

TUR PORRES_WILLS-ESPINOSA_SEFOTHO_WERA- IRN Progress report

Dear WERA team,

Please see below main activities organized by the IRN for 2021-2022 and some upcoming events to achieve our proposal commitments and strengthen the IRN work:

- The IRN *Promoting and Supporting Children's Agency and Participation in Early Education and Care: During the COVID Pandemic and Beyond*, currently has 35 members who have engaged with the network, based on promoting the IRN work among existing community networks and conferences' participation.
- IRN conveners and members have presented the network to research groups and education policy makers in Ecuador, Italy, Peru, South Africa, Uruguay. Moreover, IRN members actively promote the network among their universities and social communities.
- The online platform that is being used is Gmail and Google Drive to upload relevant documents of the IRN that are accessible to members.
- Meetings have been taking place bi-monthly with country leaders for the elaboration of an International Report on children's agency and participation with a focus on policies, practices, and research.
- A building capacity online Workshop has taken place in Ecuador for students at Casa Grande University:

Childhood participation (online) workshop by Celine Woznica (IRN member) 23rd and 30th of June 2021

- Continuing Education Students of Casa Grande University who are obtaining their Bachelor of Arts are participating in a yearlong Action Research Project with a focus on Children's agency and participation.
- Monthly seminar series have been organised for all members, see below forthcoming seminars in May and June (other seminars will be taking place in July and September)

May 10th -4-5pm UK time

Title:

The discourses on children's right of self-determination. Early Childhood Education and the positioning of children as agents in their own (and adults') learning

Abstract:

This presentation discusses the intellectual and ethical foundations of the discourses on children's right of self-determination, starting with a critical examination of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Whilst the ambiguous position of children and children's rights in society that underpins the UNCRC is acknowledged, it is argued that a shift towards the positioning of children as agents has been developing since the 1990s. For instance, this is demonstrated by the development of Early Childhood Education as a pedagogical discourse based centred on children's right to play an agentic role in shaping their educational experience. As discussed in the second part of the

presentation, Early Childhood Education practice lends itself as an informative case-study for the development of a discourse on children self-determination towards a mainstream status. Early Childhood Education positions young children as agents who can make choice and can construct valid knowledge. Paraphrasing Freire's description of critical pedagogy, in the discourse of Early Childhood Education the emphasis on children's agency constructs a view of education from children, for children, for adults.

Bios:

Federico Farini is Professor of Sociology at the University of Northampton. From 2015 and 2017 he worked as Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Early Childhood at the University of Suffolk

leading the equality and inclusion strategy of the institution. Previously in his career, Federico was a founding member of the Centre for Educational Research and Scholarship while at Middlesex University.

Federico received a PhD in Sociology of Intercultural Relations from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, where he worked as a researcher in Sociology between 2008 and 2013.

Federico has published books, chapters, articles and edited books in Italian, English and Slovenian language. His research activity includes EU-funded research projects concerning inclusive education, intercultural communication, renovation of urban spaces. Federico's

current interests mainly revolve around issues of inequality in the access to education and social

services, as well as around participatory research methods and public sociology.

Angela Scollan is a Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies and Education Studies at Middlesex University, where she obtained her Ph.D. with research on pedagogical innovation to

promote children's agency in the classroom. Previously, she has worked as Foundation Degree Coordinator in a Further Education College and as a Ofsted Inspector. Since the early 1990s, Angela has worked directly with and for children positioning her practice within a transdisciplinary approach and as a rights-based advocate. Her teaching philosophy, research and writing focus on the child first. Whilst touching on an array of themes relevant to education and care: adults-children interactions; rights-based pedagogies, leadership, and management, curriculum studies for Early Years Education, critical education studies, social work with young children, services-families' partnership. As an activist against educational disadvantage, Angela has worked with many local authorities in project to support inclusion and equality in education across England towards enhanced social mobility. Angela is currently undertaken research within a EU-funded project analysing how facilitative education can promote dialogue and children's agency in intercultural educational setting.

June 14th - 4-5pm UK time

Plenary: Participation and Agency in English Language Learning in Young Children

Abstract:

When teaching young children, language educators are confronted with the issue of how to teach their classes: by the book; by innovating and implementing good practices; or by doing what the curriculum determines. However, we often do not think about the role of young language learners in terms of defining what they want to learn, how they want to learn nor how this empowers them in and out of the classroom, because this goes against conventional teaching practices. This workshop will focus on how active participation (*young learners defining what and how they want to learn*) and agency (*young learners being empowered key players in making decisions about learning and other social issues*) can change the way we look at language teaching and learning in young children; the challenges we face in implementing participation; strategies for an implementation and how agency helps us to evaluate success.

Investigator: Nicola Wills-Espinosa, PhD

Co-Investigator: Maria Gabriela Jalil Perez, PhD(c)

Biodata

PhD in Education: Instructional Design for Online Learning (Capella University); Master of Arts in Urban Education: English as a Second Language (NJCU); Master of Arts in Urban Education: Administration and Supervision (NJCU), Bachelor of Arts in Spanish with an Emphasis in K-12 Education (Ursinus College), Coordinator of Inclusion in Bienestar Universitario at Universidad Casa Grande in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Over 25 years' experience in Education, specializing in the fields of ESL; Spanish language and literature; Teacher Education and Professional Development; Instructional Design; and Administration in the United States, Mexico, Peru and currently Ecuador. Avid investigator with publications in the areas of education, human resources, tourism, among others.

Best wishes,

Gisselle (on behalf of the team)

Dr Gisselle Tur Porres

Programme Director for BA Early Childhood Studies/Gyfarwyddwr Rhaglen BA Astudiaethau Plentynod Cynnar

Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies/Darlithydd mewn Astudiaethau Plentynod Cynnar

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences/Cyfadrn y Dyniaethau a'r Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol

School of Social Sciences/Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol

Education and Childhood Studies/Addysg ac astudiaethau plentynod cynnar

Swansea University/Prifysgol Abertawe