

# Values in English and Swedish Pre School Teachers: a comparative case study in early childhood settings

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## ABSTRACT

This doctoral case study research aims to explore the values of English and Swedish pre-school teachers, focusing on their roles and the experiences they provide for 3 and 4-year-old children. Values are beliefs held by individuals to which they attach special worth or priority; and this research recognises that values are personalised and shaped by the social, cultural and political contexts in which the teachers are situated and they act as a prism through which practice is realised. The theoretical framework titled, *situated pedagogy* is used to help contextualise. Two 'day in the life of' videos were filmed (in a Swedish and an English pre-school) using polyvocal ethnography to capture two teachers' multiple 'voices'. This aim was to ascertain their values through ongoing dialogue, telling and retelling of their 'stories' provoked by their reflections on the video footage. The findings revealed many similarities in the teachers' values, especially regarding relationships, a play-based pedagogy, valuing parents as partners, the layout of the environment and types of resources utilised, valuing the voice and rights of the child. It is concluded that these similarities are shaped by the underpinning educational policy and the curricula in the teachers' respective countries.

## KEYWORDS

Values; pre-school teachers; polyvocal ethnography

## Introduction

The word 'pre-school' means different things in England and Sweden. This paper draws from a doctoral study conducted in UK and Sweden (Stanley 2020). For the purpose of this research, we define 'pre-school teachers' as individuals who work with children aged three to four. Usually, in both countries, an early years teacher has successfully completed a graduate qualification in early childhood as well as obtaining postgraduate qualified teacher status. In England, provision for three and four year olds can be categorised into three sectors: private, voluntary and independent (PVI) (this includes full day care provision, private nurseries, play groups, stay and play sessions and crèches); state funded (this includes maintained nursery schools and nursery and infant classes in primary schools predominantly led by qualified teachers); and childminders (based in the home setting) (Eurydice 2020). In Sweden, in Sweden, there are pre-schools

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(Förskolan) (which include children aged one to five) and these can be grant-aided independent pre-schools or municipal pre-schools. Open pre-school is an alternative option to pre-school and is mainly for stay at home parents and their children; attendance there is voluntary. In Sweden, all pre-school teachers have a teacher training degree from a university, and the provision of several pre-schools in the area is overseen by a teacher (pedagogista) with a higher master's level qualification. There are also teaching assistants who complete a three-year upper secondary vocational training qualification in childcare, enabling them to work as support staff in Swedish pre-schools (Eurydice 2020).

Research has identified the importance of a highly skilled workforce and, in particular, early years teachers have been shown to make a significant and positive impact on children's outcomes (Sylva et al. 2010). Munton, Mooney, and Rowland (1995, in Vandembroeck et al., 2016, 3) state that 'international research evidence has shown that better educated staff are more likely to provide high quality pedagogy and stimulating learning environments, which in turn, foster children's development leading to better learning outcomes' Sylva et al. (2010, in Vandembroeck et al., 2016, 3), in their research on a variety of pre-schools in England and Sweden, have found that:

Competent educators nurture children's development by creating rich and stimulating early learning environments by intentionally sustained shared thinking and logical reasoning in social interactions and by valuing children's initiatives for extending their learning opportunities.

It is useful to consider what it means to have a highly skilled early years workforce in the context of this research as it aims to investigate the learning experiences (Anning, Cullen, and Flear 2009) provided by two teachers (one in England and one in Sweden), including their role when interacting with children aged three to four. The focus is on teacher values in early years education and a socio-cultural conceptual framework was adopted with a case study approach. Many countries, including England and Sweden, have expanded their ECEC services and emphasised the educational potential of this sector through improvements to staff qualifications, curricula and quality assurance processes (Heckman 2017). However, the value placed upon the educational potential of ECE does vary across countries. For example, Moss and Pence (1994), Pugh and Duffy (2013) and Mathers, Singler, and Karemaker (2012) have reviewed international models of early years practice. Studies such as these are useful to draw upon as they compare the learning experiences and opportunities offered to young children as well as the role of the adult.

