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Media education in Early childhood Education

A project in video making

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The aim of this thesis is to explore media education through project-based learning. This thesis was implemented in a private day care with children aged four to five. The topic emerged from the needs of the working life partner that I have observed and what had been discussed between colleagues at the workplace.

The project was inspired by children's interest in media, and by observing the existing skills and areas of possible development and learning. The goal was to create an activity that utilized the available ICT-tools of the day care in a way that would take the children and the educators to their zone of proximal development. By utilizing participation and project-based learning the children participating in the activity could become active learners and learn skills in terms of negotiation and media that are needed in the future.

The National Core Curriculum includes media education as part of early childhood education, but the generational gap between educators who have grown up in different age of ICT tools and the children currently growing up in the age where media is a part of their everyday life is a challenge. Older generation teachers might not be comfortable with their skills of using ICT-tools and their views on media education, which affects teaching of the topic in early childhood education. And the children grow up with presences of media and the need to learn the skills, so that they are able to be a part of the media and ICT- culture safely.

Media education does not automatically mean including ICT-tools, but due to the interest of the children and the needs of the working life partner this project is based on learning how to use certain ICT-tools. The project consists of this thesis and a video that is the result of the project made by the children. It is aimed to educators working in the field to inspire and analyse what media education is and what their attitudes towards the topic are.

Over time, information and tools used in this project might become outdated, as more research comes out and technology changes.

Keywords	Media education, ICT, project-based learning, participation

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Tämän toiminnallisen opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli tutkia mediakasvatusta projektioppimisen avulla. Opinnäytetyö toteutettiin yhdessä yksityisen päiväkodin kanssa. Lapset, jotka osallistuivat projektiin, olivat iältään neljä ja viisivuotiaita. Opinnäytetyö aihe tuli yksityiseltä päiväkodilta, jonka opettajat ja hoitajat halusivat kehittää omaa media ja teknologia osaamistaan.

Projektin aihe valikoitui ryhmän lasten kiinnostuksen kohteiden perusteella, sekä havainnoimalla olemassa olevia taitoja sekä mitä taitoja voitaisiin lähteä projektissa kehittämään. Tarkoituksena oli kehittää projekti, joka hyödynsi päiväkodissa olemassa olevia teknologisia laitteita tavalla, joka auttaisi sekä henkilökuntaa että lapsia oman lähikehityksen vyöhykkeelle Hyödyntäen projektioppimista sekä osallistumista, mahdollistin lasten tietojen ja taitojen kehittymisen aktiivisessa oppimisessa sekä neuvottelu ja media taidoissa, joita he tarvitsevat tulevaisuudessa.

Kansallinen varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma on lisännyt mediakasvatuksen osaksi suunnitelmaansa, mutta sukupolvien välinen rako varhaiskasvatuksen henkilökunnan sekä lasten välillä on muodostanut haasteita. Vanhempi sukupolvi, joka ei ole kasvanut media ja teknologia laitteiden parissa, tuntee olonsa epävarmaksi teknologiaa käyttäessään ja heidän mielikuvansa mediasta osana arkea vaikuttaa siihen, miten aihetta opetetaan ryhmissä. Mutta nykysukupolven lapset kasvavat ympäristössä, joka ei ole media vapaa, joten on tärkeää, että myös varhaiskasvatuksessa aloitetaan media taitojen opettelu, jotta lapset voivat olla osana median kuluttamista sekä tuottamista turvallisesti.

Media taitojen opettelu ei automaattisesti tarkoita teknologia laitteiden osallistamista oppimiseen, mutta liittyen tähän projektiin lasten kiinnostuksen kohteet sekä päiväkodin omasta toiveesta ne ovat osana tässä opinnäytetyössä toteutettua projektia. Opinnäytetyössä toteutettu projekti koostuu kirjoitetusta opinnäytetyöstä sekä projektissa tehdystä videosta.
Opinnäytetyö on suunnattu varhaiskasvatuksessa työskenteleville kasvattajille, tuomaan inspiraatiota sekä hakemaan tietoa mitä media kasvatus on ja mikä omat asenne ja tiedot aiheesta ovat. Ajan kuluessa osa tässä opinnäytetyössä olevista tiedoista sekä välineistä saattavat vanheta, sitä mukaan, kun teknologia kehittyy ja uusia tutkimuksia aiheesta julkaistaan.

Avainsanat	Mediakasvatus, TVT, projekti oppiminen, osallisuus

Contents

1   Introduction

The inspiration for this thesis came from my workplace at a day-care. A lot of discussions have been had about the educators' lack of knowledge and confidence of using technology in the everyday life and activity moments. Each of the groups in the unit has their own tablet, phone and computer at use, but the devices are a little bit outdated, and technology is mainly used by educators to take observation pictures, play music or look at videos from YouTube. My working life partner wanted to expand on the possibilities of media education as well as for the educators to feel more comfortable using information communication technology (ICT).

