

17th EECERA Annual Conference
One Day Pre-Conference Seminar
Exploring Qualitative Paradigms
August 28, 2007

During his short professional life, Vygotsky pushed the limits of the field of psychology, developing methodologies to facilitate his investigation of the social context of development.

Open to all interested researchers, this exciting pre-conference seminar ‘Exploring Qualitative Paradigms’ will provide an overview of the variety of qualitative research methodologies that are used today to support the deeper understanding of the development of young children. Using both lecture and active workshop formats, the seminar will provide participants with the opportunity to learn about and experiment with a variety of approaches. The day will open with a keynote presentation that will provide an overview of the three paradigms of research, and the unique role of qualitative methodologies in the study of young children. The next plenary will focus on case study methodology in early childhood care and education settings. A third plenary will focus on the use of qualitative methods to capture children’s voices and to conducting research with young children. Two sessions of active workshops will present innovative ways of (a) collecting and (b) analyzing and reporting data, using examples from recent studies around the world. The day will include sessions focusing on how to prepare papers for submission to research conferences and professional journals, and how to develop and seek funding for collaborative and cross-national research.

Limited to 200 participants, early registration is advised!

I. Overview of confirmed seminar topics:

Three Paradigms of Research – Dr. Chris Pascal and Dr. Tony Bertram.

The first plenary will introduce three paradigms of research – quantitative, qualitative, and “real world” – and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each approach for studying early childhood education (including issues of internal and external validity).

Case Study as the Method of Choice for Child Study – Dr. Robert Stake and Natalia Sofiy.

A growing need to tell about the experiences of child care and kindergarten has drawn an increasing number of researchers to use case study methods. Most case study researchers think more like ethnographers than like psychologists, looking at interactive play and cultural forces as observed in context, more than at personal attributes as measured. Case study research faces interesting choices in deciding what to watch and what stories to tell. This presentation will highlight a case study conducted in Ukraine, which focuses on inclusion and equality, capturing the experience of one young first-grader with special needs, Liubchik.

Researching with Young Children: New Possibilities, Different Challenges - Alison Clark.

This plenary session will examine new possibilities opened up by participatory research methods which enable young children to explore their perspectives with their peers,

researchers and practitioners. Methodological and ethical challenges raised will be explored with reference to three research studies involving three to five year-olds using the Mosaic approach, developed by Alison Clark and Peter Moss.

II. Workshops:

- **Qualitative Data Collection Methods from the Young Children Crossing Borders Study** – Dr. Tony Bertram, Dr. Chris Pascal, and colleagues.
Young Children Crossing Borders is a study of how the early childhood education and care systems of five countries are serving the children of recent immigrants and of what parents who recently have migrated from another culture want for their children in ECEC settings. The workshop will focus on the data collection methods using videos as a stimulus for reflecting about early childhood practices in different contexts.
- **Early Development Index as a Research Tool** – Dr. Magdalena Janus and Cornelia Cincilei.
School readiness, measured with the Early Development Instrument (EDI) as children's developmental health status at school entry in five domains, is currently used in Canada as a population-level indicator of children's health. This workshop will highlight the Canadian and international use of the EDI in several community contexts. A more detailed account of the process of adaptation and piloting of the EDI in Moldova will be provided.
- **Building Pedagogical Standards from the Ground Up for Quality Improvement** – Dr. Tatjana Vonta and colleagues.
The International Step by Step Association (ISSA) developed pedagogical standards to support quality improvement of educational processes in early education. The workshop will begin with a short overview about the ISSA pedagogical standards, their characteristics, and how they were developed. Participants will have the opportunity to better understand how standards can be used for supporting different kinds of professional development and quality improvement processes with teachers and for advertising, advocating and supporting the educational competences of different target groups, including parents, students, donors, etc. In addition, participants will practice applying the ISSA pedagogical standards using short video clips and discussing reliability issues in small groups led by reliable certifiers from ISSA network.
- **Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques from the Care Work in Europe Study** - Dr. Claire Cameron.
The Care Work in Europe Study examined the quality of employment in care work in services across both children's and adult's services using multiple methods, including case studies and a video based method named Sophos. The workshop will outline the Sophos method, focusing in particular on analytic issues in comparative studies.
- **Hearing Silent Voices: Using Visual Methods to Involve Young Children in the Research Process** – Linda E. Lee.
While researchers and evaluators understand the importance of multiple stakeholder perspectives, many struggle with how to ensure the participation of those traditionally

‘without a voice,’ vulnerable or disenfranchised populations. Young children, persons with disabilities, or those having a low level of literacy in the majority language hold important views regarding the programs, services, and situations which affect them, but their perspectives are not always included. Stemming from a rights-based approach, this workshop will explore the why and how of including young children in the research process. Through her work in Canada and Eastern Europe, Linda will share a variety of visually based techniques and how these can be coupled with more traditional methods. Participants will have an opportunity to explore drawing, photography, and mapping as tools for eliciting children’s voices. Ethical considerations will also be discussed.

