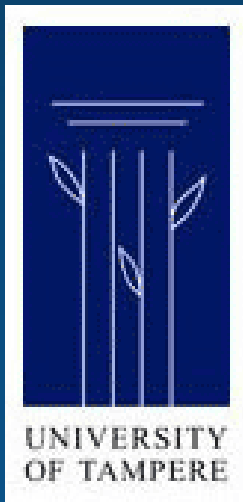


Children's conceptions about participation and educators' role as enhancer



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Paradigm of participatory learning

- * Child is competent actor (eg. Corsaro, 1996; Nyland, 2009)
- * Child has opinions and views about his/her own life (eg. Sheridan & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2001; Woodhead, 2010) *and*
- * Child is capable to having influence in his/her daily life (eg. Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2009)
- * Communication and interaction are important parts of participation (Clark, 2005; Venninen & Leinonen, 2013)



Participation in ECE

- * Participation is experienced in everyday activities like play, classroom situations and routines (Bae, 2010; Sandberg & Eriksson, 2010)
- * Adopting children's perspectives is important (Emilsson & Johansson, 2006)
- * Essential in supporting participatory of children is (Venninen & Leinonen, 2013):
 - * to fulfill basic needs,
 - * grant safety of learning,
 - * give support of initiatives and ideas,
 - * create experiences of being important



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Design of the Study

- * *How to get information about children's conceptions and experiences about their own participation?*
- * Our previous research of children's participation in ECE (Venninen & Leinonen, 2013) states the 7 key elements of participation by the definition of the teams of educators (N=1100) working in communal ECE in Finland
- * Research pictures of these 7 items were made, tested and then presented to participant children in action telling situations
- * Children's narratives were documented and analyzed



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Participants

- * Participants 153 children from kindergarten and pre-primary school classes in 5 ECE centers in Helsinki Metropolitan area during spring 2012
- * Children aged from 3 to 7 years, boys and girls, immigrants and emigrants, children with special needs and children from ordinary classes.
- * Presumptions:
 - * Child was been member of the class at least 4 months
 - * Research permissions from parents were required
 - * Children would also decide themselves to participate or not
- * In research situation one to two children at time, about 15-30 minutes per child



Action telling method

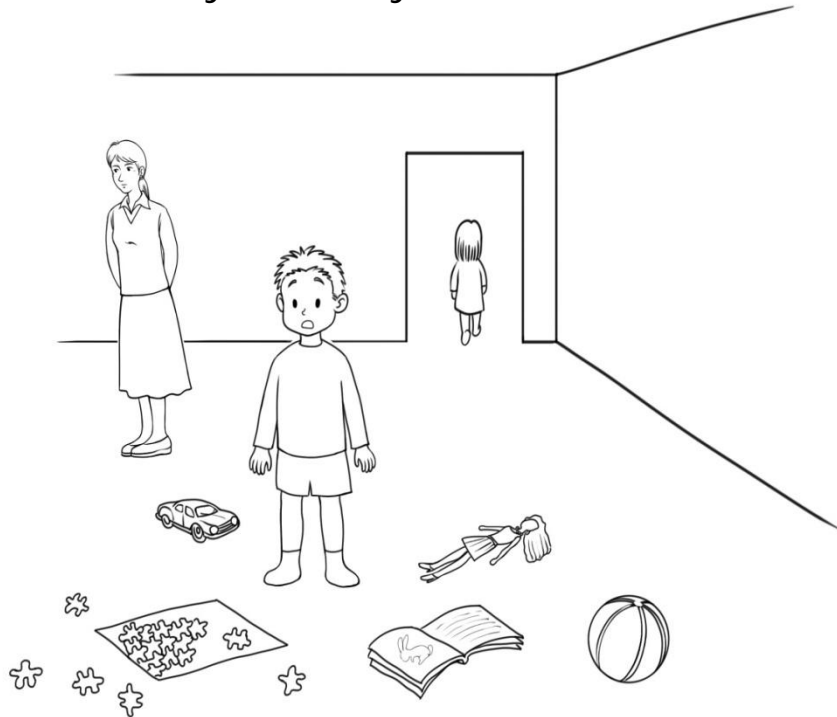
- * "Action telling" method (Reunamo, 2006) is used to collect children's narratives, especially their orientations, about everyday life in early childhood education center
- * In this study child were asked to make a storybook about their participatory experiences (*i.e. situations were they could have influence in, became listened to etc.*) by telling conceptions of what may really happen if they would be a child in a picture
 - * Researchers 'speech' actions were at minimum level, no extra question or comments would be added
- * Narratives were written down and printed as a book for every child
 - * Becoming listened to / free will to make choices and express opinions