When exploring literature in relation to values, much of this refers to teaching values to children and the debate surrounding the place that values hold within the curriculum, which is not the focus of this study. This research is about effective pedagogy which includes the child as an active participant through adult-child involvement (Siraj-Blatchford 2003; Sylva et al. 2010). After searching the literature further, however, it became apparent that a distinctive feature regarding values in early years is the role of the adult and the significant part they play in young children's learning and development. For example, Moyles (2001, 82) found when researching pre-school teachers' practice that they often express a 'passion' for their job and the children. Various researchers and individuals (such as Colwell and Pollard 2015; Nias 1989; Pollard and Filer 1999; Saltzberger-Wittenburg 1983; Woods and Jeffrey 1996) have written about teachers

who ‘love’ teaching and who see teaching as ‘worthwhile and rewarding’ because of the children, their spontaneity and the sheer joy of working in a job which brings them so close to children, families and communities. Moyles (2001) summarises how teaching three and four-year-old children therefore involves emotional responses as well as developing intimate relationships and getting to know individual children. According to Moyles, Payler, and Georgeson (2014), young children are also pre-programmed in the sense that they have an innate psychological drive which requires teachers to respond to them in a way which nurtures their eagerness to learn and motivates young children to explore the world around them. It is worth noting this may not be true for pre-schools that are diverse and include children who are neurodiverse (Jenson et al. 2023). The next section introduces the theoretical framework for this study.

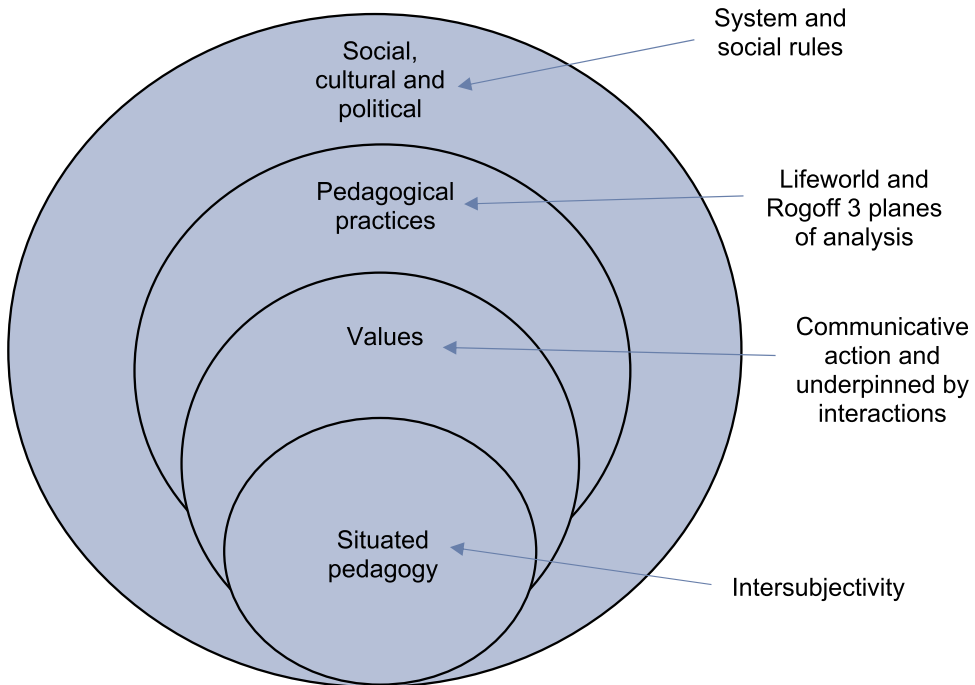
## **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework for this research draws inspiration and influence from the works of Habermas (1987) and Rogoff (2003). Intersubjectivity makes up a critical part of both of their works and specifically how it is established as a platform for communication and knowledge creation. Rogoff (2003) explores how children are inducted into activities through the establishment of intersubjectivity, and for Habermas (1987), intersubjectivity is central to his ideas in relation to communicative activity. Rogoff (2003) believes that intersubjectivity is a dual process based on shared and reciprocal meanings and is constructed on the premise that an individual, including babies and young children, can participate and engage in meaningful encounters. Through such reciprocal relationships and communication, intersubjectivity allows individuals to be able to reflect and be aware that they now have a new understanding of how children develop (Rogoff 2003). To help visualise the idea of the conceptual framework a diagram has been produced (see Figure 1). This research uses a framework entitled ‘situated pedagogy’ which draws together Habermas (1987) system, lifeworld and communicative action and also the three planes of analysis by Rogoff (2003). For the purpose of this investigation, it is claimed that if we ascertain and identify practitioners’ ‘core’ values and bring these to the surface of their practice, this will allow practitioners the opportunity to look at this from a critically reflective stance. Their practice is ‘transformed’ through scrutinising, challenging and questioning, leading to a new ‘situated pedagogy’ which needs to be reviewed regularly. The next section introduces the methodological framework for the study.

