

Early childhood student teachers and research – Different perspectives about the purposes and benefits of learning to produce professional knowledge

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This paper is part of a study about professional knowledge production in teachers' education in Portugal focusing on the role of research for early childhood teachers. We focus on student teachers' and teacher educators' conceptions about research and its role in their professional work. The relationship between teacher professionalization and professional knowledge production has become increasingly relevant and complex (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Zeichner & Diniz-Pereira, 2005). Both Schön's reflexive practitioner (1992) and Stenhouse's teacher-researcher (1987) already highlighted the idea of teachers as responsible for the production of their professional knowledge. Studies in Finland (Eklund, 2006) and in Sweden (Orwehag, 2008) with similar purposes were considered. After previously having identified the programmes which require research work, two schools were chosen as case studies. Data was collected by: open-ended questionnaire for 52 student teachers, and in-depth interviews with 6 teacher educators. A qualitative approach was taken and meaning categorization was used for analysis. Permissions were collected from institutions and individuals. Neither the institutions nor the interviewees were identified throughout the research, assuring the preservation of anonymity. Both students and teacher educators consider research as part of professional work, recognizing formative value and a contribution for quality. Although a strong and positive relationship with research is present, it is not valued as knowledge production nor as a feature of teacher professionalization. This is important considering that "a status of full professionalism for teachers requires a specific knowledge which allows for recognition, professional claim and social distinction of the profession" (Rodrigues, 2002). The production of specific early childhood professional knowledge needs to be addressed in initial teacher education.

Keywords: professional knowledge; initial teacher education; research education

What influence the attitudes and practice of preschool staff toward rough-and-tumble play?

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The aim of this study is to investigate what Norwegian preschool staff report as major influences on their attitudes and practices toward rough-and-tumble play (R&T). R&T refers to vigorous behaviors such as wrestling, grappling, kicking, and tumbling that appear to be aggressive except for the playful context (Humphreys & Smith, 1984; Pellegrini & Smith, 2005). While there is perceived functional value in R&T related to young children (Logue & Shelton-Harvey, 2010; Storli, 2012), educators are uncertain how to manage such play (Tannock, 2008). Although R&T acts are simulated, exaggerated and normally executed between friends, R&T is often inhibited or prohibited in preschool practice (Logue & Shelton-Harvey, 2010). The study is an electronic quantitative survey (QuestBack) based on "Preschool Teacher Beliefs and Practices Questionnaire" (Logue & Shelton-Harvey, 2010) executed in February-March 2012. 400 participants were recruited through direct invitation (mail) or indirect invitation (<http://www.barnehageforum.no>). The project is approved of Norwegian government authorities according to ethical considerations. The data will be analyzed according to the research question during April and May 2012. The main findings are therefore not available at this