- **Quantitative, Qualitative and Post-structural Methodologies: Getting Beyond the Dichotomy of the Good, the Bad and the Ugly** – Dr. Michel Vandebroek.

The workshop will analyze how diverse methodologies may complement each other, illustrated by cases of research into accessibility, affordability and desirability of child care provisions for diverse populations. Starting from a brainstorm of possible research questions, three paradigmatic different studies will be presented: an empirical quantitative method, documenting structural discrimination in Belgian child care; a qualitative study based on the narratives of four mothers who recently immigrated in Belgium; and a history of the present research analyzing discourses of accessibility, based on post-structural theory. Each of these studies contributes to understanding issues of social justice in ECCE and that they are complementary to each other, although the academic debates tend to divide these paradigms into separate discussions, making use of separate media. Participants will discuss how the choice of methodology is related to the choice of research questions and also involves political and ethical choices, as research contributes to the construction of social problems it claims to study.

- **Writing for publication** – Dr. Chris Pascal and colleagues. This workshop will provide guidance for researchers who wish to submit their research to professional conferences and various scholarly publications in the field of early childhood education. The facilitators are members of editorial boards of international journals in the field.

III. Agenda for the Seminar

9:00 – 9:15 Introductions and Objectives - Sarah Klaus and Michelle Neuman

9:15 – 10:00 Three Paradigms of Research - Chris Pascal and Tony Bertram

10:00 – 10:45 Case Study as the Method of Choice for Child Study – Robert Stake and Natalia Sofiy

Break 10:45 – 11:15

11:15 – 12:45 Parallel Workshop Sessions – Data Collection Methods and Applications
(Participants choose one workshop to attend)

1 - Quantitative, Qualitative and Post-structural Methodologies: Getting Beyond the Dichotomy of the Good, the Bad and the Ugly – Michel Vandebroek.

2 - Qualitative Data Collection Methods from the Young Children Crossing Borders Study – Tony Bertram, Chris Pascal, and colleagues

3 - Early Development Index as a Research Tool – Magdalena Janus and Cornelia Cincilei.

Lunch 12:45 – 2:15

2:15 – 3:00 Researching with Young Children: New Possibilities, Different Challenges - Alison Clark

3:00 – 4:30 Parallel Workshop Sessions – Data Analysis Methods and Reporting
(Participants choose one workshop to attend)

1 - Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques from the Care Work in Europe Study – Claire Cameron

2 - Hearing Silent Voices: Using Visual Methods to Involve Young Children in the Research Process – Linda E. Lee

3 - Building Pedagogical Standards from the Ground Up for Quality Improvement – Tatjana Vonta and colleagues

Break 4:30 – 5:00

5:00 – 5:30 Wrap-up and next steps – Sarah Klaus and Liana Ghent

5:30 – 6:00 Optional Session: Writing for publication – Chris Pascal and colleagues

IV. About the presenters and workshop facilitators:

Professor Tony Bertram held a Chair in Early Childhood Development (International) at Worcester University until 2007. He is Director of the Centre for Research in Early Childhood in Birmingham (CREC) in England. He is the former President and Co-Founder of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association and has undertaken a number of national and cross national research projects. He is currently a member of the UK's Early Years Advisory Group, which reports to the Minister for Children.

Dr. Claire Cameron has worked at the Thomas Coram Research Unit Institute of Education University of London since 1992 on national and comparative studies of children's services, mostly focusing on workforce issues. Between 2001 and 2005 she was the lead UK researcher for a six country study called Care Work in Europe, which examined the quality of employment in care work in services across both children's and adult's services.

