

Brandes, Holger (2015). Gender aspects of adult-child-interactions in group situations. Results from the tandem-study on pedagogical activity of female and male ECE workers. Paper presented at 1st Dresden International Erasmus+ Workshop, ehs Dresden, 24.3.2015.

Gender aspects of adult-child-interactions in group situations

Results from the tandem-study on pedagogical activity of female and male ECE workers

Holger Brandes, Markus Andrä, Wenke Röseler, Petra Schneider-Andrich

Evangelische Hochschule Dresden
(University of Applied Sciences on Social Work, Education and Nursing)
Centre for Research, Further Education, and Counselling)

Dresden 24. 3. 2015



Evangelische Hochschule Dresden



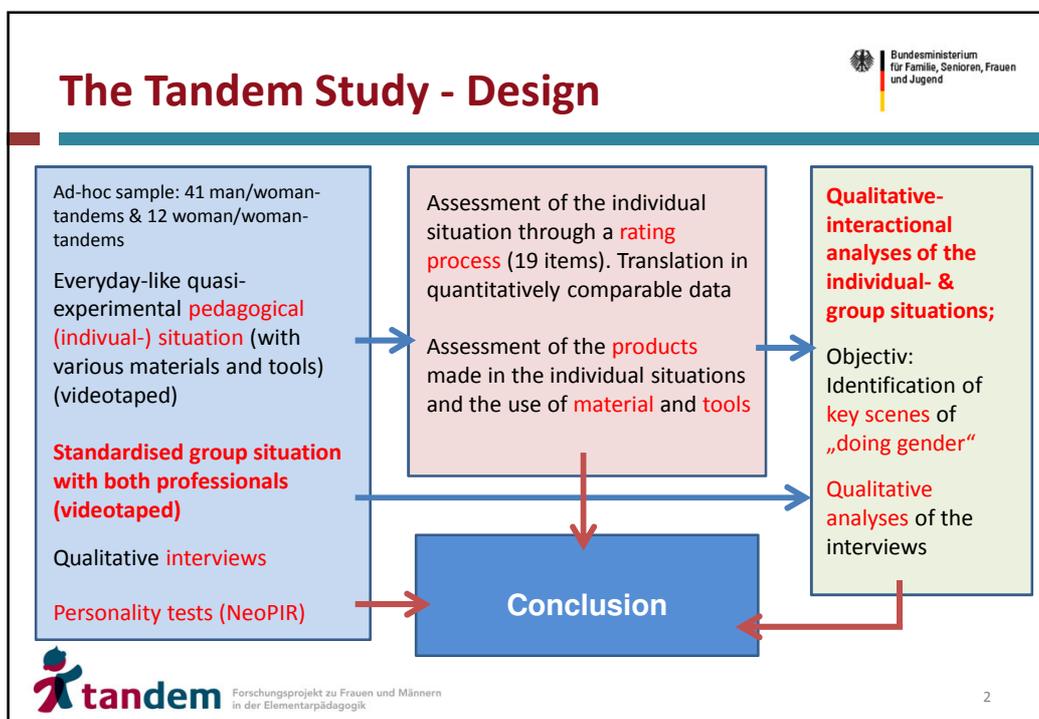
Forschungsprojekt zu Frauen und Männern
in der Elementarpädagogik

Supported by :



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend

1



Setting of the standardised group situations



Both ECE-workers (man/woman tandems or woman/woman tandems) with children of their group (in the afternoon, when groups are smaller).

A commercial game (Twister™) was handed out to play within the group. ECE workers received a short handout with instructions for the game. Time: (20-40 Minutes).

The group situation was realised and videotaped in 21 man/woman tandems and 12 woman/woman tandems.

The qualitative approach



The group sequences were analysed with a qualitative approach (scenic sequence analysis, Bosse 2007, and interpretation of videographics, Tuma et al 2013).

The analysis focused on the following aspects:

- Interactions between the ECE-workers: Is it possible to identify general arrangements or different roles?
- *Doing gender* in the context of the group: Is it possible to identify explicit expressions (verbal or nonverbal) of gender issues?
- How do the groups use the twister game: What is the overall impression of the scene in respect to the competitive character of the game?

Results of the qualitative analysis of the group situations I

In respect to the general arrangement between the ECE workers in the interaction we found:

It is possible to identify different roles and arrangements between tandem-partners (e.g. ruling the game, giving comfort for single children).

But these arrangements seem to be more influenced by the age or professional experience/professional status of the educators than by their gender.



Different types of arrangements

- **Symmetrical arrangements:** The partners interact on the same level without the dominance of one partner. There may be different roles, but these roles change during the process.
- **Asymmetrical or hierarchical arrangements:** The **male** educator takes the dominant position and the female remains more in the background or as an emotional „container“.
- **But:** We also notice asymmetrical or hierarchical arrangements in which the **female** educator takes the dominant position and the male remains more in the background or as an emotional „container“.



Results of the qualitative analysis of the group situations II

It is **not** possible to identify a clear division of **stereotyped gender roles** in the group situation.

- The male educators are more often directly engaged in the action but we also notice female educators who do this.
- Female educators often give comfort to single children, but their male colleagues also do this.
- We also find no clear difference in the orientation of girls and boys towards the educators: The boys are not more orientated to the men than to the women and the girls also are not more orientated to the women (*as other studies have reported*).



Results of the qualitative analysis of the group situations III

In most of the situations and most of the time **gender aspects** remain in the background of the interaction. But it is possible to identify **key scenes** where gender becomes explicit:

Examples for **verbal** utterances in these interactions:

- „You look like Spiderman“; „Ladies first“;
- „Men are not as agile as girls“; „It's our turn as girls“
- „You need muscles for that, Olaf!“

Nonverbal examples are difficult to describe with words; they are documented as associations of the researchers team, e.g. „synchronized swimming“, „cheerleaders“, „sumowrestler“



Results of the qualitative analysis of the group situations IV

A major difference between male and female ECE-workers was found in respect of the implementation of the twister-game and the facilitation of different principles of play.

Male workers more often tended to interpret the game in a sense of *competition*, and they gave more support to boys in struggling against each other or against girls.

Female workers more often supported an interpretation of the game as choreographic *performance*, and they gave more support to girls in emphasizing the „beauty“ of a posture.

Different character of boys' games and girls' play



Typical games in boys groups are characterized by a clear *agonal* structure: conflicts, overbidding, fighting and struggling are dominating the play. The boys try to establish a hierarchy and earn symbolic power and honour.

Skipping: One or two girls give a performance of their body movements with the rope to the other girls. Like in other typical girls plays, the aspect of *agon* is connected to the principle of *mimikry*... the girls are showing off as performers. (Gebauer 1997, p. 276ff).

Summary

- In the individual situations, male and female ECE workers did not differ in their behavior toward children according to professional criteria. Differences between male and female educators only became evident when the issue is what the professionals do with the children, to which themes and materials they incline, and which interests and inclinations of girls and boys they take up.
- As well in the **group situations**, male and female educators did not differ in their behavior toward children in general. Nevertheless it becomes evident that male workers tend to **encourage competitiveness**, whereas female workers tend to facilitate choreographic presentation. In doing this they serve boys' and girls' differing principles and styles of play.



These are preliminary results.
Thank you for your attention.