Children as producers of the learning content during role play

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EECERA Thursday 15th September 2011, 14:00-15:30

Research tasks

The processes of children giving roles to themselves, their peers and toys are studied.

Children’s ideas are related to environmental change, thus producing new content for learning.

What kind of content children produce in role play?

How children’s own views are related to the produced content?
Research design

Children’s perceptions of change
• Interviewing children: 16 questions concerning children’s everyday context.
• Categorizing children’s answers in four categories: accommodative, participative, dominant and withdrawn views.
• Counting up answers in each category, thus getting a profile of children’s perception of change in general.
• We gain understanding, in which situations children see agency, adapt and when do they have open and closed perceptions on the changes about to happen.

Observation: Between 8:00-12:00 hours in children’s everyday environment in day care by using systematic sampling. Observed items include children’s and adults actions, attention, peer relations and involvement.

Learning environment: Evaluated by the educators, items include pedagogy, atmosphere and the educational setting.

Children’s skills: Evaluated by the educators, items include learning skills, social skills, emotional qualities and social relations.

Environmental and situational factors
• Shared role and imaginary play in relation to children’s views, skills and context.
• In which way is accommodative, participative, dominant and withdrawn perception related to role play?
• What kind of role the larger cultural differences between Finland and Taiwan does play in this content production?
• What practical, theoretical and methodological consequences the aspects role play do have?

Role and imaginary play produced

The amount of role or imaginary play in different day care activities
Children object of attention during role or imaginary play

A restaurant, a shop and an airport built by Taiwanese children
The distance between the child and the nearest educator during role or imaginary play.

- Role play or imaginary play
- Hanging about together
- Material play
- Other action
- Role play
- Orientation
- Action not allowed
- Task or seatwork
- General action
- Listening to a story

The percentage of educator concentrating on the observed child at least a few seconds in role play and in all activities together.
## The popularity of children who play more role or imaginary play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer contacts</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>7.256 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>-0.256 -9.687 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.109 4.311 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of observed as peer contact</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.118 4.38 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do like to play N</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.062 2.377 0.018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method: Stepwise. (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .01, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .05). Dependent variable: B4. Role play or imaginary play. R² = .122.

## Children’s views in relation to the amount of role or imaginary play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s strategies</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>8.039 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>-0.271 -10.516 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.115 4.523 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed (Dominant and Withdrawn strategies) added up together</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.103 3.88 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodative answers with children added up together</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
<td>-0.063 -2.398 0.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method: Stepwise. (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= .01, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= .05). Dependent variable: B4. Role play or imaginary play. R² = .120.
Conclusion

In the real world the objects and interactions are either constantly or potentially changing. Role play is a good opportunity for children to perceive and practice these changes in an environment they themselves with their creative ideas have participated producing. Perceiving change in role play helps children to perceive change in other contexts too.

Thank you!

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