

Title: The times they are a changing. Reimagining a political Froebel for times of crises and hope  
Professor Mathias Urban PhD

Abstract:

The times they are a changing, sang Bob Dylan in 1964, at the cusp of profound change in modern society. They have been changing ever since. Today humanity finds itself facing a perfect storm of self-inflicted existential crises—and yet, early childhood education, as a field and discipline keeps ‘playing’ as if nothing has changed. To a critical observer of the field early childhood education might appear stuck in a time loop, unable to escape the paradigms and certainties of 20th century (post)modernity. In my interrogation I propose an alternative reading that (re)situates Froebelian thought as intrinsically linked to contexts of societal and political crises and change. I argue that becoming Froebelian, in the times we are in, requires us to reimagine early childhood education as profoundly political, aimed at justice and equity at individual, collective, and planetary levels. ‘If your time to you is worth savin’, then you better start swimmin’, or you’ll sink like a stone. For the times they are a-changing’.