Digitalization has become more and more part of our everyday lives and the technological gap between teachers and children is shining through. Educators in the field might feel that their competences in digital world is only at the basic level and at times the children seem to be more competent and comfortable using the technology. (Koivula & Mustola, 2017.) More important than the pre-existing knowledge and abilities of technology and digital devices is the educators' attitude towards them, and this does not only apply for technology but in every area of learning. Children are aware participants in their environments who absorb, adopt and learn information surrounding them in their everyday lives. The educators pre-existing attitudes, positive or negative, will be setting example for the children and might affect this learning. More so the child's individuality and their own way of working are reflecting on their learning. (Saajola, 2019.)

The project was guided by the documents that oversee the early childhood education in Finland such as the National core curriculum (2018) and the Early childhood education plan of the city of Espoo (2019), these documents describe the study modules and the way of carrying them out through projects and thematic work.

2   Early childhood education in Finland

2.1   National core curriculum of education and care

The National core curriculum of education and care is   a national regulation issued by
the Finnish National Agency for Education. It is based on the act of early childhood ed-
ucation and care. This document provides the basis of composing children's early
childhood education plan as well as how early childhood education (ECE) in Finland is
arranged and implemented. The National core curriculum promotes equal and high-
quality early childhood education and care throughout the entire country. (Var-
haiskasvatusuunnitelman perusteet, 2018.)

Using technology in everyday life has become the norm and the National Core Curricu-
lum states that the media education in early childhood should inspire and educate chil-
dren on how to use technology in a safe way, while also encouraging them to make
questions and create their own content, building and deconstructing objects and toys to
see how they work. While the eventual goal is for the children to realize that technology
is created by humans. (Varhaiskasvatusuunnitelman perusteet, 2018.)

The National Core Curriculum also states that giving the children opportunity to create
their own content and explore various media content, using various information and
communication technology tools (ICT) expands and works towards of the creative
thinking of the children, it also helps media reading skills and skills of working together.
The educators are responsible of making sure that the devices and the learning envi-
ronment are safe. (2018.)

2.2   Early childhood education plan of the city of Espoo

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) plan of the city of Espoo follows mainly the Na-
tional Core Curriculum, and they have made few notes and additions to that.

In their ECE plan the city of Espoo refers to the five areas of transversal competences.

1.   Thinking and learning-to learn

2. cultural competence, interaction and expression

3. taking care of oneself and managing daily life

4. participation, involvement and building a sustainable future

5. multi literacy and ICT competences

ECE plan says that multiliteracy and ICT competences are needed in the everyday lives in both children's and families lives, as well as in communication with other people. The skills in multi literacy are an important and pivotal, when it comes to understanding the surrounding world and the culturally diverse messages in it and being in interaction with others.   The early childhood educations duty is to support the development of these skills.   (Espoon varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma, 2019.)

ICT tools enable the expansion of the learning environment outside of the physical walls of the day cares, as such they should be used as a natural part of the pedagogical activities and documentation. The sustainability and versatility as well as safety are key parts of choosing which devices are acquired. (Suomenkielinen varhaiskasvatus, Varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma 2019.)

3   Media education in Finland

Media education is action where one knowingly influences an individual's media usage and the media skills. ICT tools and media have not been actively involved in the Finnish ECE education so the research on the execution on media education in Finland has been little researched. (Leppänen & Mattila, 2018.) The execution of media education widely depends on the interest and skills of the workers, and right now digital divide with the older and newer generation of teachers as well as the feeling of children already being more advanced users of these tools make educators in ECE more cautious to take them part of the pedagogy. (Leppänen & Mattila, 2018.)

Mediataito koulu writes in their guide that media is everywhere and that ECE is not a media free zone, and it has not been in a while. Media is not only brought in by the children, but it is already existing in the playschools through various forms. Photographs of activities are taken with phones or tablets; music is listened, and children play games with tablets. Media is everywhere and children today are active consumers of media,

and it shows in the play. Children talk about various characters in tv-shows and games, like Moomins, educators have started to reflect on how media influences on children's playing skills and various forms of play. (Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus MEKU, 2013.)

When starting media education, it is good to think about what one already knows about the topic, how does media and media phenomenon's show in the everyday life of the day-care /group, both children and adults. Changing the perspective on media education through asking questions like "what are we already doing in ECE that can be seen as media education". When these things are investigated, it becomes clear that the phenomenon is not new and little things have already been done through out decades a good deal. The basis of ECE, as I will discuss later, is participation and children's involvement. (Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus MEKU, 2013.)

So, when developing the ideas on media education, educators of the group have to start thinking what are the things that are relevant and current as well as what are the needs in this group of children.   Media education is not the same on each age group of children. With young children aged three and under education and care go hand in hand and that goes for media education as well. They start by introducing ICT through play, and come across media through emotional experiences, exploring pictures, listening to music etcetera. As children grow older, they start becoming more active participants by planning, documenting, and narrating their experiences. The most important thing is that media education is planned, and it has a purpose, the pedagogy behind the activity is visible. (Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus MEKU, 2013.)

3.1   What tools are commonly used in the media education

The types of media equipment have changed throughout the years. Audio-visual media, media based on hearing and seeing, is one of the most common types today (Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus MEKU, 2013.) Media tools that utilize audio-visual medium are smartphones, tablets, computers, cd-players etc. More traditional media tools, before smartphones and computers have been newspapers, magazines, and the radio, as well as cameras music players, e-reading equipment's. (Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus MEKU, 2013.)

