighting poverty and raising levels of literacy. BECTA (2008) review suggests that PI should start as early as possible. DCSF (2008) report two thirds of parents would like to be more involved in children's learning but work commitments prevent this.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

If work commitments are a significant barrier to PI, then providing access to child's records and opportunities to contribute ideas, photos, comments etc 24/7 through ICT should help overcome this barrier.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Action Research within wider interpretivist paradigm using combination of questionnaires for parents and discussion/ focus groups with staff before and after intervention.

Ethical considerations:

BERA code applied. Permissions from all staff and parent participants sought. ICT system password protected to restrict access.

Main findings or discussion:

Major increase in proportion of parents accessing and contributing to their children's learning journey files. Parents reported feeling more involved and valued by setting. Staff gaining different perception of parents level of interest.

Implications, practice or policy:

The ICT system has been shown to be effective as a means of supporting PI and is potentially transferable to other settings.

Keywords: *ICT, parent involvement, action research*

Raising the awareness of healthy eating on parents, staff and children

SUSAN WIGLEY, Little Wiggles Pre-school, Northamptonshire

Research aims and questions:

1. To ascertain staff and parent's knowledge of healthy eating and children's food preferences.
2. To promote awareness of the health benefits of fruit and vegetables.
3. To modify nursery snacks and evaluate children's reactions.
4. To evaluate the overall impact of the intervention within the setting.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

'Children's snacks are healthy but the menu does not emphasise fruit and vegetable well enough' (Shepherd, 2009). This outcome of a recent Ofsted report provided the rationale for the action research. Need to focus on healthy eating for under fives supported by wide ranging literature and UK government reports e.g. growing concern for childhood obesity was singled out in UK Government Office for Science report (2007) Tackling Obesity – Future Choices and in 2011, the Dept of Health published first report of a Childhood Obesity Working Group.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Health benefits of diet high in fruit and vegetables have been established. Children in day care learn habits/ food expectations from setting as well as home. If we can encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables through trying them in setting, then this improves their diet at nursery and potentially influences their food preferences at home too.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Practitioner-based action research using questionnaires, observations and group discussions before and after agreed intervention.

Ethical considerations:

BERA Code observed; Permissions sought from staff and parents in relation to participation in the study, Children's choices respected.

Main findings or discussion:

Contrary to information supplied by parents, who stated their children disliked a majority of fruit and vegetables, results show that most children did try and appeared to enjoy many of the new snacks. Staff who was initially skeptical also reviewed their ideas.

Implications, practice or policy:

Healthy eating initiatives have been implemented within the setting due to this action research project to include a new healthy snack menu which includes mainly fruit and vegetables and changes to packed lunch policy. It is now recognized by staff that the setting has the potential to influence and support parents as well as children with healthy eating practices.

Keywords: *Healthy eating, obesity, action research*

Communication and speech development in the forest school: can a natural environment make a difference to speech and language?

TANYA RICHARDSON, Touch of Eden Nursery, Northamptonshire

Research aims and questions:

Within England there is an emerging increase in the number of Forest School sites that are available for children to access from early years settings. This research looks at a forest school environment that has recently been established and analyses what impact the natural environment has on a group of children's speech and language development.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

The children in question were analysed prior to attending any forest school sessions. They then attended forest school for an eight week period and were analysed again at the end of the programme. They were monitored using the national speech and language assessment tool.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Whilst undertaking the research it was discovered that there was a strong emphasis on self-esteem levels within the natural environment and research was also therefore carried out in this vein, with the aim of investigating if there was a correlation between the two areas.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Action research was the overarching paradigm.

Ethical considerations:

All necessary ethical considerations applied.

Main findings or discussion:

All children benefited from their forest school attendance and speech and language skills improved across the board, but, most surprisingly, there was a significant improvement in children's levels of self-esteem and sense of personal power.

Implications, practice or policy:

The report argues that forest school provision should become an essential part of early years provision, given the positive outcomes of this research, and recommends that further research be undertaken in order to investigate further the strong impact that the natural environment has on both speech and language development and self-esteem.

Keywords: *Forest School, communication, self-esteem, action research*

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Designed for professionals working in the early childhood field who have a strong interest in playing and learning outdoors, this module provides an extensive opportunity to investigate the main theories and pedagogies relevant to contemporary educational practice outdoors and introduces the relevant issues and debates, encouraging critical and independent appraisal. Both content and assignments present opportunities to acquire the theory base and knowledge that will enable participants to develop their practice with greater understanding, awareness and critical insight

Jan White works nationally to advocate and support high quality outdoor provision for services for children from birth to five. With over twenty-five years experience of working in education, including key roles in developing Learning through Landscape's support for the early years sector and Early Excellence's *Stepped Approach to Quality Outdoors*, she is currently an Early Education associate, adviser for several landscape and equipment companies, mentor to Sandfield Natural Play Centre, and provides training and conference talks across the UK and beyond.

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EECERA 2013 - Call for Proposals



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This year, the prestigious 23rd EECERA Annual Conference will be held 28th - 31st August 2013 in Tallinn, Estonia hosted by Tallinn University, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Association of Pre-School Teachers, Association of Preschool Directors and Step by Step Education Centre. The theme of this year's conference is **VALUES, CULTURE AND CONTEXTS**.

We warmly invite you to respond to this 23rd conference call of papers and hope you will be able to participate in this year's conference scientific activity. Full guidance and details of how to register online and submit a proposal for a conference paper or poster can be found on the conference website: <http://www.eecera2013.org>.

Proposals should be submitted online until 22nd February and successful applications will be notified by early May 2013, following the meeting of the Scientific Committee. There is a full programme of social activities for those who want to network.

We really are looking forward to welcoming you in our beautiful city Tallinn and encourage you to participate and contribute to what is acknowledged as the European early childhood research community's most important forum.

With warm regards,
Professor Marika Veisson
Conference Chair, EECERA 2013

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