

Öffentlicher Vortrag

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Constructing inequality in preschool? – A Bourdieusian analysis of interaction in a Finnish preschool group

The preschool is for many children a familiar everyday setting which provides them opportunities for interaction among themselves and with adults (staff). By the age of six, when preschool starts in Finland, children are frequently quite experienced in the practices of the early childhood education. They have a wide stock of skills and knowledge of possible activities and ample resources to use to initiate and maintain interaction and participate in the preschool.

In this lecture, children's interactions in the preschool are conceptualized as a social practice, and the preschool is analysed as a social field within a Bourdieusian frame. By adopting Bourdieu's set of relationally linked concepts – particularly *field* and *capital* – the presentation aims to give an insight into children's everyday interaction in day care: how children participate and utilize their resources, and also how the everyday practice in preschool is both structured and structuring. This means to study children's everyday interaction as their active construction.

The daily practice of preschool is understood and explained by locating the agents in this field and by investigating the structure of relations that both differentiate and connect them, and the "game" taking place in the field. Two subfields are distinguished: one constituted of children and their interrelations, and the other one of children in relations with adult staff in the preschool setting. In their daily intersections their different logics of action are seen to interrelate, resulting in differential positioning of the children and (re)production of inequalities between them. A consistently relational analysis opens up a critical ways to interpret early childhood education and its practice in a preschool. This exploration of the field dynamics in one preschool setting is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork.

Mittwoch 03.02.2016

16:00 Uhr c.t. – 18:00 Uhr

Campus Westend, Seminarhaus – SH 0.101

22.12.2015

Fachbereich 04
Erziehungswissenschaften

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