



Froebelian Futures

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Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

Leadership opportunities & reflections

Project title

Impact of Freedom with Guidance

Subtitle (if applicable)

Your name and role

Staci Black
Depute Head of Centre

1. What are the implications of this research for:

- The team/setting as a whole
- Pedagogy
- Resourcing
- Policy
- The sector / your networks / management beyond your immediate setting.

(Please aim to write between 250 minimum and 500 words maximum, using the box below. Please do not disclose the identity of any individuals in your comments, as this form will be part of your colleague's public record of their project).

The team/setting as a whole

This research project has highlighted that the staff team have varied levels of understanding in relation to Froebelian practice. The staff questionnaires evidenced that the principle “Freedom with Guidance” is mainly considered by practitioners as children having the right to choose what and where they play. There are low numbers of practitioners trained in Froebel currently within our establishment and some have not completed their training. This has a major impact on how practitioners interpret the principle and how they embed it in their practice. To have the whole setting invest in Froebelian principles their will need to be more continued professional development through staff training opportunities.

The setting would also benefit from working together to devise new visions, values and aims that will support service users to understand and support our Froebelian journey. This project on “Freedom with Guidance” has reinforced that within our establishment we are at the very early stages of our Froebelian Journey.

Pedagogy

There is limited understanding of the role of the adult within this principle and how to extend and scaffold learning whilst developing curiosities. Practitioners require further training on sensitive interactions, open ended questions and setting up learning provocations based on children’s needs and interests. Practitioners can confidently set up the environment with invitations to play, however these experiences lack the factors needed to become learning provocations that will engage the children, develop their problem solving and encourage them to extend their interests. Staff can observe and discuss children’s interests, however, require support to facilitate this appropriately. Children can make choices and select resources/ spaces to play and learn, the implications of the research project for practitioners are that they require more training on the role of the adult in play pedagogy.

Planning works well and supports following children’s lead using floorbooks and focus child observations. Practitioners are continuing to build confidence with this.

