Current Perspectives on Global and Nordic Early Childhood Education and Care

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Constituting Cultures of Compassion in Early Childhood Education
(Myötätunnon rakentuminen varhaiskasvatuksen arjessa)
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Vital Voices2
Perspectives on (Educational) Equity on the Early Childhood Sector in Singapore:
Mapping the Best Practices (2018)

Lasse Lipponen, Antti Rajala & Jaakko Hilppö, University of Helsinki
Lynn Ang, UCL Institute of Education (IOE)
Sirene Lim, Singapore University of Social Sciences
BRINGING THE FINNISH PRESCHOOL MODEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD

HEI Schools is an international preschool concept that brings the excellence of Finnish early childhood education to schools all over the world. HEI is founded in partnership with the University of Helsinki.

www.heischools.com
Globally growing interest in
ECEC service (Campell-Barr & Bogatic, 2017)
Obama’s claim that every dollar spent on pre-kindergarten education earns ‘$7 back’

SINGAPORE: Upgrading Singapore’s preschools, fighting diabetes and building a Smart Nation were the key issues in the National Day Rally speech that Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong delivered at the 2017 National Day Rally at ITE. (Photo: Howard Law)
Investing in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Why invest in high quality ECEC?

OECD often tells countries that they should invest more in high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC). But why invest in high quality ECEC?
- ECEC is a best economical investment in preventing risk of social exclusion/marginalization/alienation
  (Heckman, 2006; Hecman & Masterov, 2004)
Investment - Return (economic discourse) is currently the dominant discourse in ECEC
• Return - investment (economist discourse) is the dominant discourse in ECEC

• When did we (early childhood education community) and WHY let economists to say what ECEC is and how it should be organised?
• Neoliberalism: What is desirable is what is profitable. What is desirable is what support economic growth.

• Economic discourse does not say anything about values, democracy, social justice, moral, care, empathy, compassion.
Manifestations of Investment Discourse
Global educational reform movement

This reform is being advocated by: the World Bank; OECD; some governments; and private corporations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM)</th>
<th>Alternative Policies</th>
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<td>teaching core subjects</td>
<td>broad &amp; creative learning</td>
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<td>standardization</td>
<td>personalization</td>
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<td>test-based accountability</td>
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<td>market-based management</td>
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<td>data and control</td>
<td>collaboration and trust</td>
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International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study (IELS)

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the Study is to provide countries with a common language and framework, encompassing a collection of robust empirical information and in-depth insights on children's learning development at a critical age. With this information, countries will be able to share best-practices, working towards the ultimate goal of improving children's early learning outcomes and overall well-being.

News

PISA tests for 5-year-olds – organiser defends pilot amid pupil pressure fears

Freddie Whittaker | 8:00, Jul 14, 2017

Organisers of the new computer-based PISA tests the UK...
Powerful human technology for shaping people’s lives
Building Better Brains:

New Frontiers in Early Childhood Development

General Messages
Programming Messages:
- Nutrition
- Protection
- Early & Lifelong Learning
- Health
- Parenting

Advocacy Messages
Key Facts about the Developing Brain
Neuroscience and Early Childhood Education

New form of truth making

Misinterpretations of neuroscience
• “The neurophilia in the early childhood education field is not a coincidence but relates to large societal changes that value economic arguments over ethical, social and eminently pedagogical concerns. It affects the image of the child, the parent and the very meaning of education in general” (Vandenbroeck et al., 2017)

• Practices and policy making: “you will save money”, it will cost you lot if you repair rather than prevent (Vandenbroek et al., 2017, p. 83)
• At present there are no findings from neuroscience that have implications for classroom practice (Coltheart, 2016)

• Parts of the brain that ‘light up’ cannot self-evidently translated in educational or social policies

• Neuroscience materialise what we already know

• Decontextualising childhood

• Neuroscience does not say anything about practices and structures that produce, for example, poverty or inequality
Pressure to start teaching academic skills at a progressively younger age at the expense of traditional early childhood activities (like play)
• STEAM education

• Aim is to teach students innovation, to think critically and use engineering or technology in imaginative designs or creative approaches to real-world problems while building on students' mathematics and science base.
• **Personalised learning** (The United States National Education Technology Plan 2017 defines personalized learning as follows):

• “Personalized learning refers to instruction in which the pace of learning and the instructional approach are optimized for the needs of each learner. Learning objectives, instructional approaches, and instructional content (and its sequencing) may all vary based on learner needs”
VARHAISKASVATUKSEN
LAADUN ARVIOINNIN
PERUSTEET JA SUOSITUKSET

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Virpi Mattila
Thomas Nukarinen
Sanna Parrila
Hanna Sulonen
What are the fundamental values of early childhood education?
• Nordic countries have not had very strong ‘investment narrative’ of ECEC - more freedom to develop the system and practices

• Nordic educational practices have been running in many areas counter to the main stream, test-based, top-down accountability, and standardization and uniformity in education (against Global Education Reform Movement) (Paananen, Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2014; Sahlberg, 2011 Simola, et al., 2013)
• What are the fundamental values of early childhood education?

• What are the purposes of early childhood education?

• What is the image (or social construction) of the child?

• Objectivity, universality, predictability and what can be measured - dismissing diversity

• What about what cannot be measured?