

Poster session 4
Room RHMZ06

Teacher professional learning

Pre-service Teachers' Learning in a Early Childhood Teaching Methods of Music Expression course: Using Documentation

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Keywords

Early childhood teacher preparation, music expression, documentation

Abstract

There are 5 fields of content in the Japanese national curriculum guidelines for ECEC, but these are not subjects (e.g., MEXT, 2017b). To ensure this uniqueness of ECEC fields, there has been an increasing interest in ECEC professionalism in early childhood teacher preparation recently. For example, the Teacher License Act was revised in 2016 while in 2017, "*The national teacher preparation core curriculum*" was developed by MEXT, resulting in more focused ECEC practice skills in the teacher preparation curriculum. The certification requirements for teacher preparation programme have become more rigid, requiring more specialized subjects for ECEC, differentiated from those for elementary school. The national curriculum guidelines were also revised (e.g., MEXT, 2017b).

As a result of these changes, in this study we developed the programme of early childhood teacher preparation, focused on interactive learning within student teaching, to improve ECEC practice skills. More specifically, this study examined how documentation contributes to student teachers' learning through a process where they design and reflect on early childhood teaching practices related to sounds or music.

The participants were 80 university students. This study was conducted in the course of the "*Early Childhood Teaching Methods of Music Expression*" in the second semester of 2019. Firstly, students were asked to take situations where children had been interested in sounds or music, observed during their student teaching, and plan practices based on the children's interests and share these in the class. In addition, they were asked to prepare documentation about it. A documentation template was used by students to write ideas for documentation, with feedback added by the lecturer (first author) and comments from the students' group. After completing this worksheet, students started to draw 'documentation'. Finally, they wrote a final report about their learning.

In this study, we extracted the features of the statements in each piece of documentation, referring to the attainment goals which are stated in the core curriculum, in order to examine students' learning. Furthermore, we compared statements made by students before lecturer feedback, with those statements made after feedback. From the final reports, we examined how students understood children's experiences and ECEC practices.

As a result,

(1) the university students actively learned the aims and contents, including “3 viewpoints for infancy” and “10 desirable outcomes” stated in the national curriculum guidelines (e.g., MEXT, 2017b) in the process of writing their documentation. They considered the meaning of children’s experiences and noticed the importance of teacher’s support appropriate for the children’s development, comparing children’s real experiences with the statements in the national curriculum guidelines.

(2) The university students explored how to articulate children’s learning, the aims of practice and the environment to foster children’s experiences through documentation. It was possible to reflect on children’s learning and practices from the student teaching experiences. The documentation was also useful for the lecturer to understand how university students were thinking to assess their learning, and led to advice to think more deeply about children’s experiences.

The interactive learning between university coursework and student teaching gave student teachers new insights for improving their ECEC practice skills.

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Recognition of deepening and expertise of children's emotion understanding of ECEC staff through a Finger Painting program

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Keywords

Finger painting, Emotional comprehension of children, M-GTA

Abstract

Providing quality childcare to young children is of paramount importance for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) staff. OECD (2019) suggested in “Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care” there is a need for professional development to ensure child well-being practices. In order to provide high quality childcare, it is necessary for ECEC staff to deepen their understanding of the quality of childcare and raise their awareness. However, the most basic and necessary attitude to do so is to understand the child's emotional empathically. In improving the quality of childcare, it is essential to understand the characteristics of each child and provide appropriate support. In this study, I propose a Finger Painting Program to improve the emotional comprehension of children and the specialty of ECEC Staff, and, clarify its usefulness.

Finger Painting has the characteristic that catharsis is easily obtained from the pleasure and openness of soiling (Yasuhara, 2006), and that visual and tactile elements create a pleasant playful sensation (Ichiki, 2009). It has also been suggested that highly fluid paints provide an emotional experience for the creator (L. Hintz, 2009). For this reason, Finger Painting was adopted as a way for ECEC Staff to relive the rustic feelings that children feel on a daily basis.

