

Concurrent paper session 1

Room 1

ECEC pedagogy / Professional practice

Pōwhiri: A Māori ritual of welcome for refugee children and families

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Keywords

Refugees, Belonging, Pōwhiri

Abstract

Rationale for the study

The world is facing a global refugee crisis, and many refugees are young children. Early childhood education provides unique opportunities for addressing challenges in refugee settlement in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and its potentially transformative role in building belonging with refugee families deserves analysis.

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

This paper is part of a wider research project, *Refugee families in early childhood education: constructing pathways to belonging* which aims to develop evidence-based policy and practice theories that illustrate how early childhood education can enable refugee families strengthen a sense of belonging and identity for refugee families in Aotearoa New Zealand, and help families sustain a sense of belonging and identity in their home countries. This paper focuses on the development of a Māori framing that builds on concepts of Mana Whenua from kaupapa Māori theory as the basis for the bicultural belonging and identity for refugee children and families.

Brief description of methodology

The research project as a whole utilised a design-based implementation research process involving cycles of data gathering, theory building, critical analysis and evaluation, and adaptation of design.

The Refugee Resettlement Centre ECE Centre, and involved observations of the participation of families in the pōwhiri ceremony at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, collaborative discussions with kaiako and recordings of discussions with interpreters about their understanding, experiences and perceptions of the pōwhiri.

Summary of findings, conclusion, and implications

Pōwhiri (ritual of welcome), where the hosts welcome visitors to their territory, provides the metaphor for the development of bicultural belonging for refugee children and families in New Zealand. Pōwhiri, whether physical or metaphorical, is a practice of welcome that involves sharing, hospitality, generosity, relationship development, acceptance, respect and celebration. It is a means of bringing people together, where a demonstration of mana and whanaungatanga is required to welcome people appropriately, with warmth and respect. It is a critical facet of welcoming refugee families and children to the AUT Refugee Resettlement Centre, and to New Zealand. Articulation of what is involved in each step of the pōwhiri process is key to developing theoretical understandings of ways teachers can welcome refugee families to New Zealand and support a sense of bicultural belonging.

Japanese children's experiences in New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) settings

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Keywords

Japanese Children, New Zealand ECE, Cultural challenge

Abstract

Rationale/Background

New Zealand is currently experiencing a rapid increase in immigration from Asian countries (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). As children of these immigrant families start participating in early childhood education (ECE) settings, it is important that teachers gain a sound understanding of how Asian children communicate and learn with others in New Zealand settings. It is also important to be cautious about overgeneralising the term 'Asian'. For example, Japanese children's communication strategies may differ from other East Asian children's (Maruyama et al., 2015).

In this study the researcher focussed in-depth on a small number of Japanese children. Despite Japanese people constituting a relatively small proportion of the Asian population in New Zealand (Ministry of Social Development, 2016), their population has had a significant increase of 40 percent since the 2001 census. Also, New Zealand has rapidly become superdiverse (Butcher, 2017; Chan, 2019) and children from a variety of cultural background attend mainstream early childhood settings. Teachers now need to engage with numerous children from diverse cultural backgrounds which may be unfamiliar to them.

Considering the global context of increasing cultural tensions, especially Asian hate movement since the pandemic, I sincerely wish to contribute to the construction of a peaceful multi-ethnic society by embracing diversity rather than marginalization and avoidance.

Purpose

The aim of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of Japanese children and their families in New Zealand ECE contexts with a focus on understanding any cultural challenges faced by the children, their families and teachers. In this research, Japanese children refer to the children whose declared ethnicity includes Japanese in the ECE centre enrolment form.

Methodology

This study was a qualitative multiple case study with five Japanese children in different New Zealand mainstream early childhood centres. The data includes five full-day observations of each child in five different centres, a 40-minute individual semi-structured interview with a parent and a teacher of each Japanese child, and document analysis of existing local and global policies and curriculum. The data is analyzed through the theoretical lens of Human Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), Sociocultural Theory (SCT), critical theory and multicultural competency.

This study is a part of a doctorate thesis through Victoria University of Wellington.

Findings/implication/contribution

Japanese children in the study experienced diverse challenges of negotiating their belonging and cultural identity, including situations such as a lack of shared knowledge within the community; lack of English; where the child's friend said "easy peasy Japanese"; balancing bicultural identity; and difficulty in relating to Japanese identity.

This research contributes to deepening an understanding of Japanese children's experiences in the New Zealand ECE context by avoiding a static view of culture and aiming to understand the target children's changing environment and identity.

The study will enable guidance to be developed to effectively support Japanese children's participation in ECE settings.

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Cultural barriers and affordances to inter-professional work in Confucian heritage culture

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Keywords

Teacher professional learning, inter-professional collaboration, Confucian Heritage Culture

Abstract

A growing body of literature worldwide explores and advocates the strengths of inter-professional work (IPW), viewing the collaboration among early childhood practitioners with different disciplinary expertise as a sound approach to support children with diverse needs. (Edwards, Daniels, Gallagher, Leadbetter & Warmington, 2009; Wong & Sumsion, 2013). Simultaneously, empirical studies have also exposed the difficulties and challenges for all those involved (Fitzgerald & Kay, 2008; Trodd & Chivers, 2011). Despite the presence of literature related to IPW in early childhood education, most of the studies are conducted in a non-Confucian-Heritage-Culture context, presenting a research gap in the literature. This qualitative study attempts to fill the void by exploring how early childhood teachers work with early intervention providers in kindergartens in a Confucian Culture Heritage context, Hong Kong in this case. The study adopted the grammar of collaboration (Engeström et al., 2015) as the theoretical and analytical framework, a robust approach to understanding the complexities of collaboration from a socio-cultural perspective.

