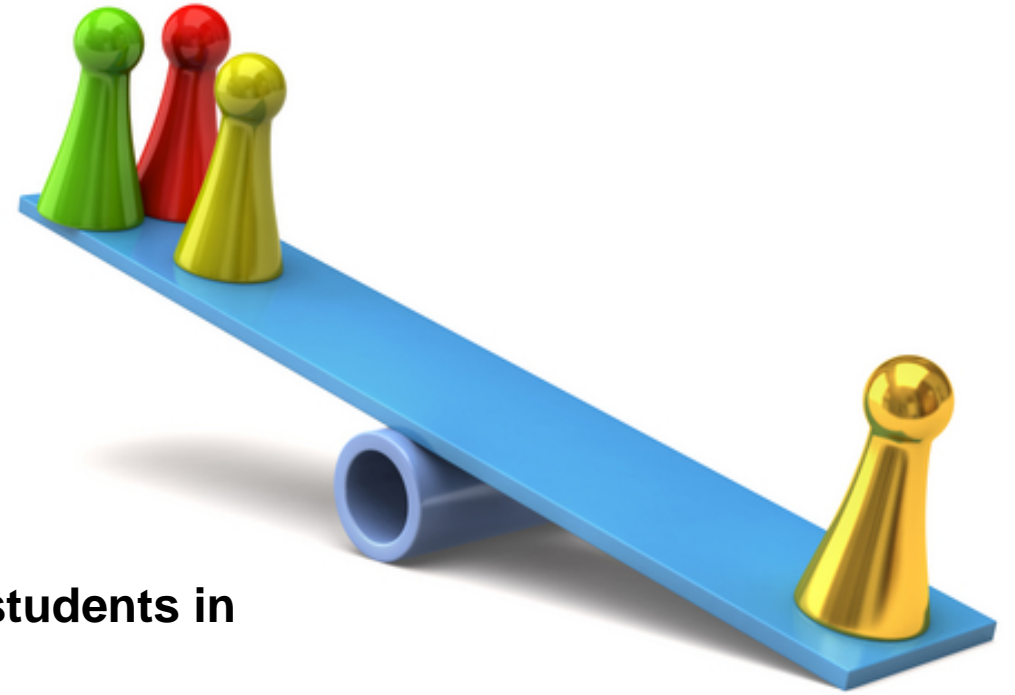


EECERA 2018

Voice, power and emotion: the challenges of practitioner/ parent partnerships

**Research regarding the effectiveness of a workshops-based
intervention designed to develop the confidence of women students in
managing communications with parents and carers**



Impetus for the research

QAA requires graduates of Early Childhood Studies to 'give voice to and where appropriate act as an advocate for babies, young children, families and communities'.

QAA (2014,.11)

Methodology and Theoretical framework

Social constructivist

In order to promote the voices of children, families and communities Early Years Practitioners must value (and be valued), themselves

Feminist

Recognising and challenging imbalances of power

Literature review



‘Women may be more likely than men to experience the phenomenon of IP [Imposter Syndrome] because of the impact of gender role stereotypes and early socialisation’.

Gibson-Beverley and Shwartz (2008, p.120)

Women are subject to ‘a subversive cultural hegemony’, one that suggests ‘freedom to be’ via education without offering ‘freedom from’ gendered norms and expectations.

Fuller (2016:12)

- 'If students can recognise the ways in which these aspects of their lives impact on their engagement in pedagogical spaces, and if they have a language to think through them and describe them, it seems likely that students can develop a better understanding of the energies and challenges involved in coming to terms with studying'.

Beard, Smith and Clegg, (2007, p.250)

The workshops

- **Social skills** - imply the ability of an individual to **interact** with his or her social environment according to context specific norms.
- **Emotional skills** - concern **self-awareness; self-regulation; resilience**

(Weare and Grey, 2003)

The workshops

- Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000), which identifies three universal psychological conditions for intrinsic motivation: **autonomy, relatedness and competence.**

Basic psychological needs

Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take others' perspectives• Provide choices• Provide a meaningful rationale when choices cannot be offered• Minimize controlling words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set an optimal level of challenge• Support the skills development necessary to meet the posed challenge• Give meaningful feedback framed positively toward the achievement of competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge feelings and convey empathy• Create structures to foster individual connections• Create structures to foster group and community connections

Table 1 Approaches to foster the three basic psychological needs as articulated by self-determination theory

Session	Perceived needs identified by students	Skills and dispositions focus	Workshop theory and activities
1	Confidence and experience	<u>Self- audit of skills and confidence & establishing boundaries</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities of practice (Wenger 1998) Sharing reflections on self-audit and identifying group and individual learning needs
2	Identification of skills and attributes for effective communication	<u>Identifying and evaluating specific communication skills</u>	Revisit self-audit: Johari’s window (Edmond & Price 2012 adapted from Luft & Ingham 1955) Analysing /clarifying thinking on ground rules to establish consensus on ground rules Evaluating skills and attributes required (diamond ranking exercise) Identifying 3-point action plan
3	Managing differing perspectives	<u>Exploring values and beliefs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying areas of consensus Using open questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring values and beliefs Bloom, P. and Ellis, L. (2009) Open/closed questions quiz Role play on conflicting perspectives (EAL child) Revisit role play using open questions and identifying areas of consensus
4	Addressing difficult situations with parents	<u>Managing interactions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising imbalances of power Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence model (Roberts 2009) Role play on addressing difficulties with parents (biting child)
5	Confidence	<u>Assertiveness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active listening (Acknowledging & reflecting back) 	Group debate on smacking Assertiveness, Active listening (Hughes and Read; 2012 Price and Ota; 2016)
6	Harder to reach parents	<u>Empathy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing issues for parents in case studies (fathers, teenage parents, SEND, offenders)
7	Addressing difficult situations with parents	<u>Professional boundaries</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing and maintaining boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MacNaughton and Hughes (2011) – unfair thinking model Applying own strategy to professional boundaries Analysing case study on ‘othering’ and ‘privileging’ & rehearsing skills in role play (Jodi)
8	Addressing difficult situations with parents	<u>Rehearsal of skills</u> Reviewing self- audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing skills and dispositions & themes identified within module Final role play: dealing with difficulty (parents in denial) Analysis, reflection and feedback

Findings

- Students ALL reported increased confidence ranging from moderate-huge
- The findings support the conclusion that the workshops helped mitigate some of the factors limiting students' learning

Conclusion

- The impact of structural and socio-cultural imbalances of power should be acknowledged and addressed in ECEC programmes of study.

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