

Equal partnership in ECTE: University Kindergartens



University Kindergartens
OsloMet

Associate Professor Inger Marie Lindboe
Professor Olav Eikeland
Associate Professor Anne Furu
Associate Professor Karen Marie Eid Kaarby
Associate Professor Tove Lafton

OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University

Context: Innovation and Quality in Education



- Innovation project funded by The Research Council of Norway, 2016-2019
- Main focus: How may quality be enhanced in ECTE through equal partnership between university and the field of practice?
- Six partners: The municipality of Oslo, The municipality of Bærum, Kanvas (private foundation), ECTE , Program for lifelong learning, Centre for the Study of Professions at Oslo Metropolitan University
- Aim: To implement lasting innovative practices in ECTE that draw on equal partnership and thereby facilitate professional learning for students and the development of kindergartens as learning communities of practice

Focus of project work



- Design: Four sub-projects centered around * quality in organisation for learning * quality in placement periods
- Aims:
 - To develop and establish innovative partnership models based on equality and mutual responsibilities
 - To explore and articulate the professional competences of early childhood teachers
 - To enhance students' placement learning and professional and workplace learning in the institutions concerned
 - To explore how digital tools can strengthen cooperation and enhance the quality of supervision in placement periods
- Methods : Based on action research and developmental work research approaches, involving dialogue seminars, workshops, discussions, interviews and regular partner meetings

Preliminary findings and results – basis for further work towards enhanced quality



- The importance of acknowledging differences in organisation and structure
- The field of practice should exert increased influence in collaboration
- Meeting points and their content have to be sorted out. University as well as kindergartens have to work consciously with issues of collaboration and reflective practices
- The roles of teachers and supervisors in education in general and in placement periods in particular have to be reflected upon
- Views on students and learning have to be discussed
- Placement periods must involve all members of staff in kindergarten – and kindergartens must be organized as institutions for lifelong learning
- The department at the University has to accommodate the contributions of supervisors and the field of practice in new ways and organise better for close collaboration



Participation – what is it, in what, by whom, why, where, when, how, how long, etc.? The use of “participatory gatherings” in research, learning, and development work

Professor Olav Eikeland,

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Point of departure: «Participatory Gatherings (PGs)»



1. Immediate occasion and background for questions:
 - i. Challenges posed by the use of “participatory gatherings” (conferences, workshops etc.) in research and development work (R&D work).
 - ii. Participatory gatherings are quite fundamentally “***cross-boundary***” work forms with different “stakeholders” as participants, mutually dependent for finding practical solutions in R&D work.
2. Backdrop and context for the challenges:
 - *Innovation* project University Kindergartens, inspired by several sources concerning work forms / methods:
 - i. the Norwegian work research tradition based on organizational action research and broad participation among all stakeholders in development projects (e.g. Eikeland, 2012),
 - ii. activity theory (CHAT), especially elaborated by Yrjö Engeström and colleagues (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013).
3. Wider background: 35 years of experience with participatory methods – practically, theoretically, methodologically.

The “what”, “why” etc. of PGs. The concept "participation" as normally used in political theory, organization and community development work, different forms of participatory research, and theories of learning



1. Since Pateman’s (1970), “participation” or even “broad participation” has been a central catchword in disciplines like
 1. political theory, a constant challenge for underachieving self-declared democratic political regimes trying to live up to the original meaning of their designation as “democracies”
 2. planning theory, (Forester, xxxx; Cornwall, 2011).
 3. organization or community development, just as often conceived as an expedient but still arbitrary and replaceable means for reaching more specific objectives.
2. With Lave and Wenger (1991), a slightly different concept, distinguishing between “peripheral” and “full” participation in an apprenticeship learning process progressing from novice to expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986).