In most day cares the media tools available to use are smartphones, tablets and computers, as well as the traditional cd-players. Phones and computers are mainly used for pedagogical documentation, playing music and searching for information. The development of the media has also made a new way of learning possible. Downloadable games for tablets have made it possible for children to practice for example their language and cognitive skills. Children might be more engaged in the activity when they are interacting with colourful characters on screen and there are multiple games developed on the purpose of practicing certain skills, mathematical reading etc. (Leppänen, S., Mattila, I. 2018.)

3.2   Media consumption habits of Finnish children

The usages of ICT devises, already at the age of three, is around an hour or hour and a half a day. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). There has been little long-term studies on the effects media usage and the result can't be used as conclusive, but more as directional. Study made in 2013 (Lasten Media barometri) of the media usages of under school aged children determined that 57% of children between ages of 0-2 and 97% of children ages 3-4 watched videos almost daily. (Suoninen, A. 2013.) WHO has suggested in 2019 that the daily screen time for children under the age of 5 should be no longer than an hour and children under the age of two should not be consuming any picture media. (World Health organization, 2019.) As the Lasten media barometri did not report the usages of video and picture media in an hour form so it is difficult to determine if they remain within the recommendation of WHO, but with the Ministry of Education and Culture study it can be deduced that the recommendation of WHO has not been followed to a certain degree.

3.2.1   Digital divide, educators and children as digital users

As Koivula and Mustola (2017) discuss the findings of Van Deursen and Van Dijk the term digital divide is used to describe the differences between the accessibility of technology use and knowledge of it, originally referring to computers and internet, currently it refers to mastering and embracing the digital skills as well. According to various research amongst other things age and education were some of the factors that impacted the technological skills. (Koivula & Mustola 2017.)

In their article Koivula and Mustola (2017) interviewed adults and children and how they view themselves and each other as users and teachers in digital devices. From their interviews it was seen that children were the main instigators and active independent users of the technology, even taking the roles of teachers, while adults seem to have a lot of insecurities related to their technological knowledge. (Koivula & Mustola, 2017.) They continue stating that the traditional "generational order" (sukupolvijärjestys) in in early childhood education is shaking in this area since children are taking the role of an educator, teaching each other as well as the educators in the groups. Now this does not mean that all children are equally skilled with technology. (Koivula ja Mustola, 2017.)

As there are differences between the adults and children in their level of competences it leaves this pedagogical "no man's land" when it comes to digital devices. Koivula and Mustola (2017) in their interviews found out that there seems to be disagreement, uncertainty of skills and the use and pedagogical purpose of tablets in the groups. None of the educators seemed to have deeper knowledge of the pedagogical benefits of technology even though they described how they were using them in the playschool. The younger generation wanted more discussion and support from the older teachers while the older generation felt inadequate in their skills and were comparing themselves in the younger generation. (Koivula & Mustola, 2017.)

 The pre-existing attitudes are also very visible in the article, older teachers had more of the attitude that technology has a lot of negative side effects and that teachers should be the ones teaching the children, while the younger teachers were more allowing and encouraging of children's participation when it came to using tablets. As Koivula and Mustola state in their article the current gap between generational roles in digital education should be used in advantage to bring children and teacher alike together to learn from each other. (Koivula & Mustola, 2017.)

Mediataitokoulu (2013) through their pilot-project noticed when there is no pressure of what media education should be or what is the perfect way to practice media education, as there is none, and when receiving material and experiences from other daycares the prejudice and fears started fading away. They noticed that ICT-tools are not required as part of media education and once there was no pressure to use them, everyday life technology started becoming part of the projects, and surprises of once own and other skills started showing and growing. (Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus MEKU, 2013.)

While the passive time spent in front of screens is growing in an earlier age already as the Ministry of Education and culture, 2016 has shown, it is up to the educators to see what is done and when on tablets and how is technology utilized in the early childhood education, and to ensure the children's safety whilst using ICT tools. While encouraging children to be more active participants and independent users, it is the educator's role to ensure the pedagogical meaning behind the activities and also show what kind of possibilities could there be. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016.)

4 Participation

4.1 Children's participation

Children's participation in ECE can be said to be rooted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), especially to the articles 12 and 13. These articles state that Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. (Article 12.). and that Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law (article 13.).

The core meaning of participation is highlighting the agency of the children in their everyday life decision making and actions that affects their lives and their surroundings. (Sevón, E., Hautala, P., Hautakangas, M., Ranta, M., Merjovaara, O., Mustola, M., & Alasuutari, M. 2021) It is social action, in which the child has the possibility to participate, make decisions and initiatives as well as feel like they are part of a community. Participation should not be interpreted on as an individual aspect as it can also be communal; being a member in a community (interacting with others) and using one's power as part of democratic decision making. (Sevón, E. et al. 2021.) It is the duty of early childhood education to support and encourage the developing skills of participation and involvement as well as encourage them to be more initiative. (Varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma Espoo, 2019.) The growth of sense of self, self-trust and social skills in children requires appreciative and respectful encounter of children as well as listening and reacting strengthen the skills in participation and involvement of children. While children are participating in the planning, executing and evaluating in on the activities they learn skills in communicating, respecting common rules as well as trust. (Varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma Espoo, 2019.)