This study was conducted in a kindergarten that participated in a government-funded “On-site Preschool Rehabilitation Services Scheme” in Hong Kong. A total of 11 participants from two groups of early childhood teachers and early intervention providers were involved in five months of participant observation and two semi-structured interviews. Relevant documents were also collected for analysis. The data was analysed both inductively and deductively through first cycle and second cycle coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

Preliminary findings suggest that Confucianism was a double-edged sword with both positive and negative impacts on the IPW. On one hand, the philosophy of Confucius that emphasises collectivism favoured constructing of a common goal and shared responsibilities among participants. On the other hand, Confucian based factors such as maintaining a harmonious social relationship and accepting an unequal power relationship constrained the collaboration, particularly when the participants were confronted with conflicting views. The findings further highlight the concept of collaboration from participants’ perspectives were distinct from those in literature. While equal status and joint decision-making are advocated in literature (Friend & Cook, 2013), the participants considered power was not necessarily equally distributed in collaborative relationships. These findings offer insights into what it is like to work inter-professionally in a Confucian Heritage Culture context.

Worthy of note is that this paper's intent is not to generalise specific cultural patterns to large geographical areas but to enrich the conversations about the relationships between IPW and its cultural and historical context. This paper contributes to the knowledge base of IPW through investigating the IPW in Confucian Heritage Culture and exposing the complexities of Confucianism in shaping the collaboration between ECE teachers and early intervention providers in Hong Kong.

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Room 2
ECEC policy /Children's and families' wellbeing

The impact of Covid-19 on ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Keywords

Early childhood education, Covid-19, ECE policy

Abstract

Rationale

Over 2020, Covid-19 shaped educational policy and practice, and brought into focus strengths and vulnerabilities in the ECE sector. This presentation highlights findings from a June 2020 survey of managers (Mitchell, Hodgen, Meagher-Lundberg, & Wells, 2020) and subsequent interviews with 15 of these managers (Mitchell, Meagher-Lundberg, & Wells, 2020). The research aimed to capture information about ECE practices and policies in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, new practices that would be continued, and management views of the ongoing sustainability of their service.

Purpose and research questions

The overarching research questions guiding the research were:

- What are the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Aotearoa New Zealand ECE sector?
- What are ECE sector responses to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Methodology and data analysis

The survey was applicable to kindergarten association management, education and care service management, playcentre management and homebased service management. It sought information about responses and actions during Alert Levels 4, 3, and 2, including: strategic responses developed by services; teaching and learning, communication and support offered families; enrolments and attendance; staffing during Lockdown 3; and funding, including ratings of financial position, funding applications, problems experienced. Interview questions were constructed after analysis of the survey responses and related to areas that were particularly crucial in these responses. Frequency analysis was used to analyse the survey's closed questions, and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) was used to analyse the survey's open questions and interview responses.

Summary of findings

The survey and interviews illustrated the crucial role ECE services played in supporting essential workers, and teachers/kaiako, families and children through the COVID-19 pandemic. Many ECE services found innovative ways to communicate with families and children and maintain an education programme during lockdowns. Exceptional efforts were made by some services that went well beyond the usual operation of the ECE service. An ideal of unity and acting together, of staff working in solidarity to support each other, families and communities, was exemplified in the actions of He Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens, a large kindergarten association that is participating in research with us. Laitinen and Pessi (2014, pp. 11-12) argue that solidarity is not focused on the wellbeing of other or you, but rather “the target of concern in solidarity can be us together”. Solidarity is premised on a concept of reciprocity, as well as a need to respond to structures and practices that are unjust. Yet the findings also highlighted management worries about future enrolments, on which funding is based, and ongoing viability of some services. There was also much variability in staff pay and employment conditions during lockdowns.

The findings are set within Aotearoa New Zealand’s ECE policy context, where the need to address problems in allowing a competitive market approach to determine where and how ECE services are provided has become urgent. The research contributes to discussion of priorities for implementation of the Ministry of Education’s Early learning action plan 2019-2029 (Ministry of Education, 2019) and to ideas about re-envisioning ECE as a public good and child’s right.

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ECE teachers and parents identifying and responding to bully-like situations

