

SEEN AND HEARD

New identities in early childhood education

Anne Looney

STRUCTURE

- Echoes
- Professional identities
- The construction of children's identities in and through education – not hear enough
- Provocation – being seen and heard

READY TO LEARN 1999

The children.....

Early childhood education will engender in children a disposition and state of readiness to learn in both formal and non-formal settings. Disposition to learn involves the development of social skills and behaviour patterns in young children which will facilitate their integration into a formal education environment. This will ensure that children will adjust well to the transition to the primary school system and culture and have the capacity and motivation to master new skills and challenges. Readiness to learn relates to the fact that children who begin schooling with solid foundations in place will be better able to develop their potential (1.5)

READY TO LEARN 1999

The Adults

There are three aspects to this issue: the provision of training for pre-school staff in multiple agencies, the skills and competencies required by early childhood education professionals and the content and duration of the training programme for teachers of infants in primary schools. Training is of crucial importance, since the knowledge and skills of the teacher, which include a deep understanding of the subject matter to be taught and of learning and pedagogical theories, critically influence the quality of education provided. Moreover, the skills required for teaching infants are not the same as general teaching skills in all respects.

THE PRINCIPLES

- Quality will underpin all aspects of early education provision.
- The State will seek to build on existing provision and to use the existing regulatory framework, where possible.
- Implementation will be undertaken on a gradual, phased basis, to allow all the participants in the system to prepare adequately for the challenges which lie ahead.
- Progress will be achieved through a process of consultation, dialogue and partnership

IDENTITY

- Cooley (1902) developed the idea of The Looking Glass Self
- Mead (1934) emphasised the importance of language and social interactions
- Goffman (1959) developed the idea of different 'selves' in different roles
- Ball (1972) took a sociological perspective on the situated and the substantive self and developed the concept of professional identity
- Mockler (2011) sees teacher professional identity as shifting over time, negotiated and ambiguous, and a framework for teachers to think through the links between theory and practice, and the connection to their own vision and moral purpose.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY



IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The most significant development to date, with potential to influence the professional identity of the sector is Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009)

For the first time in the history of ECCE in Ireland, there is now an Early Childhood Curriculum Framework aimed solely at enhancing young children's learning and development in both the formal and informal education sectors. Aistear highlights the need for a highly skilled and qualified workforce.

Madden (2012), p.31

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

- Gender
- Titles
- Qualifications
- Salary and conditions
- Role of the state
- Quality
- The reflected self....?
- Educational hierarchies?

7 STAGES



* Since 2010, almost 18,000 teachers have participated in workshops and/or summer courses as part of the Aistear Tutor Initiative, a collaboration between the NCCA and the Association of Teachers'/Education Centres in Ireland (www.ateci.ie). The initiative supports teachers in using principles and methodologies in Aistear to inform their classroom practice with junior and senior infants.

** Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking

NCCA CONSULTATION

All of the complexities now converge; it is a once in a generation opportunity for early childhood education. By the time Aistear gets to its 10th anniversary, its relationship to primary education and to early childhood education will have been transformed.

- Does a new 'stage' lead to new structures?
- A new 'stage' is already giving rise to questions about teacher identity. What about the identity of *insert title here?*
- The characteristics of a profession
 - Professional knowledge
 - A code/standards
 - Self-regulation and high autonomy
 - Strong philanthropic orientation
- An early years profession?

SEEN AND HEARD



Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

DCU Institute of Education