

Reflections of an Intern on the Children's Participation in Schools

Project

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In the past six weeks, I have had the pleasure of working on the Children's Participation in Schools project. As my contract nears its end, I have been reflecting on my journey as an intern. I feel very grateful to have gained this experience, as it is my first time working on a research project in a professional capacity. As someone who is about to graduate with an early childhood degree, passionate about empowering young children's voices and has a strong interest in pursuing academic research, I was really excited to see how the research project came together behind the scenes. I've been able to gain an insight into many different areas of the project, including writing manuscripts to data collection and have been lucky enough to witness many academic professionals at work, in areas ranging from principal investigator to research administrator.

One of the highlights of my time has been visiting the Child Advisory Board in South Wales to support the children's researcher in advisory meetings, which centre on the voice of children regarding ideas for disseminating the project. This involved working with Jacqui Lewis, whom I greatly enjoyed learning from. Using Lundy's (2007) model, each week focused on a different theme of data analysis, which we retold to the children through social stories. I drew these to aid the children's understanding of the data when introducing new concepts, allowing them to revisit pages or themes in future visits. These activities have been particularly valuable to me and will undoubtedly benefit me in the future. The visits required using open-ended questions to facilitate children's multimodal communication. Additionally, I practised ongoing consent and ethical practice by

observing children's interests and writing narrative observations. After each visit, I reflected on the day by creating a voice recording, enabling me to capture moments I might not have noted at the time and to consider how the next visit could be improved. This process helped me to strengthen my data collection and analysis skills while maintaining ethical standards.

As part of my social media role, I created five social media posts to highlight the project's recent presentation at the Child and Family conferences, showcasing upcoming free events and courses related to children's participation in Wales. Additionally, I attended a multimedia course, which expanded my knowledge of content creation for engaging diverse audiences. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to start developing skills in content creation, such as filming and editing, which will be a valuable addition to my skillset for any future career. I was also able to meet with the different partners on the project and attend a child and family conference. Moreover, I completed administrative tasks such as creating meeting minutes, taking dictation, sending out emails, and demonstrating software proficiency, all of which have significantly contributed to my skill toolkit.

My internship has been primarily guided by Sarah Chicken, the Principal Investigator for the CPIS project. She has steered me through my induction and introduced me to all the key members of the team who have been endlessly supportive. I have had a wonderful experience thanks to the welcoming atmosphere fostered by my colleagues, which has enabled me to approach them with my (many) questions about the existing structures and various ongoing undertakings.

Throughout my internship, I've been fortunate to meet many amazing individuals online and in person within the CPIW and ESCR communities, and I have received

support at every stage of this journey. I am very appreciative of the opportunities I have had and look forward to applying the skills I've gained in my future career.

- Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. British educational research journal, 33(6), 927-942.