Thirty-four ECEC Staff working in the nursery school were divided into nine groups, and performed in the order of individual finger painting and group finger painting. For individual finger painting, white paper of 25 cm x 35 cm was used, and for group finger painting, white paper of 100 cm x 110 cm was used. There was no limit on the number of sheets used. The subject of the analysis was the answers to the questionnaire, which consisted of choices and free descriptions, distributed after the program. M-GTA (Modified Grounded Theory Approach) was adopted as the free description analysis method. M-GTA is an improvement on the Grounded Theory Approach proposed by Glaser et al. (1967). Since M-GTA is a method of generating non-arbitrary explanatory concepts from qualitative data, it is suitable as an analytical method that shows a conceptual framework that describes subjective experience of Finger Painting.

As a result of the analysis, almost all of the participants had a sense of fulfillment, especially for drawing in a group. It was also revealed that at that time, emotions arose, they became absorbed in it, and they enjoyed interacting with people. And ECEC Staff felt open and positive as well as receptive to others. As mentioned above, it was clarified that simple awareness and, positive or negative emotions associated with the implementation of the program affect children's understanding of emotions. It was suggested that these awareness and emotions promoted awareness of expertise as ECEC Staff. It was also shown that these were occurred with the experience of Finger Painting. From the above, it was clarified that Finger Painting Program has the function of raising the ECEC Staff's understanding and awareness of improving the quality of childcare, and that it can contribute to the improvement of childcare professionals.

Can workshops that are conscious of musical expression activities in childhood education change the early childhood educators' awareness of weakness?

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Keywords

Musical expression activities, workshop, early childhood educators' awareness of weakness

Abstract

In the daily life of young children, it can be hard to include spontaneous and sustained musical expression, especially expression and play using musical instruments, in the early childhood programme, so a certain amount of guidance and assistance by early childhood educators is required. Therefore, the influence of early childhood educators is great.

Teachers of elementary school and above have a textbook that describes the content to be taught along with the Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines, enabling even beginning teachers and those with less musical expertise to use the textbook and proceed with the lessons according to the guidebook. However, although there are some indicators such as the National Curriculum Standard for Kindergarten and Day Care Center Guidelines for early childhood educators in kindergartens and day-care centers, the specific content of early childhood education and care programmes is left to the early childhood educators. For this reason, those early childhood educators who struggle with music lessons may see themselves as not good at music and think of music as part of children's usual play. This situation was suggested by the writer's survey of 189 early childhood educators on the area "Expression (expression related to music)".

In this study, the writer conducted an experimental practice once a month. A total of 4 workshops were held for the purpose of examining changes in the awareness of early childhood educators regarding musical expression. Each workshop had a different theme to support early childhood educators to enjoy musical expression activities with their children. The four themes are as follows Making Sound", "Beating Music", "Music with the Body and "Playing Music".

Participants were asked to answer a questionnaire twice, before and after the workshops. When asked about the knowledge and skills that they would like to have when doing expression activities with their children, they mentioned "various creativity," "imagination," "power to enjoy with children," and "power to express freely." After participating in the workshops, these practices were more evident, and it became possible for the participants to see themselves enjoying musical expression activities with children. The results of the study suggest that the fact that the early childhood educators themselves enjoyed the sounds and music at the workshop changed their consciousness to enjoy the expression activities performed with the children. It became clear that it is important for early childhood educators to accumulate experience to fully enjoy musical expression activities.

