OMEP Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2017

"*Supporting and extending young children's learning through play*"

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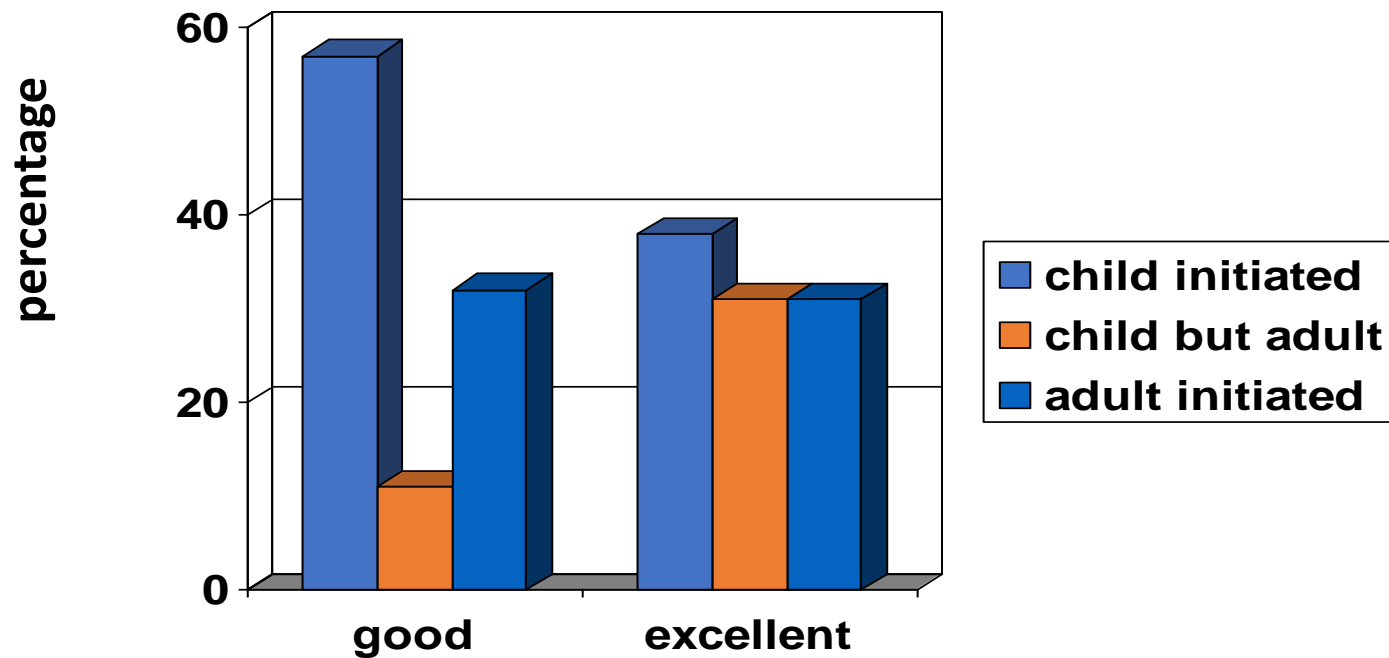
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Extending child learning...

Percentage of high cognitive challenge activities within each initiation category in each setting type

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Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years

❖**Sustained shared thinking:**

An episode in which two or more individuals "work together" in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend.

❖**Open-ended questions feature; and**

❖**Playful learning, building on the child's interests.**

The above are difficult to assess as outcomes but are essential to achieving good outcomes! Necessary but not sufficient, we still require good content.

**(Siraj-Blatchford *et al*., REPEY, DfES 2002)**

From: Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2009) 'Early Childhood Education' in;
Maynard, T. & Thomas, N. (Eds.) *An Introduction to Early Childhood Studies*,
(2nd Edition) London: Sage Publications (in press)