## **Methodology**

### ***Polyvocal ethnographic case study***

This case study research involved two ‘day in the life of’ videos, which were recorded in two pre-schools: one in Birmingham, England and one in Goteborg, Sweden and took place between 2016 and 2019 (see Appendix 1 for overview of research methodology and Appendix 2 for methodological stages). The case study approach is not a method as such, but a research strategy where the researcher aims to study one case in depth (Hammersley 2012). According to Yin (2014, 13), a case study is a strategy for doing



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework on 'situated pedagogy'.

research that 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. The 'contemporary phenomenon' being investigated is the values of teachers in the 'real life' context of a pre-school. To enable the lived realities of two pre-school teachers to be explored, it was useful to draw upon socio-cultural methodological approaches (such as case study and ethnographic techniques) and perspectives. This provided the opportunity to explore cultural influences, social experiences and individual perspectives. According to Creswell (2008, 8), socio-cultural approaches are often combined with interpretivism. Although this study does not claim to be ethnographic, it is argued that it is based upon ethnographic principles and is therefore ethnographic in nature. Hammersley (2012) identifies that ethnography is a variable and responsive approach that is accepting of different emphases and nuances. This allows a researcher to assign different distinctions to ways of knowing, under the umbrella of ethnography. For this study a polyvocal ethnographic approach was adopted; in relation to polyvocal ethnography, according to Tobin, Mantovani, and Bove (2010, in Tarozzi and Mortari 2010, 207), 'A basic assumption of this method is that the video material is richer, better contextualised and less abstract than verbal questions as a tool to stimulate discussion. The key to the method is that the video is not the data, the data are the discourses and dialogue provoked by the films'. Although, it is important to note real people were filmed to provide a context for reflection.

In terms of the criteria for select participants, it was informed using a two stage selection approach for choosing competent teachers. The criteria states that teachers should have three to five years' experience with a particular age group and national qualifications

for the field in which they are currently teaching. They should also be recognised by their school leaders and other teachers for the quality of their teaching. These were the criteria used to inform this research study.

Ethical approval was gained from the University of Wolverhampton and the BERA (2018) guidelines were adopted to ensure both rigorous and authenticity in research processes. The study was conducted with research integrity in mind guided by the BERA (2018) guidelines and participants had the right to withdraw at any stage. Filming was completed co-creatively and the young learners were able to engage in research in a meaningful way. Briefs were shared with the research site and no ethical concerns were raised by participants.

### ***School contexts***

The Birmingham pre-school offers all day and part time places for 152 two to four-year olds with 15 hours of nursery school provision. Most children attend part-time for either the first or second ‘two and a half days’ of the week and either attend the morning or the afternoon session. The children come from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups and a few children speak English as an additional language. Nineteen per cent of children have disabilities or special educational needs and five per cent have statements of special educational need. A majority of these children have speech and language difficulties or autism spectrum disorders.

The Swedish preschool is much smaller and has approximately 60 children, divided into four groups between the ages of 1–2 years, 2–4 years, 4–5 years and 5–6 years. Most children begin pre-school when they are one and leave when they are six; they have the same teacher throughout their pre-school experience. In the Swedish pre-school class, there are 20 children and a ratio of six children per pedagogue in comparison to the English pre-school which has a ratio of one to twelve. There are one qualified teacher and two pedagogues with college level qualifications in ‘children caretaking’ which is similar to the level three qualifications held by teaching assistants in the English pre-school.

### ***Research questions and data analysis***

The following research questions were designed to conduct this study:

Research question one: what are the values of pre-school teachers in relation to the learning experiences that should be offered to children aged three to four?

