



Froebelian Futures

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Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

Leadership opportunities & reflections

Project title

Valuing children's perspectives beyond the voice

Subtitle (if applicable)

Your name and role

Donna Green Early Years Pedagogue, Falkirk Froebel Lead

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).

This practitioner inquiry has been carried out by a passionate practitioner who advocates for early childhood. She has used this research as a means to support an inclusive opportunity for children who have 'children's plans' (Getting it right for every child, GIRFEC form) to not only have a child's plan but to have knowledgeable and nurturing educators who embrace the rights of the child to express the child's views in all matters concerning them.

The UNCRC (1989) Article 12 states, "every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This principle recognises children and young people as actors in their own lives and applies at all times throughout a child's life."

In the Early Learning and Childcare Community where a child has a child's plan in place, there are children who may not have the ability or wish to articulate through their voice. This can be the case for many children with additional support needs (ASN) it can also be the case where speech and language has not developed. Therefore, if we are getting it right for every child there needs to be systems in place to value what children can do and not see children as a deficit.

Lisa, intervention pedagogue, has enabled through this practitioner inquiry an opportunity to carry out research using a focus group of practitioners to explore through providing supportive information to increase practitioners' knowledge of observation and capturing children's perspectives beyond verbal communication and look at ways that nonverbal (before words) children can communicate and be included.

Although this inquiry was carried out with one team, the plan would be to roll this out with other teams across the local authority to enable a deeper understanding in relation to practitioners having robust systems in place to capture children's perspectives which go beyond voice. The focus purpose was to enable these perspectives to be recorded within each child's individual plan to enable their participation and perspectives to be part of their plan and not completed by an adult to them but instead capture these with each individual child.

When reflecting on Froebel he reminds us "Let us learn from our Children. Let us attend to the knowledge which their lives gently urge upon us and listen to the quiet demands of their hearts. Let us live for our children, then will their lives bring us joy and peace and we shall ourselves begin to grow in wisdom" (Froebel. 1885:92).

This would link in well with our Scottish practitioner guidance which advocates 'starting where the child is' approach (RtA, 2020:65).

In addition, the participatory process ensures each child is being valued for who they are "... which positions young children as active participants in the ... process" (Clark, 2017).

This inquiry has led onto further learning around dialogic pedagogy where White (2016) provides literature to further support the ongoing knowledge following this research.

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? (100 word approx.)

This practitioner inquiry shows when opportunities of a focus group are carried out with practitioners, this has supported further developing knowledge about specific key areas such as going beyond the voice, practitioners have shown a greater understanding of the meaning of children's perspectives which is an inclusive word to use rather than naming 'voice.'

This resonates greatly with the Froebelian Principle of 'Knowledgeable, Nurturing Educator' along with 'Valuing Childhood in its own Right' (Froebel Trust, npn).

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

This practitioner inquiry has enabled an Early Intervention Pedagogue to carry out a focus group study with practitioners, who were the participants in the research process of this inquiry.

I have learnt where there are passionate practitioners who have a genuine interest to get it right for every child, and open minded to learning new information to make positive interventions which aligns with a rights-based approach.

The literature enabled a rich understanding to inform thinking as opposed to opinion-based discussions. The reflective discussions are an important element of process along with the tools and literature to support.

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.