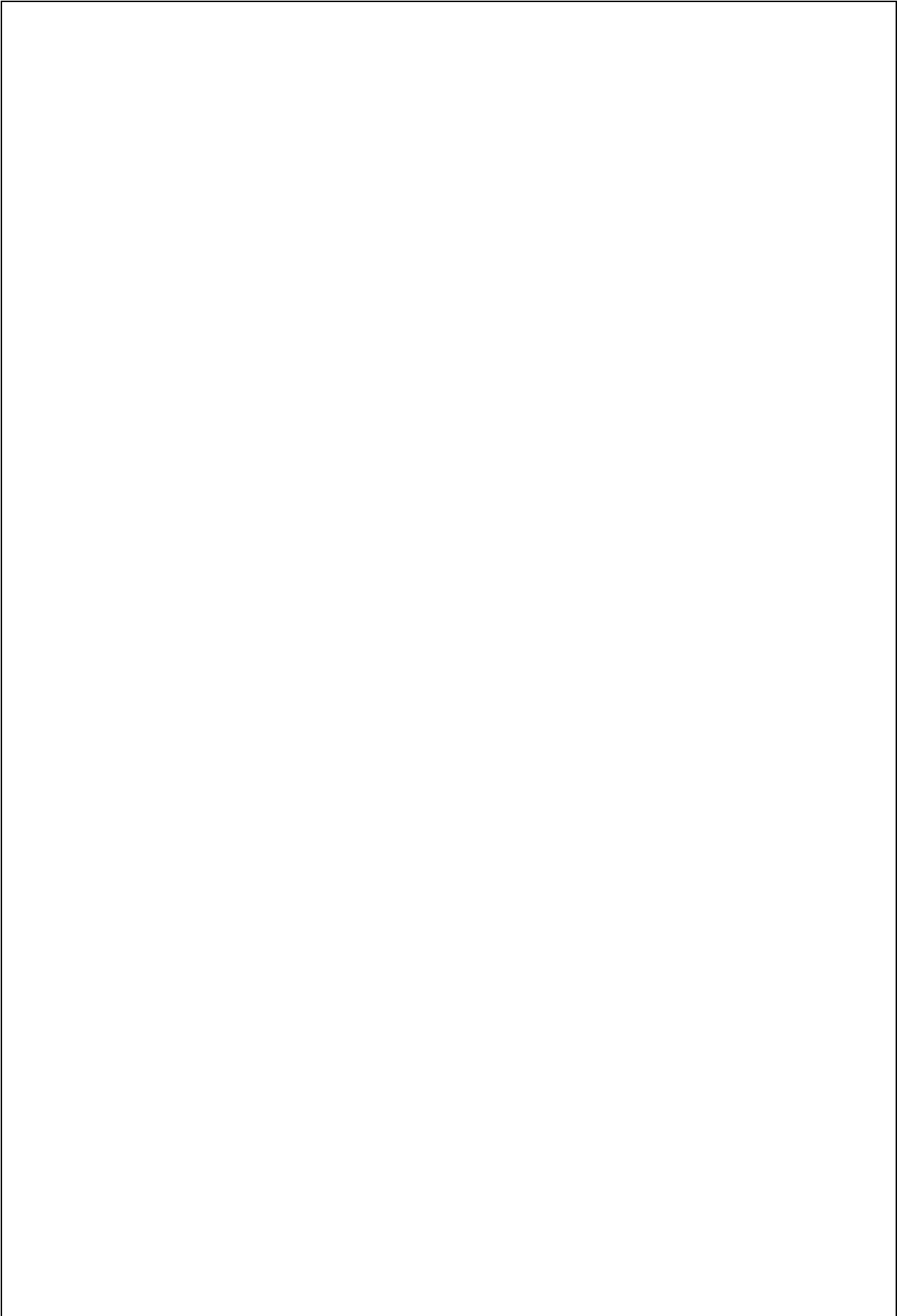
Resourcing & Policy

The playroom environments are well resourced with a wide variety of resources to support literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and other areas of the curriculum. We promote learning through real life and natural materials and have a wide variety of resources to support children making choices with guidance and support from practitioners. Budget within the nursery has been focused on supporting Froebelian practices and principles through new resourced block play areas and outdoor organisation for example wellie stands and outdoor suit pegs within the playroom to support more freedom with guidance. Implications from this research on resourcing should be on creating space for parents and staff to collaborate and develop their understanding of “Freedom with Guidance” and how this supports the children attending the establishment.

Development points taken from the project show that the nursery policies and procedures require to be updated to support children, staff, and parents with our Froebelian journey.

Early Years Sector & Our Networks

The balance of training within the early years sector appears to be unbalanced as some establishments have many trained practitioners and some have only a few. The training due to covid has also been online, for many staff this has not been as successful as face to face having professional dialogue and building a shared understanding of what the Froebelian principles mean and look like in practice. This was evident through staff questionnaires and observations within the playroom. The overriding implication of this project is further training and building deeper understanding of “Freedom with Guidance” as well as all other principles.



2. What value do you place on practitioner-research – and what more can be done in your setting/locality to enable it to continue as part of routine practice going forward?

Practitioner research and inquiry is incredibly beneficial as it supports the development of knowledge and understanding of all service users. The impact of this on practitioners is that it gives an insight into levels of knowledge within the discussed topic and identifies areas of improvement needed.

Management is able to use the practitioner-research to evaluate how far along the Froebelian journey we are and would find it invaluable in supporting self-evaluation in relation to Froebel creating a more collaborative approach involving all our children, families and practitioners.

3. What have you learned as a leader through supporting this research / programme? (100 words)

Through supporting this research I have learnt that all staff have different levels of knowledge and are at different stages of our Froebelian journey. Leaders and trained Froebelian practitioners need to work more collaboratively with other staff to support their understanding and knowledge in relation to the principles and practice that we are promoting within our establishment.

I have also learnt that the playroom environment does lend itself to “Freedom with Guidance” however practitioners require more training, role modelling and support from a management level. Leading on from this project I will be working more collaboratively to implement Froebelian principles at our establishment.

Please save this document as a PDF and share it as feedback with your researching practitioner/colleague **and** with us at froebelianfutures@ed.ac.uk. Please ask them to upload it to their project report page (Edit > Question 12) as a condition of completing their certificate. If you have any questions about this process please contact us at the email address above.