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Keywords

ECE teacher, Parent, intervention strategies, bully-like behaviour

Abstract

Research reveals that teachers and parents play an important role in the prevention and management of children's aggression and bullying behaviour in primary and secondary school (Baker, 2006; Efobi & Nwokolo, 2014; Gómez-Ortiz, Romera, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2016). Yet few studies have focused on ECE teacher and parent responses to a child's peer harassment (Cameron & Kovac, 2017; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Swit, McMaugh, & Warburton, 2018; Tepetaş, Akgun, & Altun, 2010; Troop-Gordon & Ladd, 2015; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). A sample of 272 New Zealand ECE teachers and 107 parents who had at least one child between 3-4 years old at the time of data collection completed an anonymous online survey in which they were presented with 6 written vignettes describing various types of aggressive and bully-like incidents that typically occur in ECE contexts. In this article, I just report ECE teachers' and parents' responses to three bully-like scenarios. For each scenario, participants were asked to decide whether the behaviours being described were an example of bullying behaviour. In addition, they were asked to choose one or more intervention strategy/s from a provided list. Descriptive statistical analyses and hierarchical clustering analyses with Ward's method (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998) were used to find the most common cluster of intervention strategies for both groups of participants. When presented with bully-like hypothetical scenarios, the majority of ECE teachers and parents identified the physical bully-like scenario as bullying (89% and 94% respectively). However, they were more uncertain when presented with scenarios depicting verbal bully-like behaviour; only 53% of ECE teachers and 47% of parents recognised it as bullying behaviour. With relational bully-like behaviour, there was still some uncertainty amongst both teachers and parents. Only 73% of ECE teachers and 77% of parents identified the scenario as bullying behaviour. The ECE teachers responded to physical, verbal and relational bully-like behaviour differently. With physical bully-like behaviours, the ECE teachers suggested a cluster of intervention strategies including direct (e.g. having a serious talk with the aggressive child, as well as comforting the victim) and indirect (e.g. raising the issue at the staff meeting, and undertaking some observations to make sure this kind of behaviour didn't happen again). With verbal bully-like behaviour, the ECE teachers suggested a different range of strategies including supporting both children (bully and victim), reading books or talking with all of the children about desirable behaviour, comforting the victim, and enlisting the help of other children to help resolve the problem. Interestingly, in the relational bully-like situation, ECE teachers suggested they would apply a similar cluster of strategies that they applied to verbal bully-like behaviours with a different sequence. In addition, the results highlighted that the strategy 'I would ask my child to think about how his/her friend get upset because of his/her behaviour' was the most popular intervention strategy that parents suggested they would use with all three types of bully-like behaviours. However, with physical and relational bully-like situation parents suggested a wider range of strategies such as 'I would discipline my child for his/her misbehaviour', 'I would contact my child's early childhood centre', and 'I would try to find out more about the incident' compared to the verbal bully-like situation. The findings of this study illustrate that the percentage of ECE teacher and parents who were able to identify the physical bully-like behaviour were higher than verbal and relational bully-like behaviour. It is important to raise the ECE teachers' and parents' awareness that all types of bully-like behaviours have a negative impact on children's wellbeing.

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Understanding the positive discipline practices of parents of children aged one- five years in Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration into the discipline practices parents choose to use and how they are informed in their choice of strategies

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Keywords

Positive discipline, children and families' wellbeing, children under 5 years old

Abstract

The study was undertaken as part of a Master of Education and presented in the form of a dissertation paper February 2020.

Rationale for the study

How parents discipline their children has been subject to intense academic scrutiny for more than a century. Despite this attention, the positive discipline practices parents choose to use generally in their parenting are not well understood. Nor is it well understood how parents are informed and influenced in their choice of practices.

In this study the term 'discipline' is reframed to move away from meaning obedience, control and punishment back toward the origins of the concept where discipline is more akin to learning, understanding, gaining knowledge (Sege & Siegel, 2018).

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

Within this positive view of discipline, the study aims to understand the prosocial practices parents use to guide, nurture and shape their children's social emotional and behavioural development, and how they are informed in their practices.

1. What are the specific positive non-physical discipline methods that parents choose to use to discipline their children under 5 years of age?
2. What sources of information inform or influence these decisions?

Brief description of methodology including that used for data analysis

The present study used mixed methods design (Creswell, 2012) to examine the prosocial parenting strategies that parents choose to use as part of their discipline practices, and the sources of information that influence and support their choices.

The study is situated within the specific social milieu of New Zealand and is based on a sample of 84 parents across New Zealand with at least one child aged between 12 months and 5 years of age. Parents' experiences are explored via an online survey (n=84) capturing both quantitative and qualitative data, and in semi-structured interviews with a smaller group of parents (n=3).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse and report participant data from both the survey and interviews. Data analysis was reported using a mix of graphs, tables and descriptive interpretation.

Summary of findings, conclusion, and implications (for ongoing research studies – expected outcomes and anticipated contribution of the research)

Findings contribute to a gap in literature on the practices parents choose to use to discipline their children as part of their everyday parenting. They reveal that parents generally report choosing to use prosocial strategies over coercive strategies, and it appears the information they receive impacts upon their practices. Insights into the information sources that influence parents, reveal the possible existence of a knowledge gap where not all parents are equally accessing the quality information they need.

Despite this knowledge gap, findings show that parents are open to receiving information to support their parenting and rely on friends, their partner, their parents, ECE teachers and Facebook as the top five most used sources of information. ECE teachers are the most relied upon and trusted professional source of information, and parents professionally connected to ECE as a teacher or student are more likely to access expert information related to child development and positive discipline practices.

Implications of these findings relate to the need to reach parents at a population level if a thriving culture of positive discipline practices is to be fully established in New Zealand and thereby reduce the potential for harm to children in their homes through coercive discipline practices. Furthermore, findings infer the existence of the untapped potential of the ECE sector to inform and support growing this culture of positive discipline practices in Aotearoa.

