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Putting educators at the heart of 'quality' in early childhood education for sustainable development.

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Today

- Outline of theoretical background
- Case study of action research in the early years sector
- Some conclusions ...



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Focus of this paper:

- Practitioners' understandings of ESD linked to socialisation influences
- Practice initiatives
- Their understandings used as starting points for collaborative activities, co-designed by participants with researcher to focus upon different aspects of ESD



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Theoretical approaches

- Foundational theorists e.g. Pestalozzi, Froebel, Dewey, Montessori and McMillan who were all advocates of active and experiential learning opportunities, mediated by skilful educators
- Care-full pedagogy (Luff & Kanyal, 2015) which draws upon ethics of care (Noddings, 2012)



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Case study – early years setting

- An action research involving practitioners and children in a day nursery
- Co-construct understandings of sustainability with and for early years education and care





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Methodology and methods

- Action research in 3 phases
- Initial semi-structured interviews with practitioners
- Ongoing 'pedagogy of listening' (Rinaldi, 2006)
- Shared curriculum documentation
- Observation of participants' actions and children's works
- Thematic analysis
- Findings shared with practitioners as a basis for reflections on children's learning and planning for ESD in the next phase



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Practice initiatives – natural

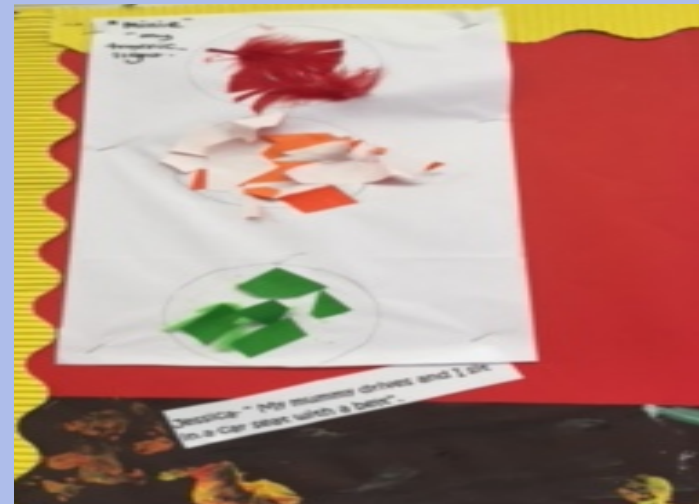




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Practice initiatives – social and economic

- Children care for themselves and each other; listen to one another
- Caring for nursery pet rabbit
- Gaining lifelong skills e.g. road safety





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Practice initiatives – social and political

- Looking after things with respect – to last longer
- Making sure children are treated equally
- Having Golden Rules and routines for the children





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Conclusions and implications

- 'Quality' in early years ESD is shaped by knowledge, skills and values of educators
- Understandings of ESD and notions of quality can be negotiated and developed in more holistic ways
- Collaborative working in planning and implementing activities
Democratic participatory approaches
- Relational pedagogy
- Negotiation of curriculum and assessment
- Opportunities for growth of individuals
- Potential for community development and social change



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Thank you

Questions for discussion?



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