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Men and Women in Interaction

Pedagogy and Authenticity – a Contradiction?

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Abstract

The purpose of the ongoing German Tandem Study (2010-2014) is to compare the pedagogic behavior of men and women working together as preschool professionals. Besides statistical findings from a quantitative analysis the Tandem Study provides deeper qualitative insights into the processes of doing gender between children and male and female professionals. Several studies have analysed gender differences between male and female ECE workers. But most previous studies have focused on attitudes of workers, not on their concrete behavior.

The study is based on the ethnomethodological concept of doing gender (cf. West/Zimmerman 1987). The data includes videotaped individual and group situations and qualitative interviews. A qualitative-interactional analysis of the data has been conducted using ethnographical methods of video-analysis (cf. Knoblauch et al. 2010).

Male and female professionals, children and their parents were asked for permission of being videotaped and using the data for scientific analysis. There is indication of an implicit gender subtext that permanently 'accompanies' pedagogic behavior and daily routines. In scenes with a manifest gender connotation ECE workers often give the impression of acting in an especially authentic manner, tending to be rather more intuitive and less reflective.


ECE Teams with male and female workers seem to broaden the opportunities for girls and boys finding their gender identity. Children might benefit from gender-mixed teams. But it has to be clarified how authenticity of educators as gendered persons matches professional pedagogical standards. The connection of professionalism to authenticity should be discussed.

Keywords

professionalism, authenticity, doing gender, male and female ECE-workers, video-analysis

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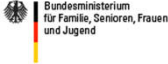
**A new Perspective on Men and Women working together
in German ECE-Teams**

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23rd EECERA Conference Tallinn 2013



Forschungsprojekt zu Frauen und Männern
in der Elementarpädagogik



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
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German ECE-System

- Public and private institutions with many different concepts
- Staff mostly qualified as “Erzieher” (degree lower than university level)
- Majority of children in Germany attend ECECs

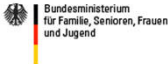
Long tradition since the 19th century:
German pedagogue Friedrich Fröbel developed a first concept of a “Kindergarten”.

Feminized Profession:
Early Childhood Education has been traditionally considered as professional motherhood.

Recent Changes:
Schoolification: Early childhood services are increasingly seen as places of education.
Curricula.
Professionalization: New Bachelor- and Master-programs at universities
Legal guarantee for a place in ECE-institutions: The sector and the workforce grows.
Nationwide campaign for more men in the workforce.



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Results of the Qualitative Analysis

Key Scenes of Doing Gender:

- 1) In individual sequences mostly in gender-homogeneous constellations.
- 2) Often in connection to materials or activities with a matching gender connotation.
- 3) Professionals respond to their own preferences. On the part of the children it leads to associations with father or mother.
- 4) More frequently and clearer in group situations with male and female educators working together. Intensification of the process. Intensification of the closeness to same-sex actors or demarcation from opposite-sex actors.

What is Authenticity?

Four components of authenticity:

- 1) Awareness,
- 2) Unbiased Processing,
- 3) Behaviour,
- 4) Relational Orientation.

(Michael Kernis and Brian Goldman 2006)

Significance of Authenticity: Developmental References

Developmental Psychology:

- 1) Authentic attachment figures as support in developmental conflicts
- 2) Social validation of direct tuition
- 3) Adaption of behaviour is predicted by the quality of the relationship.
- 4) Reliable attachment figure as basis for resilience

Significance of Authenticity: Pedagogical References

Carl R. Rogers:

Congruence is the most important quality for a therapist.

Hans Thiersch:

- 1) Authentic counterparts as guidelines in a world with less traditions.
- 2) Resources and dangers of authenticity don't have to be ignored.
- 3) Pedagogical commitment as starting point of any pedagogical process.

Limits of Authenticity

Hans Thiersch:

- a) Conceptual frame
- b) Period of time

Limits of acceptable behaviour:

- 1) Political correctness
- 2) Male chauvinism
- 3) Kinds of masculinity that express superiority above or disregard of femininity.

Consequences for Training and Practice

Being authentic and professional:

- 1) Reflexion on the own congruence and self compliance
- 2) Awareness of the limits of authenticity
- 3) Practical skills
- 4) Discussions in gender mixed teams for clarifying expectations and developing guidelines of behaviour

Awareness of oneself as an authentic personality is an prevention against arrogance and against the risk of losing

sight of the own limits.

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Thank you for your attention!