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Room 3 Advocacy in ECEC

Advocacy and equity in the workplace for diverse early childhood kaiako

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Keywords

Diversity, equity, kaiako

Abstract

Rationale for the study

Although considerable body of research is now available on the inclusion and exclusion experiences of diverse tamariki, families and whānau attending early childhood settings (see, for example, Gunn, et al., 2020), the same cannot be said of diverse kaiako in the sector. This research project investigated the inclusion and exclusion experiences of diverse early childhood kaiako in Aotearoa New Zealand. This study aims to inform our thinking around what matters to diverse kaiako in relation to equitable work and teaching contexts. There is the potential for the sector to gain more understanding around supporting kaiako rights, wellbeing and belonging by giving voice both to the positive and negative experiences of teachers (Baker, 2018; Cherrington & Shuker, 2012). We also aim to raise awareness and create further discussion around what can be done to attract and retain more diverse kaiako in the early learning sector (Education Workforce Strategy, 2019; Teaching Council, 2019).

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

Our main aim was to gather information on ECE kaiako experiences of diversity and inclusion and what matters to them in this regard. We consider that the knowledge gained from identifying both the positive and negative experiences of diverse kaiako will help inform how all the sector stakeholders can best support these teachers' rights, wellbeing and belonging in ECE.

More specifically, the objectives of our research are to:

1. Describe the inclusion and exclusion experiences of diverse kaiako in ECE.
2. Identify the barriers and facilitators to attracting and retaining diverse kaiako in ECE.
3. Identify the barriers and facilitators to maintaining equitable workplaces for diverse kaiako.
4. Strengthen understanding of what can be done to promote the rights, health, wellbeing, belonging, mana and needs of diverse kaiako in ECE.

Brief description

We invited kaiako working in early childhood services to tell their stories of teacher diversity in ECE by completing an open-ended questionnaire delivered online via Survey Monkey. By kaiako telling their own stories, in their own voice and words, about their everyday experiences and understandings of teacher diversity in ECE, we anticipate gaining insight into inclusive and exclusive cultures, policies and practices in ECE (Hughes, 2010). We are currently identifying emerging themes through iterative reading of and reflection on the responses. We will use coding to organise the data into identified key themes and ideas. Codings will reflect the questions and discourses guiding the project as well as the emergent important issues for kaiako (Edwards, 2010; Mukherji & Albon, 2018).

Summary

We are currently in the process of collecting data however, the potential benefits of this research are:

1. Promoting sector understanding of the effects of inclusive and exclusive teaching and learning environments on diverse kaiako and quality ECE provision.
2. Gaining a better understanding of how to support the rights, health, wellbeing, belonging, mana and needs of diverse kaiako.
3. Informing policy and processes relating to initial teacher education and early learning service recruitment/employment.
4. Strengthening the case for more government funding in early childhood education, especially in relation to scholarships and pay parity.

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Teacher advocacy through the lens of emotional labour

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Keywords

Emotional labour, teacher advocacy, wellbeing

Abstract

Rationale for the study

Despite a large body of international literature on emotional labour in various occupations, there is a paucity of research related to early childhood education (ECE) educators. My motivation for choosing this project stemmed from my professional identity as an early childhood educator and lecturer and my experience of working and being linked to the profession in many different roles. Research on emotional labour experienced by ECE teachers has potential to pave the way for ECE policy and organisational reforms. This could possibly start an open and powerful discourse within the profession, that may address the negative effects of emotional labour in ECE.

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

The purpose of my research was to explore and understand how ECE educators experienced emotional labour in their work. Hochschild (1983) first introduced the concept of emotional labour as a process by which workers are expected to manage (or hide) their feelings in accordance with organisationally defined rules and guidelines (Puglisi, 1999). Emotional labour forms the component of psychological safety perceived by employees in their work environment (Hochschild, 1983, as cited in Schaubroeck & James, 2000).

The primary research question the study sought to answer was: What is the role of emotional labour in the work of ECE teachers?

Brief description of methodology

Using qualitative research methodology, I conducted in-depth interviews, and collected narratives and reflections from six ECE teachers in New Zealand. These data aimed to answer the primary exploratory research question and provided relevant first-hand accounts of emotional labour experienced by ECE teachers. I developed an emotional labour framework that guided the data analysis in this research.

Summary of findings

Key findings from the thematic data analysis included:

- Unfair and heavy workloads can lead to demotivated teachers and high emotional labour with possible negative occupational health and safety (OHS) outcomes.
- Emotional labour experiences may take place due to stressful encounters with some parents, tensions within the team or with management.

- Unfair pay rates and unpaid overtime hours have the likely potential to lead to poor work-life balance and high emotional labour for teachers
- Empowered teachers experience lower stress and emotional labour. When teachers have a voice that is heard and valued, they feel empowered by supportive leadership teams and managers.
- All the participants believed that teachers needed advocacy and voice to deal with these issues for any change to happen.

The research responded to the gap in the emotional labour literature and reflected growing dissatisfaction within the ECE sector with pay, working conditions and quality in ECE work environments (Childforum, 2015; Dalli et al, 2011; Dalli, 2015; ERO, 2015). Further research on emotional labour could deepen our understanding of the plethora of factors contributing to emotional labour in ECE and lay the foundations for policy and organisational reforms to improve the working conditions of ECE teachers. This may then have positive ripple effects for our tamariki (children).

