International Froebel Society Conference 2023

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1. Children in their early years experience learning across many contexts, each with diverse histories, philosophies, and practice traditions, with most young children moving from the home to preschool and then to primary school. While transition between pre-school and primary school is characterised by continuity as well as change, the level of pedagogical discontinuity between settings can hinder children’s learning experiences and research suggests that this is particularly true for children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The present project aims to address pedagogical discontinuities in children’s learning and experience of early mathematics across pre-school and primary school, especially for children with educational and social disadvantage. Within a critical participatory action research framework (McTaggart, Nixon, & Kemmis, 2017), a professional learning community was established to create a communicative space (Habermas, 1984, 1987) between the two sectors where practices, understandings and knowledge could be explored in order to improve practice. The role of the researcher; as group member, facilitator and knowledgeable other was also under enquiry as the complexities of participatory research was examined.

The proposed 20-minute presentation will include an overview of the initial stages of the PhD research project, the findings to date as well as implications. Presentation participants will be invited to engage in discussion around some of the key themes including; the importance of pedagogical continuity for children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, challenges and opportunities faced by professional working groups, and the complexities of the role held by the researcher in participatory research.

The present study relates to the conference themes in the following ways:

•The central Importance of play- as a central pedagogy in mathematics learning in the early years

• Developing knowledgeable, nurturing, reflective educators- using a cross-sectoral professional community

•The power of observation & reflection- the creation of a communicative space (Habermas, 1984, 1987)

1. Keywords: early mathematics, transitions to school, disadvantage, cross-sectoral collaboration