

Sharing Paths

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EU-Geschäftsstelle



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Aim

The aim of the project was to create a partnership between preschools and primary schools in Iceland and to promote educational continuity and flexibility in early childhood education.

To this end, a group of preschool teachers and primary school teachers in the city of Reykjavik were enabled to work together in order to develop a unified approach and a common understanding of education that could be adopted within both educational levels.



In order to achieve the research aims, collaborative action research was conducted.

The purpose of action research in schools is to develop and improve practice. Teachers who participate in action research focus on changing and improving their own practices. New methods that are developed in part by the teachers themselves are tested. Records are made of the actions that are taken, and data is gathered and analyzed throughout the study period

In this project, preschool- and primary school teachers worked together with university researchers in developing a common ideology and pedagogical practice.



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Preparation

Bezirksregierung Köln



Evaluation

Planning



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Implementation



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First Phase –Preparation

During the first phase of the study the participants were introduced to the concept of action research, and discussed the importance of continuity and transitions between the two school levels.

The participants were given time and opportunity to discuss and reflect on their own work.



Pair I: Early literacy, play and outdoor teaching,
Pair II: Early literacy and play, and
Pair III: Early numeracy and play.

Second Phase – Planning Changes

During the second phase of the study, the participants continued discussing ideas and ways to create continuity between the school levels. Ideology and pedagogical practices that were suitable for both school levels were collaboratively developed by the preschool teachers, the primary school teachers, and researchers from the university.



Second Phase – Planning Changes

Different views and ideologies of the teachers of the two school levels.

The teachers used concepts in different ways (e.g., play).

Time of frustration

Third Phase – Implementation

Tried out ideas and developed projects that they worked on with the children.

Listened to presentations from other educators who had participated in action research studies.

Introduced to ways to generate data.

Meetings in the schools once a week

During joint meetings of the whole group, the teachers presented good practices that they had been trying out and they wanted to share with the others



When the teachers started to work collaboratively with their ideas and joint projects, it became quite clear that both the preschool teachers and primary school teachers seemed to make a strong distinction between play and learning.

Third Phase – Implementation

Storybooks

The first grade children were used to “writing” stories in personal storybooks, not only in school but also at home. The children then took turns reading their stories aloud for each other in a special “story chair.” The preschool teachers decided to use this idea in the preschool, but instead of an individual storybook the preschool children used one joint book in which they wrote after a common experience, such as field trips.



Third Phase – Implementation

Prop boxes

The teachers in both primary school and preschool prepared prop boxes with the purpose of encouraging play and literacy. The prop boxes contained items related to certain themes. Grocery store was the first theme. The children and the teachers collected materials for the boxes together. The children brought materials from home, such as boxes from groceries and the teachers brought other things such as cash registers, calculators, and grocery



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Third Phase – Implementation

Literacy activities in the play areas

In the preschool, the children could choose activities or play areas during the free play period. The preschool teachers decided to put literacy props into two of these areas: the block centre where the children play with unit blocks and hollow blocks, and the dramatic play area. In the beginning they demonstrated to the children how they could use the writing materials to label, for instance, their buildings. Later, the children were able to use the materials on their own and demonstrate to the younger children how to use them.



Third Phase – Implementation

Playing with letters

The preschool teachers prepared small letters for the children to play with. In the beginning the teachers planned lessons where the children worked together to put letters together to make up words and names they knew. Later the children were encouraged to write down these words. When the children had been introduced to this new material through teacher-directed activities, the material was placed in the children's play area where they could use it during free play.

Fourth Phase – Evaluation

Observations

Photos

Video recording of best practices

Video recording of new practices

Evaluation sheets

Journals

Interviews
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Recordings from meetings

Conclusion – Challenges

Difference of ideology and working modes and different understandings of concepts such as play.

For the preschool teachers, play was something that belonged to the children, and which they were not eager to interfere with. They stated

Conclusion – Challenges

Another challenge was time.

The teachers had difficulties in finding time to fit the project in their daily schedule and they also had difficulties finding times to meet.

The third obstacle was related to the initial planning of the project, which was the initiative of the university personnel who invited the teachers to take part in the project.



In the future there will be opportunities to address these issues to a greater extent; the teams that have been working together on the project have shown interest in continuing to work together on the goal of creating continuity in children's education, and examining the possibilities of integrating the concepts of play and learning.



EARLY YEARS TRANSITION PROGRAMME

The education of the child shall be directed to...
the development of the child's personality,
talents and mental and physical abilities
to their fullest potential.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

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