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Navigating racism: Developing anti-racism commitment and advocacy in early childhood education

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Keywords

Institutional racism, anti-racism, anti-racist advocacy

Abstract

In conjunction with the ARC-ECE (Anti-Racism Commitment in Early Childhood Education) research project, this paper responds to the calls by the Teaching Council to engage in “uncomfortable conversations” about racism with teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2021). Consistent with this focus, the paper addresses the expectations in *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō nga mokopuna* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017), and other key documents (Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, New Zealand Ministry of Education., 2020, 2020a, 2020b) to confront racism, to ensure that individuals are free from discrimination and stigma, and that learners have the confidence to resist and challenge discriminatory behaviours against themselves and others.

The paper discusses existing understandings of racism within the ECE space in Aotearoa New Zealand. These understandings will be contrasted with race-critical scholarship on anti-racism in order to highlight the potential for enhancing anti-racism commitment and advocacy (Da Silva, 2007; Dei, 1996; Goldberg, 2009; Lentin, 2016, 2020; Phillips, 2011; Turda et al., 2018; Wekker, 2016). The paper concludes by raising questions about the current strategic approaches and their limitations.

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Room 5
ECEC pedagogy

The introduction of the emergent curriculum in a Maltese ECEC context (0-7 years): Seven case studies

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Keywords

Emergent curriculum; child-centred approach; early years education

Abstract

The Maltese early years context (0-7 years) has recently experienced significant curriculum changes including the implementation of the Learning Outcomes Framework (MEDE, 2015) and the shift from a prescriptive curriculum to a curriculum that is co-constructed and co-owned by the educator and the child (MEDE, 2012). This shift has resulted in the rise of a new curriculum discourse in which the key terms are: emergent curriculum; child-centred approach; learning outcomes framework and the project approach. This paper presents the preliminary findings of a qualitative study aimed to investigate how the newly introduced curriculum approach is being experienced by educators and children in childcare, kindergarten and early primary settings (0-7 years), and impacting practice. The key research question is: *How are early childhood educators understanding the new curriculum discourse, implementing it in their educational settings, and perceiving its impact on children's learning?*

Using narrative inquiry, the researchers are collaborating with teachers within a co-constructed framework to document and critically reflect on their understanding of the new curriculum approach, how they are implementing it and perceiving its impact on children's learning. The key data sources are the teachers' reflective accounts and transcripts of teacher-researcher meetings and focus group discussions. The paper will discuss early themes from thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the textual data, including how the implementation of the emergent curriculum approach is impacting educators' views of learning and their interpretation of the new curriculum discourse in Maltese early years practice. The implications of the new curriculum approach for contributing to social justice will be highlighted.

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Children's portfolios as pedagogical documentation in assessing children's learning progress

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Keywords

Documentation pedagogy, teaching and learning, young children

Abstract

Pedagogical documentation is a form of formative assessment in evaluating children's learning progress as well as evidence of their work (Helm & Katz, 2011). Children's work is documented in the portfolio that is presented in the form of a transcript, photos, and videos by teachers or children themselves. Documentation is necessary for teachers to reflect on children's ability and dispositions in exploring their learning, particularly in planning project work. Children also may review their work and construct their learning by what has been documented. Hence, the purpose of the study is to collect, analyze, interpret, and display evidence of children's learning progress through the practice of the project approach. The research question is to analyze how teachers implement pedagogical documentation in evaluating children's learning and whether children's portfolios guide the teacher in assessing children's learning progress. The study adopts action research to have an in-depth overview of the implementation of pedagogical documentation as an evaluation of children's constructive learning progress, which took two (2) years to complete the phases of the research. Samples were purposely selected to ensure ample and substantial answers to the research questions were obtained. A series of naturalistic observations are applied to examine how teachers document children learning via project work and how teachers review and reflect on documentation in guiding children to investigate further or inform children of the knowledge that they should know and understand based on their project work progress. An observation checklist was used to narrate and describe the situation and learning environment based on the research questions. The narrative observation was analyzed to identify the major themes derived from the observation. The themes were analyzed to describe the implementation of pedagogical documentation by teachers in reviewing and assessing children's learning. The findings identify that teachers are not well versed in documenting children's learning journey as part of their assessment. However, teachers make use of the documentation as references in planning the next step of the project work progress with children. The teachers also used the documentation to identify children's learning potential and guide children following what they able and not able to do. This shows that pedagogical documentation is applicable for assessing children's learning progress, despite the teachers' incompetency in implementing the documentation as teachers are used to with summative assessment. The recommendation is to ensure the pedagogical documentation is to be used in changing teachers' assessment methods from summative to formative to enhance children's active participation and engagement with their learning.

Analysis of mathematic learning that stimulates higher order thinking skills of kindergartens in Indonesia

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Keywords

Mathematic Learning, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Kindergartens

Abstract

This research is motivated by the finding that the mathematics ability of children in Indonesia is still low. Early Childhood Education covers various aspects of child development, including the development of mathematics in children based on the principles of learning. Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) which includes five elements, namely: problem solving skills, inquiry skills, reasoning skills, communication skills and conceptualizing skills related to one another is a fundamental way of learning mathematics. The problem is how teachers can stimulate early childhood mathematics that can stimulate the HOTS of children during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia? The research objectives were (1) to analyze the implementation of early childhood mathematics learning in kindergartens in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic; (2) analyzing High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) which were stimulated in early childhood mathematics learning in kindergartens in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic; (3) describe the relationship between mathematics learning and HOTS stimulation in Indonesian early childhood during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study uses a mixed method research approach. This research consists of two stages. The first stage with quantitative methods and the second stage with qualitative methods, then the data from the two phases are analyzed so that the research results are obtained. Quantitative data analysis used simple statistics, while qualitative data used Miles and Huberman's analysis. The sampling technique was a combination of cluster purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The number of participants is 90 Kindergarten teachers spread across five major islands in Indonesia. Research is still in progress. It is hoped that the results will provide a description of the implementation of Mathematics learning for kindergarten children in Indonesia. Therefore, this research is important to carry out to enrich the knowledge and the birth of a new theory related to mathematics learning and stimulation of HOTS in children in kindergarten as well as a reference for further research.