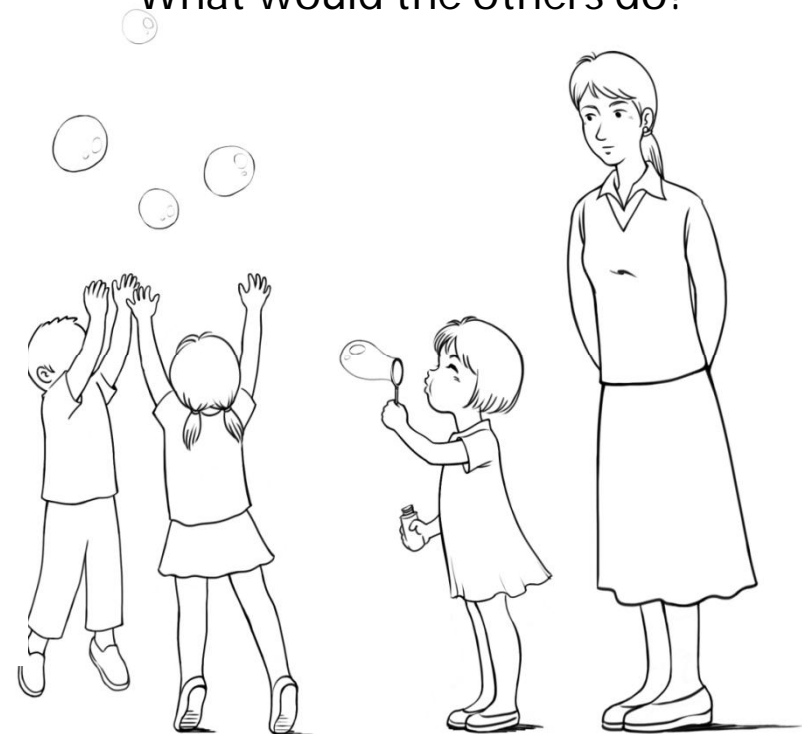
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Research pictures; examples

What would you do if you were the child here?



What would the others do?