Research question two: what do teachers believe their role should be in enhancing the learning experiences of children aged three to four?

A thematic analysis approach was utilised to inform the research questions, drawing on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013) and their six phases of thematic analysis as a way of identifying and analysing patterns and saliences in the data. As Braun and Clarke (2013, 120) comment, thematic analysis ‘is suited to a wide range of interests, it works with a wide range of research questions, from those about people’s experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in

particular contexts'. Therefore, the following steps were used to analyse the data: (1) familiarisation of data, (2) generation of codes, (3) combining codes into themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) determine significance of themes, (6) reporting of findings (Braun and Clarke 2006).

## Findings

The findings from this research project are underpinned by themes which include, (1) how children learn, (2) pedagogical approaches, (3) rights of the child. The 'Day in the life of' stories were recorded by both teachers and summarised in an edited 20-minute video. Based on the research questions and focus of this research, the video footage extracts were placed into stories and labelled by the teachers after ongoing dialogue and discussion (see appendix 3 and 4). The conceptual framework of the case study approach (Yin 2014) has enabled research to be captured with a socio-cultural focus lens and through using the data analysis framework (Braun and Clarke 2006), the findings are thematically organised.

### *How children learn*

The literature highlights a growing recognition that the way in which children are viewed and how they learn is socially and culturally constructed (Fleer and Pramling 2015). There was also a general consensus that children should be active and not passive recipients of information. This allows children to make connections through meaningful experiences, as all children will interpret their world differently (Anning, Cullen, and Fleer 2009).

This resonates with Emily who feels that 'meaningful experiences' and 'purposeful learning' are important aspects of her practice and feature in the ranking of her values. This is evident in story one with 'Eddie' (a child with cerebral palsy) as she ensures that he understands and makes links between the purposes of using the rolling pin, allowing Eddie to make meaning and understand the purpose of this activity. This is illustrated by the following reflection:

My session with Eddie was a privilege to be part of. He is a really optimistic little boy, who has an amazing attitude to life and is inspiring to his friends and staff. Eddie's weakness in his hands does stop him from wanting to use both hands, and he will shy away from activities that require this, so to have him want to use the rolling pin was amazing.

This also links to other key priorities within the ranking of her values and reflections which include the importance of 'know[ing] the children' (in relation to their interests and how they learn) and 'reflecting from both staff and children'. This was also prevalent within the literature which highlighted that the knowledge, expertise and sensitivity required of early years practitioners cannot be overestimated if young children's learning in early childhood settings is to be maximised (Murray 2018). It supports the view that young children are pre-programmed and have an innate psychological drive which involves teachers responding to them in a way that nurtures their eagerness to learn (Moyle, Payler, and Georgeson 2014). Although this is not necessarily true for pre-schools that may be diverse and include children who are neurodiverse (Jenson et al. 2023). Moreover, the literature revealed that pre-school teachers require sophisticated

expertise to know when and how to intervene in young children's learning in early years settings. This is evidenced in the example of Emily and Eddie. Emily intervenes sensitively and clearly understands Eddie's abilities, nurturing his eagerness to learn.

Accordingly, Emily ranked 'skilled caring practitioners' as one of her values (not a ranking identified by the Swedish teacher). Astrid, however, did 'know the children' and was caring and empathetic in her conduct with the children and, like Emily, she was observed making sustained eye contact during conversations and getting down to the children's level. It is also apparent from Emily's reflections and the video footage, that she knows Eddie's individual needs. She knows from speaking to his parents and health professionals that the left side of his body is weaker and needs strengthening. Emily ranked 'understanding child development and the expected stages', which was also a difference between the English and Swedish teachers' ranking of their values. This perhaps can be associated with the English teacher again having to know where children are developmentally so that she can plan for next steps, as set out in the EYFS (DfE 2017) as well as the EYFS assessment profile (DfE 2019). The EYFS (DfE 2017) also states that the adult role within 'Positive Relationships' and 'Enabling Environments' affects both how and what a child learns. Emily reflects on her role in story one with Eddie and she feels that she dominated the session slightly, commenting that:

When reflecting on the session, I do feel that I did a lot of talking, which makes me feel uncomfortable; did he have enough time to say what he needed to?