Room 6
Teacher professional learning

Exploring the art and science of ECERS on-site professional coaching in early childhood education: Capturing the voice of coaches, coaches and kindergarten administrators

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Keywords

ECERS; professional development; coaching

Abstract

Since 2013, The Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Association – Hong Kong Chapter (PECERA-HK) has been publishing the authorized Chinese translations of the world renowned Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS), namely the ECERS-Revised (Harms et al., 2005) and ECERS-Extension (Sylva et al, 2010). A team of PECERA-HK Coaches has also been providing ECERS On-site Professional Coaching (OPC) using both rating scales to local Kindergartens in Hong Kong (HK).

Although coaching with ECERS is not unique to HK (e.g. Seplocha, 2018), there is a lack of research in Asia, and a need to go beyond “does coaching work?” and toward, “where do specific types of coaching work best, for which educators, and in what contexts?” (O’Keefe, 2017). Many PD interventions do not provide enough information either to understand why the PD works or to replicate the PD model (Gupta and Daniels, 2012).

As part of a wider mixed methods research project on the effectiveness of ECERS OPC, this particular study sought to address the following research question:

Focusing on each of the three parties involved in the ECERS OPC (i.e. PECERA-HK Coaches, Coachees, and Kindergarten Administrators), how did each party find the ECERS coaching experience? What worked well and what could be improved?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 26 Coachees and 16 Kindergarten Administrators (i.e., Principals or Curriculum Coordinators) from 14 Kindergartens, which were located in two disadvantaged districts in HK. Focus group interviews were further conducted with 12 PECERA-HK Coaches, all of whom are veterans of the HK ECE sector, each with substantial leadership experience and at least a year of ECERS coaching experience. Findings were as follows:

Kindergartens' Perspective

- ECERS is widely regarded as a valuable Professional Development and School Improvement tool with many merits;
- Coaching is considered a vital approach;
- ECERS OPC enhanced team building amongst kindergarten staff;
- ECERS OPC enhanced teachers' professional growth (upgrading of "software"); and
- ECERS OPC enhanced kindergarten facilities or materials (upgrading of "hardware").

Kindergartens further shared that they would have appreciated more OPC sessions, conducted at a more leisurely pace (ideally beyond one academic year), and expressed their desire for inter-school peer-learning opportunities, perhaps through the creation of Professional Learning Communities.

Coaches' Perspective

- Reaffirmed the inherent strengths of ECERS OPC; and
- Emphasized the essential role of School Management.

Coaches also recommended the provision of school-wide ECERS introductory talks, and to intentionally invite Kindergarten Principals to serve as Coachees. They would welcome additional PD for themselves too, so that they can become even more effective ECERS Coaches.

In light of the above, PECERA-HK made various improvements to our ECERS OPC provision, including:

- More targeted ECERS Coaching for School Improvement that can realistically be achieved within one academic year;
- Extra off-site/online ECERS coaching sessions;
- Better understanding of Coachees' academic backgrounds prior to OPC;
- Implement 'Coach:School' ratio of 1:1 and institute new role of Head Coach;
- Intentionally invite Kindergarten Principals to serve as Coachees, alongside their own teachers;
- Complimentary offering of School-wide ECERS Introductory Talk; and
- Conduct advanced communication with Kindergartens prior to start of OPC.

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What professional coaching has changed in the early childhood classrooms: The use of ECERS-R and ECERS-E scales in professional coaching for teachers in Hong Kong

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Keywords

ECERS □ Quality in Early Childhood Education □ Professional Coaching

Abstract

The current study evaluates the effectiveness of professional coaching practices on enhancing school environment and enriching professional development in Hong Kong kindergartens. The team of professional coaches are provided by PECERA-HK to support teachers in building their capacity in the quality of classroom learning and environment in the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust's **KeySteps@JC Project**. Two to five seed teachers in each kindergarten are trained as coachees. The coaching practices intend to facilitate a higher quality of school environment and empower early childhood teachers on planning and designing the in-school activities. 16 kindergarten and nursery schools located in two districts with less advantaged background in Hong Kong were measured by the scale of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale –Extension (ECERS-E) (Sylva et al., 2010) and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale –Revised (ECERS-R) (Harms et al., 2005). These instruments serve as tools for formative evaluation in the coaching process when teachers worked with the coaches at three time points (Time 2, Time 3 and Time 4) from March 2019 to Jan. 2020. The Independent *t*-test was conducted to examine the differences between baseline measurement conducted in Oct. and Nov. 2018 by the researchers and Time 4 in Oct. 2019-Jan. 2020. Significant gains were found in five out of seven dimensions in ECERS-R and in all the four dimensions in ECERS-E. A repeated measures ANOVA were used to evaluate the main effect in different times during the coaching experience. The significant main effects were shown in the domains of personal care and routines, activities, sciences and environment, and diversity. The Implications will be also discussed.