Overlapping forms of Participatory Gatherings, mostly without communicating among themselves



1. “Dialogue conferences” since early in 1988 (Eikeland & Berg, 1997, Eikeland, 2012, m.fl.),
2. previously, “Search conferences” (Emery & Purser, 1996, mfl), a designation many still hold on to (e.g. Klev & Levin, 2012, Barburoglu, xxxx).
3. “Change laboratories” in the tradition of cultural and historical activity theory (CHAT) (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013),
4. “future workshops” (Zukunft-Werkstatt) (Jungk & Müllert, 2000),
5. “open space techniques” (Owen, 1998 & 2008),
6. “World Cafés” (Brown & Isaacs, 2005),
7. “participatory workshops” (Chambers, 2002),
8. “Socratic dialogues” (ref. L. Nelson and others).
9. “Participatory workshops” (Chambers, 2002),
10. “Knowledge workshops” (Erstad and Hansen, 2013),
11. “Learning conversations” (Harri-Augstein and Thomas, 1991),
12. “Focused conversations” (Stanfield, 2000),
13. “Learning spaces” (Savin-Baden, 2008),
14. “The way of council” (Zimmerman and Colyle, 1996),
15. “The circle way” (Baldwin and Linnea, 2010),
16. ***and more.***

3 starting points for discussion



1. The parallel “incommunicado” lives of the approaches as independent “techniques” is hardly productive. Needs to be overcome through “critical *Auseinandersetzung*”, not by mutual ignorance and dominance.
2. The discussion of participation in Eikeland and Berg (1997) where the usual division of labor between phases in development work is reduced considerably
3. Aristotelian concepts like epistêmê, virtue (aretê), and phrônêsis (Eikeland, 1997, 1998, 2008).

Working hypothesis, challenge and aim



1. All of the separate “recipes” need analysis and *phronetic* adjustments to specific and concrete challenges, conditions, and possibilities.
2. The *challenge and aim* is to specify what kind and level of general competence and understanding is needed in order to adjust to the current situation here and now, appropriately (not unprincipled and eclectically) in each and every case. What is needed to catch the *kairós*?



Learning in placement periods: Negotiation concerning assignments

Associate Professor Karen Marie Eid Kaarby

Associate Professor Inger Marie Lindboe

OsloMet



What kind of assignments promote professional learning?

New practices introduced:

- Focus on collective reflection between students and employees
- Assignments based on individual (students) needs and kindergartens' needs for new knowledge within a specific field

Does the division of responsibilities influence professional learning?



Challenge: How may the content of placement periods be negotiated between University and kindergartens in order to facilitate professional learning?