What University Students Learn from Examples of Children's Interaction with Sounds: Analysis of Contents and Features of Reports

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Keywords

Early childhood teacher preparation, sounds in nature, children

Abstract

The Japanese national curriculum guidelines for early childhood education and care (ECEC) indicates the importance of educators' support in the idea that children appreciate sounds, shapes, and colours in nature, including the sound of the wind and rain as well as shapes and colours of plants and flowers (e.g., MEXT, 2017). In early childhood teacher preparation, a small number of practices are implemented to enhance university students' sensitivity toward sounds or imagination. Yoshinaga (2013) practiced *sound-walk* activities and reported that students learn to attentively listen and internalize sounds. Imagawa (2007) practiced *sound-walk* and *sound map making* activities wherein students interact with the environment, walking on dead leaves or making sounds with acorns. It was shown that some students focused on understanding of personal feelings and expression from a child's perspective, as stated in their reflection report. The fact that they viewed the environment from a child's perspective is intriguing; however, only five students' extracts from reports were shown. Therefore, the study aims to examine the learnings and thoughts of university students regarding children's play in nature and gather new insights into enhancing the students' practical skills as well as improving their understanding of children's interaction with sounds in nature.

This study was conducted in the course of *Early Childhood Teaching Methods of Music Expression*, with 62 second-year students who took this course as participants. First, the students were provided the reading materials with examples of children's interaction with sounds in nature. After reading, the participants wrote a report on their personal childhood experiences and views regarding their interactions with sounds in nature. Then, their reports were analyzed using Koichi Higuchi's KH Coder.

The results of the study are as follows:

- (1) The words *sound*, *nature*, *play*, *think*, and *feel* frequently appeared in the students' reports, indicating that students understood the importance of hearing sounds in nature and were able to state their personal experiences.
- (2) In a co-occurrence network, one of the groups included the word *children* or *child*, suggesting that students considered understanding and supporting children's interactions with sounds in nature.
- (3) In this study, 81 sentences that included specific words (e.g., children or child) were analyzed and classified into six categories by meaning. The numbers of sentences written from the early childhood educator's perspective were 27, whereas those referring to children's perspective or children's competence were 12. Students are required to have learning opportunities to observe children play with sounds in nature from the latter's perspective and plan teaching activities based on their interests.
- (4) The students expressed that being with family or friends enriched these experiences through statements, such as "I retain warm memories of going for a walk with my grandparents and sister." and "I could feel spring and (the warm) relationship between animals and us."

These results serve as baseline data for developing early childhood teacher preparation programs. The researchers intend to examine students' learning by observing the interaction between students and children in nature in future studies.

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Factors for long-term service of Early childhood teachers in Korea

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Keywords

Factors, Long-term service, Early childhood teachers

Abstract

Rationale for the study

Many early childhood teachers experience conflicts, low remuneration systems, work overload, teacher autonomy restrictions, and pressure on their responsibilities in relation to co-teachers, principals, and parents, causing stress on teachers' work, which hinders organizational immersion and impacts on quality (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Frequent turnover of teachers causes confusion for infants and parents, reducing the quality of education and disrupting work in institutions. On the other hand, Kontos and Stremmel (1988) argued that despite the low remuneration of early childhood teachers, there are rewards in terms of social and psychological aspects that increase the intention to work. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the factors influencing early childhood teacher long-term service to improve the quality of education and support teacher wellbeing by reducing the frequent turnover of early childhood teachers.

Purpose(s) and research question(s) of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the long-term service factors of early childhood teachers and suggest implications for long-term early childhood teachers. The research question is as follows:

Research Question: What factors can influence whether early childhood teachers have long-term service?

Methodology

Eight early childhood teachers with 7–12 years of experience participated in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted and recorded for three weeks from January to March 2021. A qualitative analysis was conducted of the collection data.

Summary

1. Leisure, self-improvement time and conditions from institutions.

Early childhood teachers showed a high level of work satisfaction and recognition that they can work for a long time because they are provided with leisure life and self-improvement time and conditions from the institutions they are currently working in.

2. Peer-staff relationships

The reason why early childhood teachers stay in their workplaces for a long time was that they maintained intimacy with faculty members, including their colleagues and principal, and formed good relationships. In addition, it was found that morale increases when the director responds to parents who make demanding and difficult demands and solves problems by representing the teacher's position.

3. Transitional event

Early childhood teachers have a different perspective from their previous lives following events such as marriage, childbirth, and illness. For example, one teacher said that it was difficult to combine the life of being a mother and the life of being a teacher after marriage and childbirth, but her perspective on life changed. Another teacher said that after recovering from ill-health, her teaching habits changed and she returned to teaching.