Emily also states:

We have a huge amount of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children and we are always being advised by other professionals to use a 'commenting' approach when they are working. This enables them to be immersed in language and for them to make a connection between the action and its meaning.

In the English setting Emily is the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator, so developing inclusive practices would be part of her role. She appears to be questioning her practice in the extract above, as she has been advised to use a commenting approach when children are working so that children can make the distinction between action and its meaning. This emphasises the importance and visibility of the teacher's role in the English pre-school setting. It can be assumed from Emily's reflection that she is not fully comfortable in her interactions with Eddie and it leaves her thinking about her teaching approach. Bruner (2006) refers to 'folk pedagogy' and states that when observing any adult working with a child, it is striking to see how much of what they do is guided by what children's minds are like and how to help them learn, even though they may not be able to verbalise their pedagogical principles. Such ways of thinking are reflected in the interactions captured within the research in early years settings.

### ***Pedagogical approaches***

The literature on pedagogy and pedagogical approaches to the curriculum reveals many definitions of pedagogy. Some definitions focus on the 'how' or 'practice' of educating, while others focus on the strategies that teachers use to provide knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and cultural context, and how this is facilitated. Other definitions focus on the interactive process between teacher and



learner and the learning environment. A recent definition is based on praxis, which means an action based on theory underpinned by values (Johansson and Einarsdottir 2018). In relation to the findings of this study, and reflecting on story one, 'Eddie' from the English setting, it could be argued that praxis reflects this example. Breaking this down further, Emily describes how her role – and thus her pedagogical approach – are different during forest school and that she is there to observe and support (actions). She then refers to the EYFS (DfE 2017) 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (influenced by theory) and how she enjoys forest school, as it is a time when she can see children doing things they do not normally do (beliefs).

'Development Matters' (DfE 2012) suggests that adults should play with children and encourage them to explore, and that adults need to show an interest in discovering new things. It also advocates that adults pay attention to how children engage in activities and the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Emily can be seen doing this during story one in the video footage, where she asks Eddie what he would like to make and talks him through the process of making the clay flat. She asks him how he feels now he has achieved what he wanted, flattening clay by using a board and a rolling pin. She also talks about textures and how the clay feels, using language such as 'flat' and 'lumpy'. Eddie was challenged by this activity and achieved something which he can now arguably apply and use in different contexts. Emily acknowledged Eddie's new learning and expresses this to Eddie at the end of story one. Emily's pedagogical approach with Eddie clearly links to the findings of Siraj-Blatchford (2003), which are that effective pedagogy includes the child as an active participant through adult-child involvement, cognitive co-construction, engagement and the use of instruction techniques such as modelling and demonstrating, explanation and questioning. All these pedagogical strategies can be seen in story one of the English video footage. When ranking her values in Stage two and reflecting on her practice through the video footage, 'modelling', 'questioning' and 'extending learning' were all included. However, although Emily clearly feels that these are linked to her teaching priorities, they were all ranked towards the bottom of her values, suggesting that although these are important to her, they are not as high a priority as other aspects of her practice.

The pedagogical approach advocated in the EYFS in England encourages practitioners to adopt a played based approach to curricula and to follow children's interests, although the dominant discourse running through the documentation promotes play that is well planned, purposeful and potentially instructive. As the literature reveals, unlike Swedish teachers, English teachers are arguably challenged to meet adult determined goals from play (Moylett 2014), which are not necessarily set from the perspective of the child, and at the same time engage children in meaningful and intrinsically motivating play activities. This is reflected in Emily's reflection on story four which is entitled 'Letters and Sounds Extension Group':

The letters and sounds are an extension group, they had only been attending it for a few weeks, but it is a special time for those children who need a specific push.

This again reflects a 'next steps' and 'readiness approach', and the dominant discourse through English early years pedagogy. The focus is on children's literacy skills and as the literature suggested, this is given prominence in English settings, rather than



valuing all areas of learning as being equal in terms of how children learn. Contrastingly, the Swedish teacher, reflecting on her pedagogical approach states:

In the morning, we gather to start the day together with a (short) welcoming of all the children that have arrived. We use photos of them to talk about those who are present and those that have not yet arrived.