When talking about participation a clear difference between participation and taking part needs to be made, as these concepts might often been mixed up especially in the context of Finnish language. Participation (osallisuus) does not only mean being present in the situations or taking part in an activity, the significant meaning is that individuals can also affect the activities or actions they are part of. Whereas taking part (osallistuminen) means that one is a part of activity or situation that is organized and planned by others. It is important to knowledge that there is also a difference when it comes to inclusion and involvement versus participation. The two formers refer to actions of the surrounding people and system operation which are focused on the child whereas participation describes the action and being in the situation from the point of view of the child. (Turja. L. 2011.)

As mentioned earlier children's learning can be described to be wholesome, it is influenced by child's mood and their areas of interest. The way of thinking for children is individualistic as well as multi-dimensional, that is why the most important thing when it comes to learning is experientiality as well as how is the information related to their lives. (Mikkola & Nivalainen 2009, 56.)

In their article Sevón, Hautala, Hautakangas, Ranta, Merjovaara, Mustola & Alasuutari (2021) point out that children's participation is acceptable only when it is suitable for the educators plans and compliments their opinions. According to the article the understanding of children's participation has also criticised to be very narrow as it easily leaves out children who are young, have speech or linguistical related delays and children who require support in their everyday lives. Even viewing children as active participants, who has their own voice and opinions is not enough. In order for children's right to participation to be fulfilled it requires conscious actions, like the opportunity and the space to express their opinions, as well as an audience to listen and those opinions to make an impact in the world of the educators and other adults. (Sevón, E. et al. 2021)

4.2 Educators' role in participation

The role of an educator has been seen in multiple ways, in more traditional role the educator is the teacher and leader, they are an active participant in the activities, usually they are the ones teaching how to solve the problems and the children are passive participants. Dewy and the constructive learning models have challenged this traditional role and has described the teacher to be a skilled guide whose mission is to guide the children to learn, but they should not only be transmitting the information. They should

create the right kind of circumstances where the children are able to use their senses and practice their thinking skills. Growth and learning come naturally for children, so the educator's role is to create ideal surroundings for so called right kind of learning. (Stenroos, H. 2017.)

4.2.1 Talentia Work, values and ethics

In the guide of Work, value and ethics, Talentia talks about dialogic leadership and dialogue, and how dialogue posits that "every individual's personal viewpoint is as valuable as that of others" (Talentia, Work, values and ethics, 2019). According to the guide in working life individuals are expected to work independently but at the same time have their work join the common objectives of the workplace and leader's role is to ask the core questions: How can a manager help employees maximise their competence and how does a manager ensure that all employees always have an understanding of the overall work situation and are able to act together and support each other. (Talentia, Work, values and ethics, 2019.) This echoes the participation of children in the early childhood education set in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) well as the goals of the ECE guide.

The role of a leader is based on openness and mutual trust. Sometimes as a leader one needs to step in the misconducts of employees and limit their actions but in these instances, it is important to notice is the working community lead in dialogically, listening to the employees, and do they have a possibility to impact in their work and work environment. (Talentia, Work, values, and ethics, 2019.) This could also be implemented in a playschool environment, the leader-employee relationship can be compared to an educator-child relationship. In order to maximize the learning (and to use the zone of proximal development), and to guarantee that the children feel heard and listened to the teacher needs be able to use dialogue or at least be able to answer the questions: How can I maximize learning and how can I ensure everyone understands the activity, the topic at hand or just the everyday activities.

5   Methods of developmental task

In my developmental task I will be using observation research which is field work in its natural setting (Denscombe, 2014. 205). When doing an observation-based research

task one must remember the perception i.e., the personal values and other factors of the researcher. Denscombe points out that there are factors that affect observation-based research.

1. Selective recall, that is we are not capable of remembering everything, and what we do remember is not decided at random.

2. Selective perception, mind filters information, letting some information from the senses through and at the same time "putting up barriers" to others.

3. Accentuated perception, on top of the other two factors our current emotional and physical state as well as previous experiences affect the information coming through as well as how it is perceived. (Denscombe, 2014. 206.)

For my developmental task I will be making observations and writing them down to minimize both selective recall and selective perception. I will also ask one educator from the group to observe each session of the project and to give feedback. For privacy reasons (observation containing information on the children, names etcetera.) I will not be adding my observations to the Appendix of this thesis.

5.1 Constructive learning theory

Piaget's constructive learning theory has heavily influenced early childhood education. According to Piaget's theory children have an active role in their learning, they explore their surroundings and the world around them constantly adding new information on already existing knowledge, adapting their previous ideas to accommodate new information they receive. (Hännikäinen & Rasku-Puttonen 2001.) The constructive learning theory went through changes in the 1990's, when   interaction with the environment started being highlighted more and thus the concept morphed into social constructionism (Brotherus yms. 2002).