Dr. Cornelia Cincilei is the Director of the Educational Program Step by Step in Moldova, a non-governmental organization, established in 1998, that cooperates with the Ministry of Education, World Bank, Mott Foundation, UNICEF, Open Society Institute and Soros

Foundation to develop and implement quality early childhood programs accessible to all children. Dr. Cincilei studied philology and continues to teach methods of teaching foreign languages and semiotics using interactive, student-centered techniques at Moldova State University. Dr. Cincilei has published articles about the Step by Step Program work in Moldova. In connection with the large Education for All - Fast Track Initiative Project of the government of Moldova, Dr. Cincilei cooperates with Magdalena Janus to implement a baseline study of children's school readiness in Moldova.

Alison Clark is a Research Officer at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, with an international reputation in the field of young children's participation. Her research interests include listening to children, children's experiences of place and the development of participatory research methods. Her work has included a research and development project concerning listening to young children, funded by Joseph Rowntree Foundation which led to the development of the Mosaic approach, with Professor Peter Moss. More recently Alison led a pilot study exploring young children's participation in the outdoor environment which was a collaboration with Learning through Landscapes. Currently Alison is Director of a longitudinal study exploring young children's involvement in the design of new buildings. This project is investigating new ways to make young children's perspectives more visible and to include the whole school community in decisions about future design.

Dr. Magdalena Janus is an Assistant Professor and Chair in Early Child Development at the Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. She holds a Ph. D. in behavioural sciences from Cambridge University. Since 1997, Dr. Janus has been involved, together with the late Dr. Offord, in the School Readiness to Learn Project, focused on providing communities with the information that would inform them about the children's early development status and thus provide a tool for mobilization of resources. This project led to the development of a measure of children's readiness to learn at school entry, called the Early Development Instrument (EDI). In her work, Dr. Janus is collaborating with various Canadian and international organisations.

Linda E. Lee is a partner in Proactive Information Services Inc., a Canadian social research and evaluation company. Linda has worked in evaluation, research and program development since the late 1970s. She has conducted trainings on program evaluation, research methods, data use, student assessment, organizational change, and education for social justice. She has worked extensively in the area of school improvement, including workshops in Canada, Lithuania, Argentina, Macedonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Linda is passionate about using evidence (data), empowering students, and engaging school communities in improving educational equity and access, all with the intention of creating a more socially just world.

Professor Christine Pascal OBE was Professor in Early Childhood Education at University College Worcester until 2007 and is also Director of the Centre for Research in Early Childhood in Birmingham, England. From 1999-2003 she was National Evaluator of the DfES Early Excellence Centre Programme, and director of an international 5 country study of integration in early childhood settings at both policy and practice levels. Currently, she is directing a project which is exploring how early childhood settings manage and

support the children of newly emerging communities. She is a specialist adviser to the House of Commons on Early Childhood issues and her OBE was awarded by the Queen in recognition of her services to young children and families.

Natalia Sofiy is Director of the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation (USSF), national educational non-governmental organization in Ukraine and also a senior lecturer of the department of Educational Management within the Central Institute of Post Graduate Pedagogical Education. She works as a national expert on the international projects funded by the World Bank, European Commission and Mott Foundation, developing training materials for teachers and adopting educational materials to the students with special educational needs. She has been involved in developing and conducting studies on evaluation of inclusive educational in Ukraine.

Dr. Robert Stake is director of Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation (CIRCE) at the University of Illinois. A specialist in educational program evaluation, he refers to his approach as *responsive evaluation* and emphasizes use of experiential data and case studies. Among his evaluative studies have been works in science and mathematics in elementary and secondary schools, model programs and conventional teaching of the arts in schools, and development of teaching for gender equity. Stake authored *The Art of Case Study Research* and *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. Recently he has worked with the International Step by Step Association on case studies of child-centered teaching in 29 countries. He holds the AERA's Presidential Citation and an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala.

Dr. Michel Vandenbroeck is senior researcher at the Department of Social Welfare Studies of the Ghent University, where he teaches early childhood education and family pedagogies. He is also president of the VBJK, Research and Resource Centre for ECE in Ghent and member of the editorial board of the European Early Childhood Education Research Journal.

Dr. Tatjana Vonta is assistant professor at the Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska and senior researcher at the Educational Research Institute in Slovenia where she leads the development-research center for educational initiatives. She was actively involved in creating pedagogical standards on ISSA level and carried out some research studies about them. She is particularly focused on using standards for quality improvement and professional development of teachers.