Conclusion

Early childhood teachers' quality of relationships in the workplace have a positive effect on their psychological well-being (Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014). Early childhood teachers are motivated by work hours, self-improvement, and re-education opportunities for balancing their lives and work, providing support from colleagues and principals, and life-changing events, which contribute to long-term service.

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The Potential of Intra-Facility Training for Child Care Providers Using Combination of Remote and Virtual Reality (VR) Systems

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Keywords

Virtual Reality, Intra-facility training, Remote system

Abstract

The recent spread of COVID-19 has made it difficult to carry out training and other programs face-to-face inside nursery schools. However, remote systems have become widespread during the past year or so, leading to a rise in training sessions and meetings/conferences being held using online systems. As a result, the effects of training using remote systems may include the benefits of implementing on-demand-type training through which content can be replayed and reviewed numerous times. They also helped expand the domain of learning to include people who previously found it difficult to take part due to their work circumstances and implementation of training held in faraway places, but who were now able to participate with ease.

However, certain problems have also emerged. Compared to face-to-face training, for example, participants cannot physically experience or practice childcare directly and can no longer perceive the mood or atmosphere of the sessions.

Therefore, our study implemented mixed-type, intra-facility training that combines remote systems and virtual reality (VR) and offers both virtual experiences as well as a sense of immersion as if the participants were actually there, at the site, and aimed to explore its potential.

The subjects of our study were 25 nursery school teachers who were registered with preschool A in Japan. We used Zoom as the online system, and the subjects took part using their own computers or tablets. Training consisted of a one-hour lecture conducted in real time. Next, the subjects were asked to view, via the YouTube app, VR videos that showed childcare scenes related to the lectures. After having viewed the VR video, the participants were divided into groups of five people each and asked to describe freely some of the things they had noticed individually on Jamboard (an interactive whiteboard system). They were then asked to talk within their group about what they had seen. The subjects were allowed to watch the VR videos as many times as they wished during the discussions.

Since we are currently mid-way through the study, we will describe the anticipated results as follows. The first is that the knowledge gained through lectures and the virtual experiences obtained through VR are linked together to build a more solid and specialized knowledge. The second is that the breadth of the subjects' awareness expanded as a result of viewing the VR videos and combining their own awareness with that of other people.

A Study on the Effects of Teacher Education Programs on the Professionalism of Early Childhood Teachers: A Meta-analysis

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Keywords

Teacher Education Program, Infant and Toddler Teacher, professionalism

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of teacher education programs on the professionalism of early childhood teachers through meta-analysis and to explore the mediators that influence the effect. From the period 2002 to November 2020, 38 studies were selected from doctoral thesis and academic papers published in Korea. The results of the study were as follows. First, the overall average effect size using the random effect model is 1.45, which can be interpreted as a large effect size according to Cohen's effect size analysis criteria. Second, the effect size of the teacher education program for each type of education appeared in the order of subject education area and teacher competency. Third, the teacher education program had the greatest influence on the cognitive dimension among the areas of expertise, followed by the affective dimension and the behavioral dimension. Fourth, as a modulating variable, the shorter the education period, the greater the effect of teacher expertise.

Is an Egalitarian Gender Role Attitude Important in Childcare Workers?

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Keywords

Gender role, life course, efficacy

Abstract

Rationale for the study

In Japan, **the demand for** childcare workers continues to increase. Although there are many potential childcare workers, there is a severe lack of supply and a high turnover, possibly related to female life events **and working conditions**. Few studies have examined **the** associations between **the** life events and gender role attitudes of childcare workers. This study examines childcare workers' gender role attitudes and the effect of life events on their careers.

Previous studies have reported that egalitarian gender role attitudes and various life experiences relate to continued job careers. Moreover, gender role attitudes are related to work values and may be considered to predict subsequent work styles (Morinaga, 2000).