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Development and validation of the Chinese kindergarten teacher quality scale in Shanghai

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Keywords

Teacher quality; Teacher professionalism; Cultural existentialism pedagogy

Abstract

Teacher quality is at the core of education quality, and China's educational authorities have campaigned to improve teacher quality as a measure to improve education quality in the country. In 2010, the State Council of China issued the "Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)" to define the necessary goals to improve teacher quality at all educational levels. To achieve these goals, the nation's educational authorities have issued further national policy documents, such as "Several Views on the Development of Preschool Education by the State Council" (2010) and the "National Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers" (2012). However, the concept of "Teacher quality" has not been clearly defined, nor has its measurement been developed. This lack is not specific to China; the evaluation of kindergarten teachers' quality has been neglected worldwide (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006; Herman, Morris, & Fitz-Gibbon, 1987; Ramsden, 1991; Sandilos et al., 2015). Consequently, China established the Collaborative Innovation Center of Assessment for Basic Education Quality in 2007 to build a national basic education quality assessment system and provide a reference for the improvement of basic education and its assessment (Ryan et al., 2009). As part of this Center's research project, the present study explores the definition and evaluation of kindergarten teacher quality in the Chinese context.

This study's theoretical framework was developed by Jiang et al. (2017), based on cultural existentialism pedagogy (CEP). CEP considers teachers as a whole to be "homo educandus" (Wulf & Zirfas, 2014) and underscores the importance of "culture" and "history" in the construction of kindergarten teacher quality (Scotland, 2012). In particular, culture plays an important role in nourishing kindergarten teachers' spirit. CEP also focuses on teachers' professional knowledge and skills and highlights the existence and development of the teacher from the perspective of individuality and historical culture. In regarding education as a life journey, CEP highly values the cultivation of empowered and autonomous teachers that demonstrate loyalty and commitment.

Based on CEP, we developed a comprehensive, systematic framework to understand kindergarten teacher quality and developed and validated the Chinese Kindergarten Teacher Quality Scale (CKTQS). We randomly selected and surveyed 1,834 teachers from Shanghai kindergartens. Exploratory and confirmatory factor

analyses confirmed a five-factor structure (healthy condition, practical wisdom, cultural literacy, empowerment and autonomy, and loyalty and commitment), indicating satisfactory construct validity. Descriptive statistics indicated that the Shanghai kindergarten teachers were generally of good quality, ranking highly in practical wisdom. Latent profile analyses generated three profiles, (1) low teacher quality, (2) medium teacher quality, and (3) high teacher quality, while MANOVA results revealed the significant effects of age, educational background, professional title, and position on these quality levels. Finally, hierarchical regression analyses found that job position predicted better teacher quality and that public school tenure was a negative predictor, after controlling for demographic and kindergarten factors. Implications for policy-making and teacher education are discussed.

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Room 8
ECEC policy

Determinants of preschool choice: Understanding how middle-income parents choose kindergartens in Shanghai

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Keywords

Middle-income parents in Shanghai; Preschool choice; Determinants

Abstract

In the past 40 years, strengthening parents' choice of schools has become a global trend in education management (Fung & Lam, 2011; Song & Yuan, 2017; Zhou, Ma & Aoyagi, 2007). As Gordon (2008) pointed out, giving parents more power in choosing schools is "a powerful rallying cry for reform". Although the extant research has empirically explored how parents select schools based on their children's best interests, preschool choice remains relatively understudied. This study addresses this gap by examining preschool choice determinants among middle-income parents in Shanghai and focuses on the major determinants of preschool choice among Shanghai parents, parents' satisfaction and their major concerns.

To achieve this, this study developed a research questionnaire, which was completed by 333 middle-income parents from two demonstration preschools, two public first-level preschools, two public second-level preschools, and one high-end private preschool in Shanghai.

This study used IBM SPSS to conduct a statistical analysis of the data. First, the data were cleaned. Second, the results showed that the questionnaire had good reliability and validity (reliability coefficient is 0.937, KMO data is 0.926, P-value is ".000" in Bartlett sphericity test). Third, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to verify the structural validity of the scale, the first order CFA [$\chi^2 = 1159.94$, $df = 36$, $p < 0.000$, CFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.957, RESEA = 0.064, AIC = 2426.132] and second CFA [$\chi^2 = 1496.07$, $df = 36$, $p < 0.000$, CFI = 0.970, TLI = 0.954, RESEA = 0.074, AIC = 2426.132] measurement models both showed good fit. Finally, descriptive statistics and a two-step clustering analysis were conducted to identify the factors around parents' concerns when choosing a preschool.

Results can be summarized as follows: First, the questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, with a higher score indicating greater significance. Analysis reveals that middle-income parents first consider their children's development (M = 4.74, SD = 0.34), then preschool conditions (M = 4.54, SD = 0.36), and finally family conditions (M = 4.02, SD = 0.59). According to the parents' rankings of the importance of the nine secondary dimensions, parents are primarily concerned about the program quality. Second, results reveal the latent profiles of parents' satisfaction. In this respect, the majority of "Highly Satisfied Parents" (57.7%) had selected either demonstration or high-end private preschools, while "Satisfied Parents" (42.3%) had selected second-level public schools for their children. Third, "Highly Satisfied Parents" had relatively higher requirements compared to "Satisfied Parents." These findings contribute to the growing knowledge about middle-income parents'

preschool needs and can guide future policy-making. Middle-income parents are more concerned about the development of children's survival abilities, and tend to promote the development of children's mathematics, science, art and other professional ability through the extracurricular tutoring. New middle-income parents have different emphases compare with other groups in making a decision, which require more attention from policymakers.