5.2 Project based learning

Project based learning has few other learning approaches, like phenomenon-based learning and research-based learning closely related to it (Opetushallitus, 2016). All these approaches are brought together by a problem or an interesting question that is trying to be solved. This problem is then used to spark the interest in learning, and as

mentioned previously the skill to question and wonder is already found within all the children no matter the age. (Vesterinen, 2001.)

Vesterinen (2001) sees constructive learning theory as the starting point of project-based learning. And as stated before in constructive learning theory the learner is an active participant, who constructs their new knowledge on the basis of what they already know. Project based learning supports the pedagogical working in the early childhood education. (Vesterinen, 2001.) In project-based learning the activity comes from children's own needs and interests while utilizing the areas of learning from the national core curriculum (Lappeenrannan kaupunki 2017).

Concept names like project method, project study and project-based learning are often used as synonyms, and for this reason defining project-based learning is discontinuous. I will be using the term project-based learning as it seems to be more fitting to the setting of early childhood education. Project based learning has close relations to other terms like problem-based learning and phenomenon learning. (Vento, E. 2018.) The national board of education (2016) Defines project-based learning as a way of thinking, as it is more of a outlook on learning or as a philosophy of education. Learning occurs through problem solving, looking into phenomena, and trying to understand them. It can entail different teaching methods, but it is not based on any traditional lessons. The central focus is on interaction and communality, skills that are seen important in the future work life. Project based learning is also closely tied to other terms such as phenomenon-based learning (ilmiöpohjainen oppiminen) and research-based learning (tutkiva oppiminen), that are also used in the curriculums of pre-school and elementary schools. (Opetushallitus 2016.) Lappeenranta for example has referenced project-based learning in its core curriculum (Lappeenrannan varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma, 2017.), but there is no unity with the different cities core curriculums, the city of Helsinki is focusing on phenomenon-based learning (Helsingin varhaiskasvatussuunnitelma, 2019) and the city of Espoo has not included neither in its curriculum in 2016.

6 Social pedagogy

Social pedagogy is a concept that states in its core that one can influence social circumstances like inclusion, participation and social competence (Hämäläinen, 2003).

Social Pedagogy is implemented though techniques and concepts, that are utilized differently with different clients' base on their needs, while having its main focus on children. (Storø, 2013: 1, 11-15.) It reflects the current culture and society (attitudes and traditions), and how that society caries the ones who need help (Thempra, 2015-2020).

Social pedagogues are professionals who work in the field, like teachers and social workers, while they are able to learn social pedagogy from the books, and need knowledge of developmental psychology, the true learning happens in the everyday life situations. (Storø, 2013: 63-64.)

Few key concepts of social pedagogy are:

1. The Common third which uses various of activities to strengthen the relationship between the educator or other social pedagogue and child. It is a child centred approach, from start to finish.

2. The zone of proximal development, a practice that functions on the assumption that, in this context, children learn and develop when supported by someone, usually an educator or a peer, who has more knowledge in that certain area.

3. The Learning zone, the place, usually different situations, that offer to take us out of our comfort zone and give opportunities to develop ourselves and our skills.

4. Haltung is how social pedagogues carry out their actions based on their beliefs and moral convictions. (Thempra, 2015-2020.)

7 Implementation of the development task

7.1 Functional thesis

The goal of functional thesis is to guide, organize and inform on practical activities. The topic and execution are usually based on the client group and the working life partner's needs. Functional thesis consists of the functional, active part and the written report of the activity. The report will entail the planning and evaluation of the activity that is done with research writing method. (Saastamoinen, M., Vähä, T., Ypyä, J., Alahuhta, M. & Päätalo, K. 2018.)

In their writing Pohjanoro and Taijala discuss about the four criteria of scientific research that Uusitalo has stated in his 1991 article. These are:

1. Clear definition of the subject. The research topic should be defined clearly, with reason and it should be easily understood.

2. Novelty. The existing knowledge of the topic should be approached from a new angle or new information of the topic should be presented in the work.

3. Usefulness. The research should be useful to the target group. Meaning that in the scientific community, the information produced should be something that future research ought to be taken into account.

4. Scientific justification. All the claims and results should be justified, and those justifications should be able to be evaluated based on the methods, references and material used in the research. (Pohjannoro, H., Taijala, B. 2018.)

Pohjannoro and Taijala argue that these four criteria could also be applied to the functional thesis with few modifications or clarifications to part three: the target group being the thesis working life partner as well as the future or current profession. And to part four that the evaluation should still be there, but justification might be also seen as functionality, as evaluation usually happens through professional field know how, that constructs of knowledge, skills and this so-called "tacit knowledge". (Pohjannoro, H., Taijala, B. 2018.)

7.1.1 Tacit knowledge

More commonly seen in practical fields of work, tacit knowledge is defined by Hakkarainen, Lonka & Lipponen (1999: 61) as an ability to understand unspoken agreements, skills and knowledge that are verbally difficult to express.   The adaptation process of tacit knowledge happens (unknowingly) usually when an individual grows into the operational culture of the work community. (Hakkarainen et. al. 1999: 61.) The challenge is to word out tacit information for example in functional theses, so that the information of it can be more extensively discussed in the expert communities as well as used more commonly in the student communes. (Hakkarainen et al. 1999:61.)