Interestingly, Japanese women's career development and gender role attitudes are not necessarily in line with **the findings from the West** (Suzuki, 1996). Japan has maintained a **salient** gender stereotype in occupation (Adachi, 2013). One may be unable to properly understand how gender role attitudes are related to remaining in work considering occupational characteristics.

Purpose and research question(s)

This study examines how the life events of childcare workers, attitudes toward gender roles, and work values influence willingness to continue childcare work while also testing the following three hypotheses:

- (1) Differences appear in gender role attitudes based on a person's life course.
- (2) Work values differ based on differences in gender role attitudes.
- (3) Based on gender role attitudes and work values, **the** willingness to continue childcare work efficacy changes.

Brief description

In December 2020, only female nursery schoolteachers were requested to participate in a questionnaire survey examining gender role attitudes, work values, nursery school teachers' efficacy, life course, and willingness to continue childcare work (N = 222).

Summary

To examine the first hypothesis, gender role attitude types were compared among three groups: those who were unmarried and had no children, those who were married with children continuing their careers, and those who were re-entering their careers after childbirth. The results of a chi-square test showed no significant gap, but egalitarian attitudes increased to 38.6%, 40.9%, and 50%, respectively, suggesting an impact from the course of the respondents' lives.

Subsequently, having performed a correlation analysis between gender role attitudes and work values, a significant positive correlation was found only with work-life balance.

Moreover, a hierarchical cluster analysis was performed regarding gender role attitudes, work values, nursery school teachers' efficacy, and willingness to continue childcare work. The results showed that four clusters were identified: only one cluster of those with no willingness to continue childcare work, showing the lowest efficacy and work values, which is generally understood as the low interest in society's active role.

Overall, many nursery school teachers develop egalitarian gender role attitudes through work, marriage, and childbirth. Higher egalitarian attitudes and work values were associated with higher efficacy. It is considered that they pursued fulfillment in both work and family. This finding partly provided quantitative evidence for previous studies (e.g., Nakata, 2006).

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Learning in Practical Subjects in an Early Childhood Care Provider Training Course in a Japanese College under the Disasters of COVID-19

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Keywords

Sustaining learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, free-writing survey comments, blended learning

Abstract

Under the influence of COVID-19, lectures at universities in Japan have either been completely switched to remote learning or have been conducted classes using a combination of remote learning and face-to-face learning. "Infant Physical Education 2", a practical course at an early childhood care provider's training college, was also conducted using both remote and face-to-face classes. The purpose of this study is to clarify the effect of the change in the teaching approach and environment due to the introduction of remote learning on students' learning in the situation where regular classes were no longer available at the early childhood care provider training course in the college. We analysed the students' free-writing comments in the questionnaire survey conducted at the end of the semester to verify the effects of the combination of remote and face-to-face classes on students' learning in practical subjects.

The subjects of this study are 126 students out of 137 students in the training course who gave valid responses in the questionnaire survey. The content of the free descriptions in the questionnaire given in the last class were analysed by text mining and KJ method. When we paid attention to the students' words about the remote learning in the free writing, we found some expressions peculiar to this teaching form and environment. In terms of content, there were many requests to increase the number of face-to-face classes, but there were also evaluations such as "I was able to learn well in the remote class at home" or "I was able to work carefully using the practical skills videos".

In the face-to-face classes, the number of practical skills was reduced, so there were not enough physical activities and group learning opportunities as in previous years. However, some of the questionnaire results indicated that the combination of report assignments and practical skills deepened students' understanding. The new learning approach and environment, which combines the practical skills of face-to-face classes with the theoretical learning of remote classes, often imposes restrictions such as not allowing "physical activities" or "group works" in large groups. However, some students have begun to learn independently and spontaneously, and started to work in small groups in order to accomplish practical tasks with devising original ways of learning. In face-to-face classes, learning is based on the experience of activities introduced by the lecturer. In contrast, the results of the questionnaire suggest that combining remote learning with face-to-face classes may make learning in practical subjects more proactive and help students gain a deeper understanding of both theoretical and practical aspects.