This reflection by the Swedish teacher again mirrors the Swedish pre-school curriculum values and her pedagogical approach here locates children in the context of their families. It emphasises that care, socialisation and learning together form a coherent whole (Lpfö 2010). The Swedish teacher used provocative questioning to generate discussion and dialogue between the children, and listened and responded to their ideas. She did, however, encourage the children to demonstrate and tell each other's ideas. During the latter part of story one, Astrid reaffirms this and reflects:

Then we look back together on things that we have done earlier, on days before. In the video, Sebastian had made a drawing of Kusama's houseboat. (Kusama is the Japanese artist that inspires us with patterns). Sebastian shows and explains to the other children what he has done and about his ideas of it.

The influence of Reggio Emilia is evident here (the Swedish teacher had also recently visited pre-schools in Reggio Emilia). According to Cagliari et al. (2016, 210), within a Reggio approach 'the teacher should be understood as a co-constructor of knowledge but also as a researcher, experimenter and a new type intellectual, a producer of knowledge connected with the demands of society'. Malaguzzi's view of the role of the adult was to construct pedagogy for individual children based on relations, listening and liberation.

### ***Rights of the child***

In relation to the rights of the child, Malaguzzi argued that policy, provision, practice, structure and culture should be backed up by professionals' approaches and their image of the child (Moss 2016). It could be argued that for this to be carried out in practice, it requires pre-school teachers to hold underpinning and 'implicit' values about how they view 'children' and 'childhood'. This is evident in stories one and two in the Swedish teacher's reflection, as she comments on the children learning from each other and being curious about each other's ideas. In Stage two, 'children's voice', 'valuing what children say' and 'listening' all feature in the Swedish teachers' ranking. Similarly, based on the responses, the English teacher also ranked 'rights of the child' and their 'voice'. This suggests that both teachers view children's rights as an important part of their practice, and that the learning environment, and the pedagogical approaches implemented, need to reflect this.

During Stages one and two, the Swedish teacher refers to her role as an adult as being to plan and reflect and to involve both colleagues and children in the planning and initiation of activities. This again reflects the social pedagogy tradition prominent in Nordic countries, where early years are seen as a broad preparation for life and the foundation stage of lifelong learning. It values children as active agents, and having a 'voice' in terms of the planning and preparing of activities within the pre-school setting. This is reiterated by OECD (2004, 6), and the literature previously discussed, that in socio-pedagogy 'there is a focus on the agency of the child, including respect for the child's natural

learning strategies and the extensive use of listening, project work and documentation with young children'. Social pedagogy also proposes that education and care are family oriented, and 'rather than specifying any pre-defined knowledge, skills or attitudes that children would require in everyday life, the central aim of social pedagogy has been to empower children as active citizens, so that they can act to change their own lives' (Sylva et al. 2010, 151). This can be observed in stories one and two of the Swedish video, as the teacher acts as a co-constructor and experimenter, listening attentively to each child around the table. Viewing children as active agents in their own learning, she only prompted and intervened when invited to do so by the children, for example, when they asked questions or sought comments and suggestions on their work. The children stayed at the table for as long as they liked with no restrictions on time, with the teacher and children researching their thoughts and ideas. The idea of teachers and children being 'researchers' is a feature of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. This resonates with Sandberg and Arlemalm-Hagser (2014), who also believe that the Swedish view of children frames them as individuals with competences and active experiences, interests, knowledge and skills that should be the starting point for everyday activities in early childhood settings. This is evident throughout the Swedish stories and reflections.

The Swedish setting is part of the 'BRIC' (2019) project which aims to exchange aspects of 'good practice' between pre-school teachers in three countries (Italy, Sweden and the UK). BRIC research involved systematic education and training regarding democratic engagement in public spaces. The Swedish pre-school setting was involved in promoting democratic engagement in public spaces to look at different ways to make children more 'visible' there, and to demonstrate how they can be included as competent agents. This is supported by Astrid, reflecting on story seven:

The last picture, of Millie behind the camera, really communicates our idea of pre-school – with the children as protagonists. The kind of pre-school we try to practice every day is about learning together in a democratic way – with the voices and the gazes of both children, teachers, families and society.