7.2   The project

This project came from the needs of the working life partner. They wanted more inspiration on media education as well as for the educators to feel mor comfortable whilst using ICT- tools. When planning this I focused on having the children participate in the planning and implementation of the activity as much as possible. Through the common third, as it being a child centred approach, the role of building the relationship between educators and children and challenging the norm of the traditional generational order and the believes of what the role of an educator is.

From this project with the working life partner (in this case the playschool I worked at), I created a process where the working life partner would receive more ideas on how to use media tools already available for them, more specifically in activities that would also involve children in every part of the process. As I have worked in this community for a year before implementation of the activity, I was able to utilize my tacit knowledge I had gained through that time in planning and implementing this project. In this case the children of the group have long been interested in dancing, music, and music videos. Utilizing those interests and talking together with the children, the children and I decided to initially create an exercise video but through the process and based on the children's own interests and ideas it morphed into a music video.

7.3   Aims

The aim of the project was to find a new angle on media education that the educators were comfortable with through on project-based learning and the common third. As part of the process utilizing the zone of proximal development, for the educators as well as the children to able to develop their skills further regarding media education.

Media education, as discussed earlier, does not automatically mean using ICT-tools but in this project the needs of the working life partner as well as the interests of the children were aimed more towards learning how to use the ICT-tools available for them.

It was also important for me to use Haltung, challenge my view of the traditional role of an educator in this project and through participation and project-based learning so that

what I was projecting as an educator would be that the children had an experience to become active learners and influencers in their own learning.

7.4 The session plans

Each session has its own agenda to move along the process and at the end of the second session the children can conduct a small survey using pictures (Appendix 1). I chose to do three sessions as it seemed like a natural amount for this project. First session is to plan and see what the children would be interested in doing and how many of them would be interested in participating. Second to executing the project, evaluating the activity and third to see the results.

There could have been more sessions planned, but with my tacit knowledge and after talking with the teachers in the group we decided that three sessions would be a good amount. The children have not filmed or made a video themselves before, they had experience performing but on other areas their knowledge was limited. With more experience there could be sessions added as well as new skills, but with their current knowledge the children would have most likely lost their interest before the end of the project. Two or one session would have not been enough as that would mean the project parts would be longer and that the children would not have been able to view the final product of their work.

7.4.1 First session

During our first session I will explain the children what the activity will be and what the purpose and goals are in this project during circle time. Enforcing children's participation, the common third and the zone of proximal development throughout the whole session. Together with the children we shall discuss what kind of exercise video would they like to make (yoga, dance, etcetera), and what moves we will do. Next, we will talk about the different roles the children can have in this activity as well as talk if everyone wants to do everything or will we set roles for everyone depending on their interests. I would make sure that the children are still comfortable and willing to participate in this activity. And finally, I will tell then when we are going to implement the second session and conduct the survey. (Appendix 1).

7.4.2   Second session

On our second session we will shortly recap the type of video and the roles of the children in making of this video. Firstly, I would show how to use the tablet/phone for filming and where to press and to start and stop the video as well as how to aim. Next, we would go through the movements for the video and then we start filming the video. Ideally my role would be as minimal as possible during the filming, and I would only be supporting and guiding the children as needed. Finally, we shall assess the session and the children are able to give their feedback (appendix 1). Throughout this second session I will be enforcing and encouraging children's participation, the common third as well as the zone of proximal development.

7.4.3   Third session

On our third session we will watch the video that we had made and naturally move along the instead of passively watching it. Then I will show the children where in the tablet they can find the video and we will explain the general rules that apply to their tablet use that they also apply to the video. After everything we will have one final talk about the activity sessions the children can tell me what they liked the best and would they like to do something like this in the future, and generally give them a free platform to tell me their opinions and feelings about the whole process.

7.5   Evaluation of the sessions

7.5.1   First session

In our first session I asked the children what they knew about making videos and using technology, have the ever used it and how? They started talking and talking about music videos and other YouTube videos they have watched together with their siblings. After this I asked them if they would be interested making their own video and what they would like the content to be, I gave them few suggestions on what kind of content they could make and they decided on making a music video. After this they talked to themselves asked questions to me as well as to the group on what would be possible. Some of the questions they discussed were, could they add costumes, can they have multiple choices of songs that they could have on the video as well as what roles they

would like to be on. My role in this process was mainly guiding the conversation, observing, and writing down on decisions they made as well as asking for consent from the children to be part of this project.

The children were able to problem solve as a group without asking too much of help from me. After realizing that not everyone wanted to do the same song, they first started to argue over which song they would choose but after a while they came to the conclusion that they could do multiple ones perhaps and after that conclusion they asked me if it is possible to do that. Next step was to ponder the roles and that lead to them asking me if they could be in multiple roles, "Can I do perform and filming as well?" They were also very curious on if they could see the videos after they have filmed them!

During this session some of the children showed more enthusiasm for the project and some children said they did not want to be a part of this, and I told them that that is completely fine and if they chose to join later, they would be more than welcome to come. I also had one child who was not part of the group the teachers and I planned on but was very keen on participating and ended up giving lots of ideas enthusiasm for the group.