A Basic Study on the Gender Equality Perception of Pre-Service Childcare Teachers

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Keywords

Pre-service teachers, early childhood teachers, gender equality

Abstract

Rationale for the study

Gender equality means that both women and men should be acknowledged for individual uniqueness and differences and have equal opportunities, responsibilities and authority, regardless of gender at birth. The need for gender equality education is emphasized in that early childcare is a critical period (Jo Yu-na, Oh Sun-young, 2018) when individual consciousness is formed by observing how society categorizes people, roles, and play according to gender (Trepanier-Street & Romatowski, 1999). One of the most important variables in early childcare education institutions that can affect the perception of gender equality for infants is the teachers, and the perception of gender equality that teachers have has a significant impact on the infant's educational experience (Lee Young-ran, 2011).

Purpose(s) and research question(s) of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate gender equality education and awareness for Pre-Service Teachers to prepare basic data for education programs that train childcare teachers with gender equality awareness.

1. What is the Pre-Service childcare teacher's understanding of gender equality education?
2. What is the difference in the degree of gender equality perception according to the education experience of pre-infant teachers?

Brief description

For the purpose of this study, a survey was conducted on Pre-Service childcare teachers attending universities located in Gyeonggi-do using questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 40 questions, including 8 questions about the general background of Pre-Service childcare teachers, 4 questions about experience and understanding of gender equality education, and 28 questions about gender equality awareness. First, in order to understand the general background of teachers and experience and understanding of gender equality education, researchers developed it by referring to the inspection tools in the preceding study (Jeong Mira, 2011; Choi Ji-yeon et al., 2009). Second, the Korean Gender Egalitarian Scale for Adolescents (KGES-A) was used to measure the level of gender equality. For the analysis of the data, frequency, percentage, cross-analysis (σ^2), and t verification were performed using SPSSWIN 23.0.

Summary

First, Pre-Service childcare teachers recognized the need for gender equality education for them, and that childcare teachers' awareness of gender equality affected young children.

Second, Pre-Service childcare teachers who have gender equality education experience were found to have higher gender equality awareness in all factors, including attitudes to gender equality in the public domain, attitudes to women's rights demands, attitudes to gender roles, gender norms, paternal family systems, and attitudes to gender equality at home

The results of this study can help prospective Pre-Service childcare teachers explore ways to raise awareness of gender equality. In addition, the Pre-Service childcare teachers' awareness of the need for gender equality education, including for childcare teachers and young children, reflects the growing demand for gender equality in our society. Therefore, educational institutions that train Pre-Service childcare teachers should provide continuous education on gender equality. As a result of this education, awareness of gender equality in early childcare teachers and young children could increase.

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The Relationship Between Self-Leadership and Stress Response Strategy of Preservice Early Childhood Teacher, Mediating Effects of Conflict Resolution Strategies

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Keywords

Preservice early childhood teacher, Self-leadership, Stress response strategy, Conflict resolution strategies

Abstract

Early childhood teachers experience conflicts in various relationships, including with infants and children, parents, faculty and staff, and community personnel. It will also be seen as 'burn-out' for various reasons, including the recent difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and reports of child abuse in the media. Teachers should be able to cope with stress with self-leadership because 'burn-out' phenomenon leads to stress. It is necessary to maintain a smooth interpersonal relationship by resolving conflicts between various human resources surrounding teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the self-leadership of early childhood teachers and the mediating effects of conflict resolution strategies. To this end, a questionnaire was distributed to 199 pre-child student teachers at a three-year college located in Seoul, Gyeonggi-do. The questions of the tools used in this study are as follows. First, self-leadership is a total of seven questions. In other words, self-establishment, imagination of successful performance, self-punishment, belief and assumption analysis, self-conversation, self-compensation, natural reward. Second, the stress response strategy consisted of 10 questions, six questions for active response and four questions for passive response. Third, the conflict resolution strategy has a total of 18 questions, five sub-factors: concession, control, integration, avoidance, and compromise. A correlation analysis was conducted to find out how much each other's direction and relationship are due to factors between variables. The collected data were analyzed by the structural equation model. The research results are as follows:

Significant correlations were found between self-leadership and stress strategies of early childhood teachers. Self-establishment, imagination of successful performance, self-punishment, belief and assumption analysis, self-conversation, self-compensation, natural reward factors showed significant static correlation with the ability to actively relieve stress. The higher the self-leadership of prospective early childhood teachers, the higher the ability to actively relieve stress. In other words, early childhood teachers with high self-esteem actively try to solve stress by focusing on problems when faced with stress. In addition, the six sub-regions, excluding self-punishment also showed significant static correlation with passive response skills. In other words, early childhood teachers with high self-leadership try to reduce a stress response by using their emotional aspects, such as trying to relax when faced with stress. However, self-punishment had nothing to do with passive stress response. To deal with stress passively is to make positive use of one's emotions.

Second, the self-leadership of prospective early childhood teachers showed significant direct effects on stress response strategies, and the indirect effects also showed significant effects. In other words, the seven factors of self-leadership of prospective pre-child teachers are strategic in their ability to actively and passively stress response through the integration and compromise of conflict resolution strategies.

This study is meaningful in that the conflict resolution strategy of prospective early childhood teachers has a medium effect to cope with self-leadership and stress. Therefore, it is necessary to develop various programs that can solve conflicts by prospective early childhood teachers and to support them to foster self-leadership.

Strengthening advocate-activist teacher identities through initial teacher education: Challenges and possibilities

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Keywords

Early childhood pre-service teachers, advocate-activist identities, initial teacher education

Abstract

Initial teacher education (ITE) is arguably considered as providing the ground work for high-quality early childhood education (ECE) by preparing teaching graduates “to be effective beginning teachers from day one on the job” ([Teaching Council], 2019, para. 2). While recognising the potential contribution of ITE to high-quality ECE, it is equally important to acknowledge “the weakness of education” and the fact that “despite attempts to get it ‘right’, the outcomes of education are never totally predictable, and success can never be totally guaranteed” (Biesta, 2009, p. 354).

This presentation creates space for a conversation about the challenges and possibilities of ITE in supporting pre-service teachers to build the capacity for construing themselves as critical thinkers and advocate-activist teachers for a socially just, equitable, and inclusive ECE and the world. Precisely, it critically explores the current positioning of early childhood pre-service teachers within some ITE spaces and places and looks for opportunities for strengthening their advocate-activist professional identities.

The presentation draws on a qualitative study that sought to explore if/in what ways the B.Tchg ECE programme, with its courses and the practicum, may equip pre-service teachers with resources to strengthen a critical mentality and the capacity for advocacy and activism in their work. The study was conducted with ethics approval gained from the institution’s ethics committee. It consisted of four data sets, including the analysis of compulsory courses offered on the B. Tchg ECE and interviews with pre-service teachers on the final year of the B. Tchg ECE programme, mentor teachers supporting pre-service teachers on the practicum in ECE settings, and teacher educators teaching on the ITE programme. Data analysis consisted of thematic and a discourse-analysis of the texts (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kamenarac, forthcoming), allowing a critical examination of common themes identified across the data sets and prevailing discourses within the themes. Data was treated as a discourse and viewed as possibly holding power to shape pre-service teachers’ worldviews and identities while also offering a framework for their future selves as they become qualified teachers and members of the teaching profession.

Research findings shed light on specificities and complexities in the positioning of pre-service teachers within ITE spaces and places shaped by powerful opposing discourses and hierarchies. The study poses questions about the place of ITE in strengthening the capacity of teaching graduates to be and act as advocates for a better ECE and the world (i.e. those who speak on behalf of self and others from within existing political and socio-economic frameworks). Importantly, it invites all parties involved in ITE to explore possibilities for supporting teaching graduates to take the position of activist teachers (Kamenarac, 2019; Marshall & Anderson, 2009; Picower, 2012; Sumsion, 2006) by challenging the existing frameworks and power relationships and envisaging a more socially just ECE and the world.