This research reflects the views of Dewey (1938) who believed that children were the 'chief carriers of control' (Dewey 1938, 40). The idea of the child as the protagonist highlights the perspective as described by Dewey (1938). Ideologically, the aim of education, according to Dewey (1938), was the creation of power and self-control. This is the case in story seven as Millie interrupted the researcher's filming and directed me to give him the camera. This was 'out of character' for Millie, according to the teacher; he had been upset most of the afternoon as he did not want to go outside. The Swedish teacher was pleased that Millie had found the confidence and self-belief to ask for the camera, and pleased to see his self-esteem grow. The researcher during story seven stimulated and promoted Millie to come outside and encouraged him to play with the camera. In Stage two Astrid rates 'public spaces for learning' and 'being part of community/society' in her values. This could have perhaps been influenced by her pre-school setting's involvement in the BRIC (2019) project but also, being part of a community and society is the fundamental drive behind the Swedish pre-school curriculum (Lpfö 2010). The Swedish teacher's values reflect the idea of children's voices, as she includes 'public spaces for learning' and 'part of community/society', which signals a difference in relation to the values of the English teacher.

In addition, there is further evidence of the ‘rights of the child’ during story three of the Swedish video footage. Joline wanted to make her drawing on plastic (a technique that had been introduced to the children earlier) and see her drawing magnified on the wall, using the overhead projector. Joline helped Astrid with the preparations in the large atelier, and these ideas and suggestions were again led by the child. Astrid and Joline talked about different concepts and solutions that appeared during the process, and Astrid says:

My idea as a teacher is to encourage the different experiences and knowledge of the children to be shared in the group. My purpose was to listen to what they need so I can be able to challenge them in their learning process, to be able to offer materials they might need. My aim is to give suggestions but also to encourage the dialogues between the children. In this situation I used pen and paper to document the ideas of the children.

This again reflects a Reggio philosophy, as Malaguzzi believed that schools were living centres of an open and democratic culture, enriched and informed by social encounters. For Malaguzzi, democracy was about social management and participatory accountability.

## **Conclusion**

This paper explored with considerable nuance and depth the values of two teachers in an English and a Swedish pre-school by filming a ‘day in the life of’ video and asking them to reflect on their own and each other’s practice. The research questions have been informed and it is useful to return to them here. In relation to research question one, the two teachers in this study benefitted from basing their practice (and their values) on firmly structured theoretical positions. These opportunities allowed each teacher to pick an aspect of her practice and reflect in even greater depth on one of her chosen ‘stories’ from her video footage. They also enabled the teachers to articulate and reframe their values, which they continued to do during the different stages of the research process. It is implicit that both teachers felt that they had ‘shifted’ their practice by taking part in this research which required them to reflect, read, think critically and analytically select their values. Videos as a resource for encouraging reflection among teachers have been used by researchers. Such approaches can help support professional development in terms of informing the design of early years teacher training and also informing education policy decisions.

## **Ethics**

Ethical approval was sought from University of Wolverhampton for conducting this doctoral study. BERA (2018) ethical guidelines were adopted to ensure a robust ethical framework. The ethical framework included ensuring responsibly to participants, which included consent, transparency, right to withdraw, privacy and data storage. Participants had the option to withdraw from the research at any time.

## **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Overview of research methodology

Methodology	Voice one (teachers on own practice)	Voice two (teachers on own practice)	Voice three (teachers on each other's practice)	Voice four (teachers on whole process)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretative</li> <li>• Socio-Cultural</li> <li>• Phenomenological</li> <li>• Symbolic interactionalism</li> <li>• Polyvocal ethnography</li> <li>• Comparative</li> <li>• Ethnographic principles</li> </ul>	<p>(1) Video a day in the life of an English and Swedish pre-school teacher. Teachers choose several video episodes (based on researcher's field notes and observations as prompts)</p> <p>(2) Preliminary analysis of data is generated by researcher and teacher by viewing footage together through unstructured interviews and dialogue. The video footage is then edited to twenty minutes</p>	<p>Teachers watch and reflect on their own twenty-minute video footage, through unstructured interviews and dialogue with researcher</p> <p>The teachers then provide written reflections and generate ranking of their values</p>	<p>Teachers watch and reflect on each other's practice through unstructured interviews and dialogue with researcher and provide written reflections</p>	<p>Teachers take part in a semi structured exit interview, reflect on voice 1, 2 and 3 and add any additional comment. Reflect on video stories and ranking values are amended</p>