7.5.2   Second session

In the second session the children started filming and performing the children who wanted to be part of the process, but were not too enthusiastic on it, went in first and they had decided they wanted to do the filming but not to perform. After this they were allowed to go and play on their own, but I told them that I would need their help later on when we would evaluate the process and if they enjoyed this activity. During this face I also received new participants who also wanted to join in and were very excited on the process and learning.

It was interesting to see the choices on the music and dances the children made as they were either some that they have already learnt and practiced the choreography to with their educators, one child took the role of a teacher in a way that she was not on the video but was showing the movements to others performing. Some children chose to show their abilities like standing on one foot or just moving to the music based on their felling.

My role in this face was showing where and how they could film the video how to aim and showing how I made a play list based on the songs they chose. Applying Haltung and challenging the instinct of "taking over" was a challenge. I was going outside of my comfort zone and the educators of the group observing were seeing how the children participating in the process were more actively involved, when they had been participating on the whole process and had had their opinions and voices to be heard.

After the activity I had made an evaluating system (Appendix 1) where   explained the children what the different colours and face represented (for example, green smiley = I really loved the activity. Yellow = IT was ok, red = did not like this at all). Then I told them that they can choose from those what they thought about this activity and put the choice on the bag, and I would step away while they were choosing so my presence would not affect their opinion and it would be anonymous. The children told me when the were ready and we celebrated the activity, and they were very excited to see the results and have a viewing party!

 The reason why I chose to have the evaluation after the second activity was because this is right after the children have challenged themselves and have gone outside of their comfort zone. The children's actions, choices and feelings are still fresh in their mind, and they can give their most honest opinion. The first session can be seen as planning of what the project is going to be and therefore it is still hard to evaluate if the activity is actually something that they do enjoy. The third session is more of natural conclusion of the project, time has passed since the second session and the children's opinion might be affected by the selective recall, selective perception as well as accentuated perception.

7.5.3   Third session

Our third session was short, we had our preview where we watched the final product of what the children had filmed, and I had edited it together. The children were extremely excited to see it and they were very proud of themselves. Most of them were making observations of what they saw, who was performing, what they were doing and who might have filmed that part. Some of them got excited and started dancing again!

8 Evaluation

8.1 Ethical considerations

I have tried to ensure the reliability of the information, provided and gathered during the writing of this functional thesis, as more research is done on this field, the information in this thesis may be outdated or change.

For this developmental task I have permits from the working life partner, and as the project involves children, from the parents that the children are allowed to participate in this project. For this purpose, I have created a permit letter (Appendix 2) where I explained the aims and goals of the development task as well as asked a clear permission form the parents that their children are allowed to participate in these workshops.

On top of this as children are autonomous agencies if they feel like they do not want to participate in the workshops or part of them, they will not be forced to take part.

The video made in this project will not be shared outside of the day care (working life partner of this project) and to ensure the safety and anonymity of the children their names nor anything identifiable will not be used in this project.

8.2 Evaluation

8.2.1 Feedback on the project

Thinking about the four criteria of research (Pohjanoro and Taijala, 2018) that was discussed earlier, I feel like in this project novelty and usefulness are easily met as I have been getting a lot of good feedback and interest when talking about my thesis. People working in ECE have said that it has given them new ideas on how to implement media tools in their groups and in their activities, as well as, and more importantly from my working life partner. The children as well as the adults felt like this was a fun and exciting way to explore the skills both adults as well as the children's, the educators felt like the process did not give them pressure to have a perfect outcome which made it more

comfortable for them to use the ICT-tools. They liked that I utilized the tools they already had existing, but in a way that they have not thought of using, but they also felt like that the teachers could use a course for them to learn more how to use ICT- tools, or in general more practice in order to feel more comfortable. The educators also felt like there was a difference on the children and how they engaged in the activity and also later, they were more familiar with ICT-tools and explaining how they were using the phone to film the video.

8.3   My view on the developmental task

One thing that is common for all of these theories and pedagogical concepts is that children are seen as naturally curious beings and that learning should be based on that natural curiousness. This is something that I tried to utilize for this project, tapping into their interests and them learning new skills through those interests. In the future this could be developed future as the children's skills develop the next step could be further into their zone of proximal development, they could start learning how to download the videos from the tablet or phone to the computer, how and where to find music as well as incorporating them in the editing process. This could also be developed as film festival type of thing where the children could make, in small groups, videos based on the interest of the group. Then once done they could have a film festival premiering all the movies perhaps if the kids are interested, they could make movie posters for their film's etcetera.

Or as times of the global pandemic this could be utilized as a way of making a spring concert video if the pandemic guidelines do not allow for in person spring concerts.

I feel like if there would have been fewer sessions the children would not have been able to concentrate on the tasks or they would not have been able to view their final product in the same way, also on the other hand if there would have been more sessions doing this for the first time, the children in this group could have lost their interest on the project or they might have felt like they would be too much outside of their comfort zone (zone of proximal development).

I feel like I was able to challenge my role as a teacher and explore the role of a facilitator, thus influencing my Haltung, and the children felt like they were able to influence

and they were heard on how they wanted to do this project, how they wanted it to look like and what they wanted to learn and what roles they wanted to be in and how long.