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Changes in career perception of pre-service early childhood teachers

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Keywords

Pre-service early childhood teacher, career perception

Abstract

Introduction

This study aims to determine how undergraduate pre-service early childhood teachers' willingness to pursue the teaching profession influences changes in their career perception.

Objectives

- a. determining the factors that influence the pre-service childcare teachers' decision to enter their current schools;
- b. examining the changes in the pre-service childcare teachers' "willingness-to-teach" indices since entering college;
- c. studying the changes in the pre-service childcare teachers' career desires and willingness to teach;
- d. analyzing how the pre-service childcare teachers' willingness to teach affects their career choices.

Materials and Methods

The subjects of this study were 202 teachers from three universities located in Gyeonggi Province. Assessments of pre-service childcare teachers' career perceptions were performed using a modified and supplemented version of the questionnaire from Kang et al.'s (2015) The Shift of Pre-service Mathematics Teachers' Career Perceptions (Teacher Education Research, 54(4), 538-548). The validity and understandability of the questionnaire were verified by two professors of childcare as well as two professors and two Ph.D. students of early childhood education, and its reliability was confirmed by 20 teachers with a Cronbach's alpha-coefficient of .82. Data were collected using a questionnaire survey with the subjects from November 25th through December 6th of 2019. A chi-square test and a t-test were conducted to evaluate the changes.

Results

- a. Factors influencing the pre-service early childhood teachers' decision to enter their current school.

The vast majority (66%) of the respondents answered their own choice was most influential in their decision to enter their schools, immediately followed by "advice from their parents or family" (18%), and thirdly "news" (10%). In the fourth "their college admission test scores" (6%).

- b. Changes in the pre-service childcare teachers' willingness-to-teach indices since entering college.

Among the respondents whose willingness to become teachers increased (71%), female and male students accounted for 67% and 4% respectively. Those whose willingness-to-teach indices decreased (29%) consisted of 26% of female respondents and 3% of male respondents.

- c. Pre-service childcare teachers' career desires and willingness to teach.

In the case of the students whose career desire was to become childcare teachers, willingness to teach remained similar or slightly increased compared to the time of admission to college. While 57% of the respondents desired to become childcare teachers upon entrance, the percentage had risen up to 86% by the time of the survey. This increase

suggests an influence of the undergraduate students' college entrance on willingness to teach across all the three college years. The percentage of students who did not intend to become childcare teachers decreased from 43% to 14% since the time of entrance.

d. Pre-service childcare teachers' willingness to teach and career choices.

Since the time of their entrance, the willingness to become teachers among pre-service childcare teachers has increased from 65% to 83%. In contrast, the percentage for professions that are not related to their major has declined from 26% to 6% since entrance.

Conclusions and Implications

a. The majority of the background factors behind the pre-service childcare teachers' decision to enter their current school were the choice of the pre-service teachers themselves. A number of other factors, including advice from their parents or family, accounted for smaller percentages.

b. Most pre-service childcare teachers were likely to pursue teaching professions that are relevant to their major. This outcome is probably related to the various teaching opportunities that these aspiring teachers encounter in their college years.

c. Among the undergraduate students whose career desire was to become childcare teachers throughout their college years, their willingness to teach remained similar or improved. A similar improvement is also observed with the students who did not intend to become professional teachers at the time of college entrance.

d. The pre-service teachers who had intended to become early childhood teachers upon college entrance experienced a general increase in their willingness to teach. In contrast, those who had chosen to become office workers and public servants were less willing to teach by the time of the survey.

It is necessary for childcare or early childhood education colleges to minimize their students' job departure and to foster quality childcare teachers through systematic education, such as training their teaching abilities and providing various teaching opportunities.

This study will provide a meaningful insight for further studies in career perception and job choice to improve the social perception of Korean childcare teachers and to establish a foundation for solving the shortage of early childhood teachers.