### Appendix 2

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<p>The researcher spends an initial day in the setting, letting the children and practitioners get used to the video recorder (and the researcher), ensuring all ethical protocols have been disclosed and addressed with the practitioner, parents and setting manager, and the teacher is clear about focus of the research</p>	<p>Shoot the video footage. Focus on one teacher throughout the day. Researcher observes and makes field notes/prompts on footage</p>	<p>Using researcher's prompts, field notes and observations. Researcher and teacher watch the footage and researcher asks questions to stimulate discussion in relation to teacher's values</p>	<p>The researcher then edits the footage to twenty minutes. The teachers watch the video again to check if this best reflects their practice and their role.</p>	<p>The footage is then used as a stimulus to gain the four voices outlined in the methodology above on page 153 (Table 5.1)</p>

### **Appendix 3. English setting stories summary**

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Story one – ‘Eddie’	This is a forest school session led by a forest school practitioner. Emily is working on a one to one basis with Eddie who has cerebral palsy and a weakness in the left side of his body. Using clay and a rolling pin they make different objects and talk about the shape and texture of them.
Story two – ‘Clay Around the Table’	Here the teacher has five spaces around a table indoors with clay and various materials in which to manipulate the clay. This is a ‘choice’ activity during a free play session. Several children join in the session.
Story three – ‘Reflecting on Their Play’	This story involves the teacher with her key group reflecting on the play session they have just had. It involves two children talking about how they put pipes together to make water flow through. The teacher asks them lots of questions about this, also involving the other children. The idea is that the children share ideas and that other children may try out the activity later on in their play.
Story four – ‘Letters and Sounds Extension Group’	The letters and sounds are an extension group, which happens weekly. The children had only been attending it for a few weeks, but it is a special time for those children who need a specific push in phonics and reading as they will be going to school in a few months.
Story five – ‘Reading a Core Book’	This story involves reading a core book like ‘The Three Billy Goats Gruff’ for a series of weeks so that the children get to know the structure of the story and the characters. The role play area is also set up as this story, so the children can replay the story or adapt it to make up their own version.

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### **Appendix 4. Swedish setting stories summary**

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Story one – ‘Morning Assembly’	This is where all the children gather together every morning, look at pictures of each other and ask questions about each other’s interests and experiences and how the others are feeling. This includes children not in pre-school that day. They then reflect and look back at the work of Sebastian from the previous day. Using a projector, they evaluate and talk about his drawing of ‘Kusama’s houseboat’.
Story two – ‘In the Atelier’	The children who were inspired by Sebastian’s drawing have the opportunity to create what they think Kusama’s house might look like, by drawing in the atelier. They use pens to draw the designs and then could use colour, if they want to. The children work on this task until they feel satisfied with their own drawing. More children join to make drawings when there is space for them around the table.
Story three – ‘Joline’	Joline wants to make her drawing on plastic (a technique introduced earlier to the children), and see her drawing magnified on the wall. Using the overhead projector the teacher and Joline talk about different concepts and solutions that appear during the process of magnifying her drawing.
Story four – ‘Lunchtime’	The teacher sits with a group of six children and they have lunch together. They pass the food to each other and they talk together about the food, the tastes and any topics that might come up from the children or the teacher.
Story five – ‘At the Construction Area’	Daris is in the construction area where he has previously made constructions in the context of the project ‘Kusama’s house’. He is telling the teacher how he made his construction. The teacher documents this with pen, paper and camera, to be able to remember, come back to, remind herself and refer to this narrative in the collective project documentation.
Story six – ‘Pokémon on the iPad’	Pikachu, one of the Pokémon figures, is currently popular amongst a group of children. On this occasion the children want to draw, and together the teacher and the children look at the features of the figure on the iPad.
Story seven – ‘Millie’	This part of the filming is outside and Millie wants to use and work with the researcher’s video recorder. Millie ended up filming the teacher and the researcher and was the ‘leader’ in this story.

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