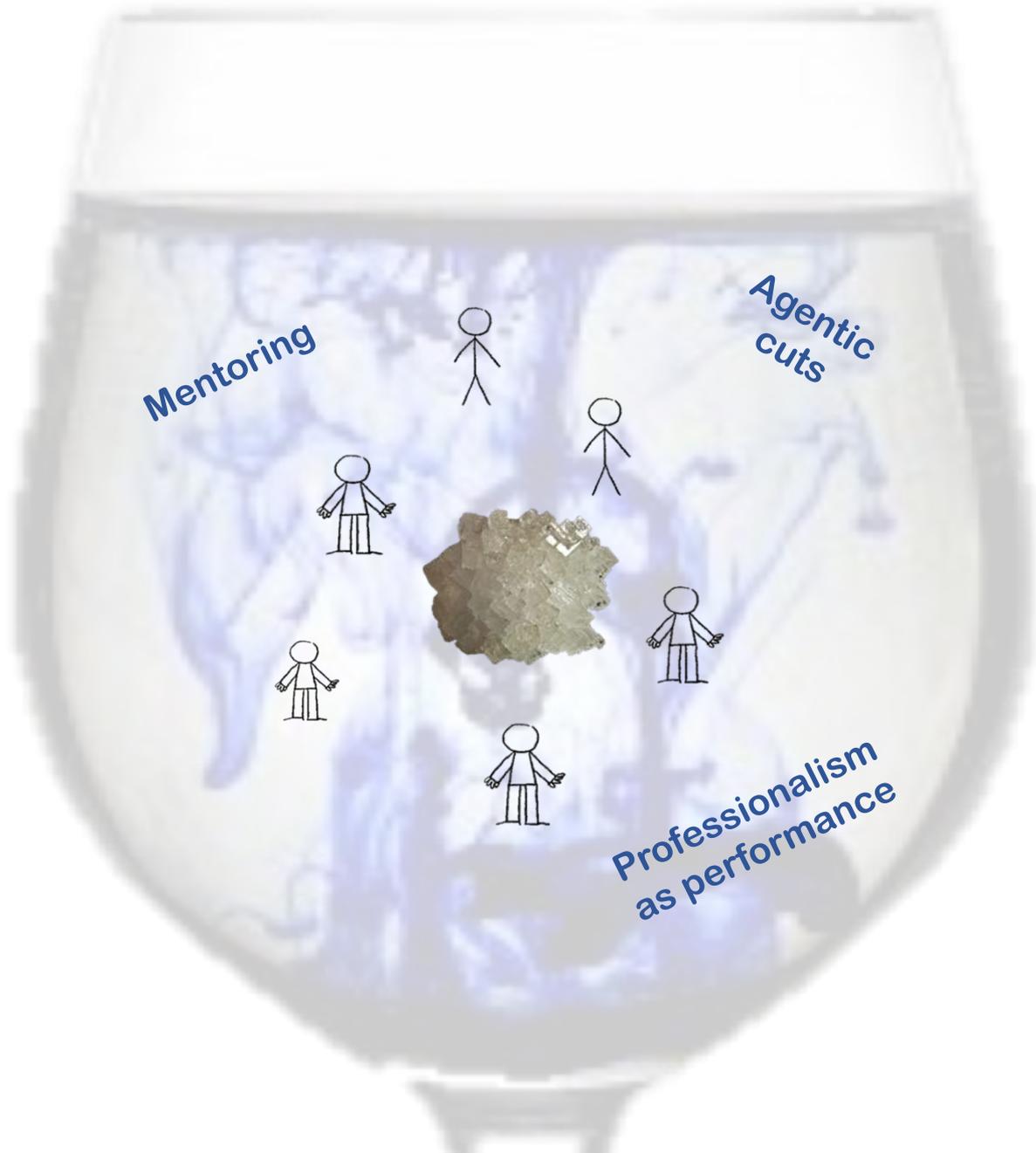
Investigating how video influence supervision in early childhood teacher students placement periods.



Associate Professor

Tove Lafton

OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University



Performing professional knowledges



- Written notes lacking initial reflections
- Supervision as «mostly talk»
- Reflection as travelling concept
- Written language and bodily language

Video to get access



- reflection and knowledge-in-action
- “Look at oneself from outside”

“I was mostly surprised by how I was a part of the group and how there was this linking between myself and the children. Even children I thought I had “lost”. They weren’t lost at all, they just did other things whilst they were still engaging with the theme”

How to upscale?



- What do the students need?
- What do the placement supervisors need?
- What do the university teachers need?

Challenges according to premises in partnership



Anne Furu

Associate professor

Oslo Metropolitan University

Significant conditions for constructive partnership in teacher education



- Equality – the education institution's position as dominant
- Resource intensive
- Mutual interest
- To have a common theme/project
- To know each other
- Common professional concepts
- Anchoring in management

Central future challenges in our innovation project



- The students in focus
- To be even more explicit in defining our common object of learning - shaping «the third room» (Zeichner 2010)
- To explore and discuss the premises for a constructive collaboration between placement kindergartens and education institution
- To develop some common professional language concepts

The need of long term projects



- By acknowledging the complexity of conditions and the need for communication and multiple discussions both within each institution and across the participating institutions, I will argue for the need for long term processes in developing a sustainable partnership

Current challenges



- How may sustainable structures for equal partnership in education be established within existing resources?
- How may small scale innovative practices be implemented at full scale level?
- What works? Does it work?