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Policy innovation of Microminiature Kindergartens: A case study in Guangdong, China

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Keywords

Kindergarten size; Policy innovation; Sustainable development

Abstract

With the urbanization of China and the influx of population into big cities, microminiature kindergartens (number of classes less than 6) have emerged in urban areas with dense population and scarce land for education. But most of these are not approved and certified by the government's legal rules and standards (Fu & Yan, 2014). This case study focused on microminiature kindergartens in a district of Guangzhou, Guangdong which has launched a policy called *Guidelines for Microminiature Kindergartens* (2018) to guide the legal and sustainable development of microminiature kindergartens, so as to solve the problems above. The data collection methods mainly include semi-structural observation, questionnaire, interview, and focus group. We also collected relevant text data, aiming to understand the policy and practical effect of microminiature kindergarten as comprehensively as possible.

The local education authority has a strict and standardized examination and approval process for micro-miniature kindergartens. It highlights the characteristics of "micro" in the size of kindergartens, but in-service teacher education and quality supervision requirements remain the same as for standardized kindergartens. Results show that by reasonably reducing the requirements for space and size and strictly controlling teachers' qualification and supervision, micro-miniature kindergartens maintain their quality of child care and education. Due to their small size and low enrolment of children, the two kindergartens in our case study have experienced high

operating costs and are running at a loss. They pay considerable attention to cooperating with families and serving parents, and the childcare and education programmes offered are life-oriented and community-based. To meet the high standards of staff, teachers' ongoing training and development are valued and guaranteed. Teachers also keep their minds open and inclusive by focusing on exchanging experiences with other kindergartens. Teachers have strong retention intentions (88.89%) and high job satisfaction ($M=4.45$). Parents are also highly satisfied ($M=4.44$) with these micro-miniature kindergartens (rating on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly dissatisfied to 5=strongly satisfied). However, since the original intention of micro-miniature kindergarten owners is not to establish a public interest kindergarten, they cannot get the corresponding subsidy measures from the government. It is necessary to raise the per-student fees to maintain the balance of income and expenditure.

This has implications for China's policy innovation on ECEC. (1) Large-scale kindergartens should not be the only option funded, and the quality and scale features of kindergarten should be balanced. (2) The diversity of educational ecology especially in the non-compulsory education section should be encouraged so as to provide diversified ECEC resources according to the diverse needs of families. (3) Policy channels should be opened up for non-public microminiature kindergartens, including private ones and those run by qualified enterprises and public institutions for their staffs' welfare. (4) While microminiature kindergartens in urban areas focus on providing diversified educational choices the construction of low-cost public microminiature kindergartens that support ECEC quality for in rural areas should be explored.

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The supply of preschool education resources for urban migrant children: A case study of Minhang District in Shanghai

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Keywords

Internal migrant children; Resource supply; Access to kindergarten

Abstract

Regarding the problem of the supply of migrant children's preschool education resources, a picture of migrant children's education situation has basically formed: "Under the split of the household registration system, the supply of migrant children's education resources is closely related to family capital, the proportion of migrant children entering public kindergartens is low, the running conditions of local kindergartens are poor, the government investment is absent, and some public welfare organizations participate in support ."

In order to understand the phenomenon of migrant children's access to preschool and construct a multi-dimensional understanding, we need to trace the evolution of the support system for these children from a development perspective. Adopting the case study method and selecting the Minhang District of Shanghai as the research unit, this paper walks out of the silent policy text, enters the realistic situation, and focuses on the truly disadvantaged migrant children. In this study, four kindergartens dedicated to the recruitment of migrant children are used as embedded units of analysis.

Firstly, starting with 2005 and taking the changes in admission conditions as the main axis, this paper examines the distribution rules of pre-school education public resources for non-Shanghai residents. It finds that the public resources of pre-school education for non-Shanghai residents are only available after first meeting the needs of local children, and the admission policy for non-Shanghai residents is an extension of the city's talent attraction policy in the field of pre-school education. Both these policies lead to the exclusion of many disadvantaged migrant children.

Next, to trace how of the current pattern of preschool education resources for migrant children has developed, this research focuses on four of the kindergartens that especially recruit children of migrant workers. In Minhang District, the pattern of preschool education resources for migrant children has evolved from illegal care centers to private kindergartens assisted by the authorities, to the coexistence of private third-level kindergartens and record care centers, and to private third-level kindergartens and private kindergartens assisted by the authorities. Currently, the education resources for migrant children in Minhang District comprises 2 private second-level kindergarten assisted by the authorities and 28 private third-level kindergartens.

Furthermore, how to improve the quality of private third-level kindergartens? The quality improvement of private third-level kindergartens is influenced by a number of limitations and particularities. Limitations include that the kindergartens have insufficient conditions, the level of fees charged is limited, and the government input is also limited, so it is mainly based on management norms. These kindergartens serve migrant children who are a typical disadvantaged group in cities. Many public welfare projects are centered on private third-level kindergartens, and aim to improve their quality through various methods such as the donation of teaching aids, volunteer services, teacher training and so on.