

Symposium Set A3, KLA Lab (Classroom Space 2 – presentation followed by discussion).

NOTICING THE 'SMALL AND THE ORDINARY' MOMENTS

Small and Ordinary: Enacting Participation through Practitioners' Noticing Stories from Wales

Abstract: The session will include a discussion of a working paper that explores children's everyday encounters alongside the role of 'practitioners' noticings' in shaping opportunities for participation. It examines how both teachers and children aged 3–7 conceptualise and experience participation, drawing on qualitative research conducted with teachers and children in Wales, a context shaped by strong rights-based commitments.

Participation is a central aspiration in early childhood education policy, yet it is often interpreted through formal democratic mechanisms that do not fully reflect how younger children participate in everyday school life. Using a qualitative, interpretivist design, data was generated through pre- and post- interviews with 14 teachers and 21 focus groups with 109 children. The paper discusses our sustained engagement with children and teachers, supported by iterative and collaborative analysis, which enabled close attention to the small and ordinary moments through which participation occurs.

Our findings indicate that children described participation through everyday decisions for example, managing temperature, opening windows, choosing clothing and negotiating outdoor play, highlighting participation as embedded in routines, relationships and multimodal, embodied communication. Teachers initially expressed uncertainty about terms such as participation and children's rights, recognising that their practices had focused on formal structures like pupils' voice and school councils. Through involvement in the project, they reported shifts in practice, including increased relational engagement and greater recognition of symbolic and embodied communication.

The session will invite discussion around the key contributions of this work-in-progress, including the significance of everyday participation, the role of practitioners' noticing as a mediating process, and the implications for inclusive and participatory pedagogies, particularly for younger children and those who communicate in diverse ways.

The session will also provide opportunity for attendees to view draft documentation for practitioners and to discuss discursively as a group.

Keywords

1. Children's Rights
2. Participatory Pedagogy
3. Early Childhood Education
4. Teacher Professional Learning
5. Reggio-Inspired Practice



CHAired BY: Dr Gisselle Tur Porres, Swansea University

Gisselle is a Lecturer and Programme director for the BA Early Childhood Studies at Swansea University. Her research centres on emancipatory learning-teaching practices, with a commitment to work with children, families, educators, and communities. She has a particular interest in creative and participatory methods that honour agency, and relational ways of knowing across diverse educational and cultural contexts.

Facilitator



Dr Samyia Ambreen, University of the West of England

Samyia is a Research Associate on the Children's Participation in Schools project. Her research focuses on children's interactions within educational and broader social settings, with a particular attention to how culture and language shape their understandings and constructions of the world around them. She explores the multimodal dimensions of children's participation as co-researchers, using creative and ethnographic methodologies.