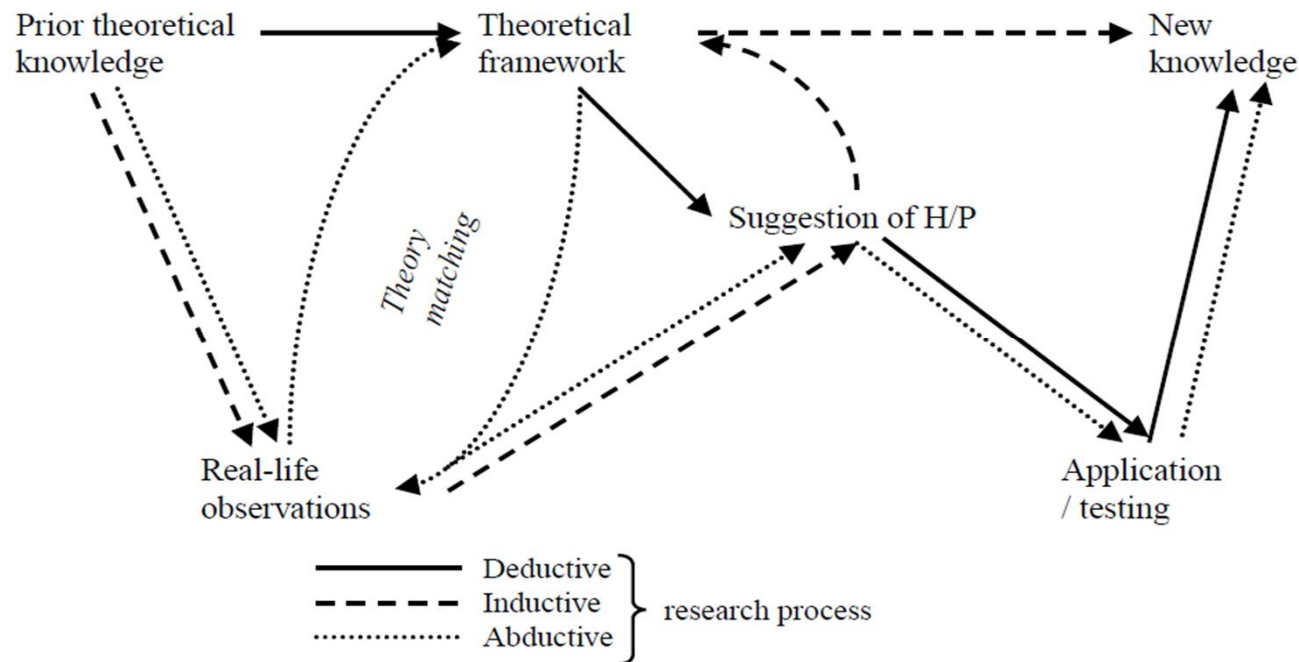


What will happen next?



Analyzing narratives

- * Content analysis with abductive approach (e.g. Spens & Kovách, 2006) → codes → classes → categories





Narrative analysis

- * Categorizing narratives with help of classes in content analysis → Forming narratives about participatory experiences

Narratives of:

- * Becoming listened/noticed to (Adult as observer)
- * Making independent initiatives (Adult as supporter)
- * Sharing activities together (Adult as enhancer of empowerment)



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Becoming listened/noticed to

* Form of narratives:

Child is focusing in daily activities such as play and educator follows child's actions

or

Child has a need or problem in her activities

Educator as observer:

- * Observes child's/children's actions
- * Listen child/children
- * "Is present"
- * Notices child's need



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Becoming listened/noticed to

- * "These girl and boy are making toasts [for snack]. Teacher watches how they are doing. Then they make some more."

Girl, 5 years

- * "This boy has hurt himself...then teacher notices him and ask him about it."

Boy, 7 years



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Making independent initiatives

* Form of narratives:

Child ask for help,
makes a suggestion,
shows something or
expresses an initiative to
educator

Educator as supporter:

- * Gives help
- * Answers to suggestion



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Making independent initiatives

- * "This girl tries to take teddybear. Asks help from teacher. The teacher helps her."

Boy, 4 years

- * "These kids won't take him in their play. He would start crying and would go to tell the teacher. Teacher will talk about it with his friends. Then he can join the play."

Boy, 6 years



Shared activities together

- * Form of narratives:

Child's is focused in interaction with other children and/or educator and shared action is formed

Educator as enhancer of participation:

- * Interested in child's perceptions
- * Supports joint activities and sharing "together"



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Shared activities together

- * "He would play with jigsaw puzzle. It is too difficult for him and he asks help from teacher. Together they can made it! Then they put it back to shelf together."

Girl, 6 years

- * "The other play together and leave him alone and this makes him feel bad. He would tell it to the teacher and teacher says: "come children here to talk about this". And then they talk together about how its feel to be left alone."

Girl, 5 years

- * "...the teacher could join the children and watch the snail together."

Boy, 5 years



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Children's conceptions about educators support

- * Children viewed educators' role from three perspectives:

As an Observator (*passive*)



As an Supporter (*adult initiated*)



As an Enhancer (*shared activities*)





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Summa summarum

- * Seems that the role of educators in ECE requires some reflection:
- * Supporting could be seen only as fulfilling needs
- * Observation has had an important role in child initiative learning paradigm but it could evolved into something more in participatory learning paradigm
- * Sharing ideas and initiatives is not only for children but for all class members who are interpreting and reproducing the social learning culture of class



Thank You!

For further questions:

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