Even though media education does not automatically mean using ICT-tools, in my project the children's interests and current topics of conversation made technology almost a natural part and a key interest in developing media skills and choosing the project type. This project also took the children from passive consumers of media to active creators of it in a safe monitored way. Although the passive screen time of children under school aged is going against the recommendations of WHO, I feel like it is important to explore media education in ways that engage children and make them active participants on their learning.

Project based learning has been explored before and media education has been made part of learning in the national core curriculum (Varhaiskasvatus suunnitelma, 2018). The application of these two topics in the field and combining them is something that was new to me as well as to my working life partner. The subject as well as the research project are clearly defined, and I have opened the concepts used in this thesis. Tacit knowledge has been used to both outline the project, so it would be enticing to the children participating, as well as in creating an environment where the children wanted to take part and they felt like they were making an impact and their opinions were heard.

9   Discussion

When it comes to technology there is an existing difference between a younger and older generation of educators, and a gap that could be caught up if both generations would be open for discussion of their strengths and weaknesses as well as their knowledge of the topic.

In a world where media is everywhere it is important to start educating children on the various ICT and media tools and how to use them responsibly. The topic of media education in Finnish early childhood education is not vastly explored and it is one topic where more research could be useful to patch the generational gap. When exploring on various methods from more traditional to innovative, in my opinion experiences on the topic should be shared in the ECE community for educators to be more comfortable on sharing their experiences and to gain inspiration to their day care units.

Thinking about what media education is and what has already been done regarding media education is the first step into realizing that this is not something new and the topic has been taught in various ways throughout the years in ECE. This is also the first step forward to be open to new ideas and new skills, both to educators and children alike. (MEKU, 2013.)

As in other areas of learning, children's participation and seeing them as active learners is important to recognize, and it should be at the core of everything done in ECE. The traditional role of a student-teacher relationship has been under a change, and I see that media and ICT- education offer an opportunity to form new educator identities as it is challenging what we know and how our own prejudice on any topics is reflected on how we teach. Media education has the opportunity to teach them so many important skills like self-expression, participation, and involvement. It has possibilities to expand the classroom beyond the walls of the playschool and the surrounding areas.

Currently children are using media in ECE in very restricted, passive in a way, playing games on tablet or watching videos on various platforms. The challenge and the way I see the future of media education to be is teaching them to become more active users and creators of media. Instead of consuming, to be creating content and using it to influence one's surroundings. Utilizing project-based learning and the already in use phenomenon-based learning, media education could be expanded in a way that children are active participants and influencers in their own learning. Keeping in mind the current suggested guidelines for media usage by WHO and looking out on the future research on the effects of media consumption on children. These could be used in media education in ECE as one way of educators to control the pedagogical meaning and safety when planning these activities.

I'm hoping that this project could give inspiration and thought for other educators working in the field as well as future educators on how our attitudes towards media education and ICT-tools reflect on the way this topic is thought in ECE. I also wish this would give them new ideas or inspiration on the possibilities of using the technology they already have in hand or at least inspire to explore and expand the preconceptions of media education. ECE is not media free and has not been for a long time, it is a part of our lives and a part of the everyday life for children growing up now, so it is important to start teaching media and technological skills needed in the future.

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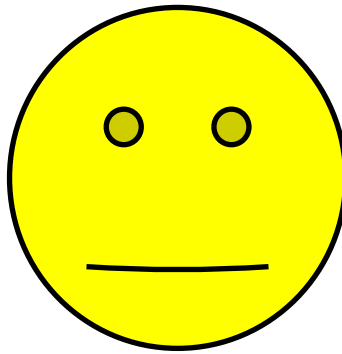
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Evaluation scale

Happy/Enjoyed the activity   The activity was ok   I did not like the activity

Consent form

Dear parent and child,

I am writing my thesis about the media education of children in the early childhood edu-
cation and how we can use ICT tools exciting in the day care. As a part of this project, I
have planned a series of sessions. In the first time the children will be told about the
goals and the method of this activity session, they can themselves express if they
would like to participate in this activity as well as choose a role that they will be com-
fortable in. (filming, performing) as well as deciding what type of video they would like
to make, yoga, exercise movements, dance video) For our second part the children will
film and their own video with the theme they came up with and then we will be editing
and choosing the music for our video. Lastly the children can present the video to their
group.

Th video the children make will not be posted or shared in any social media platforms
or outside of the playschool. The video will be saved in the tablet of the group where
the children (with the help of the educator) can access it when they feel like they would
like to.

In the second session I will conduct a survey with the children so they can tell their
opinion of the activity and give feedback or suggestions. Any information gathered will
be used on for the purposes of the thesis and the children will not be identified in any
written or assignments or presentations of the result of this project without a permis-
sion.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me,

Senja

My child can participate in this activity in a role they choose (performing, editing, filming
etc)

Yes_____   No____

My child can participate in the survey

Yes_____   No____

Can I take pictures of your child that I can utilize in my thesis?

Yes_____   No____

Yes, but my child cannot be identified from the pictures ____

Name of the child _____

Date and place _____

Parents signature _____