Table 1: OECD Curriculum Outlines

|	Teacher's initiating activities	Teacher's extending activities	Differentiation and Formative Assessment	Relationships and conflict between children	*Sustained Shared Thinking*
EEL[1]	"Introducing new activities"	"Enriching interventions"	"Observe children"	"Work out sustaining relations"	"Engagement"
High Scope	"Sharing Control"	"Participation as partners"	"Plan - Do - Review"	"Adopt a problem solving approach"	"Authentic dialogue"
Reggio Emilia	"Development of short and long-term projects"	"Sustaining the cognitive and social dynamics"	"Teachers first listen don't talk"	"Warm reciprocal relationships"	"Reciprocity of interactions"
EPPE/ REPEY	*Correlations found with effective practice*	*Correlations found with effective practice*	*Correlations found with effective practice*	*Correlations found with effective practice*	*Correlations found with effective practice*

REPEY Study Findings (DfE, 2002)

Proportion of adult cognitive pedagogical interactions in settings varying in effectiveness
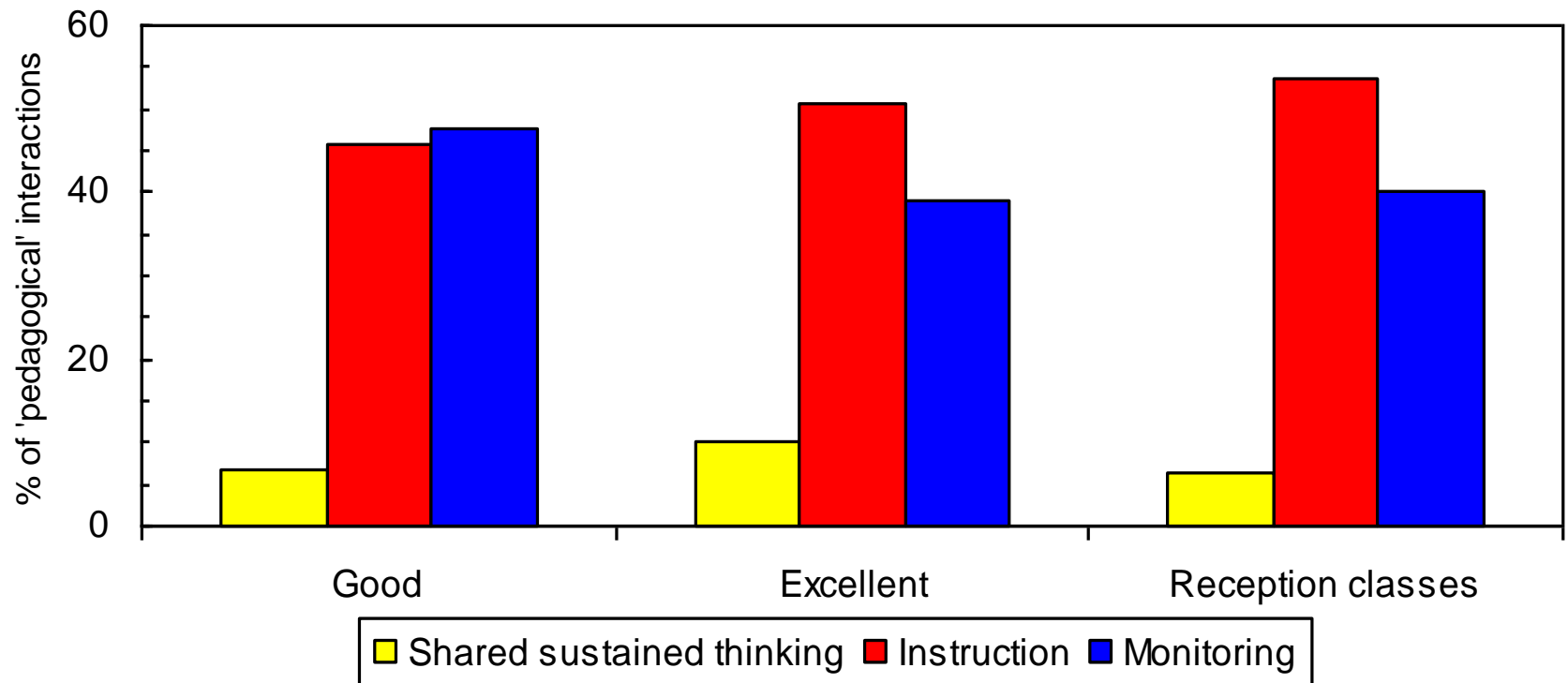
REPEY Study Findings

Time spent by children in different social groupings across settings of varying effectiveness
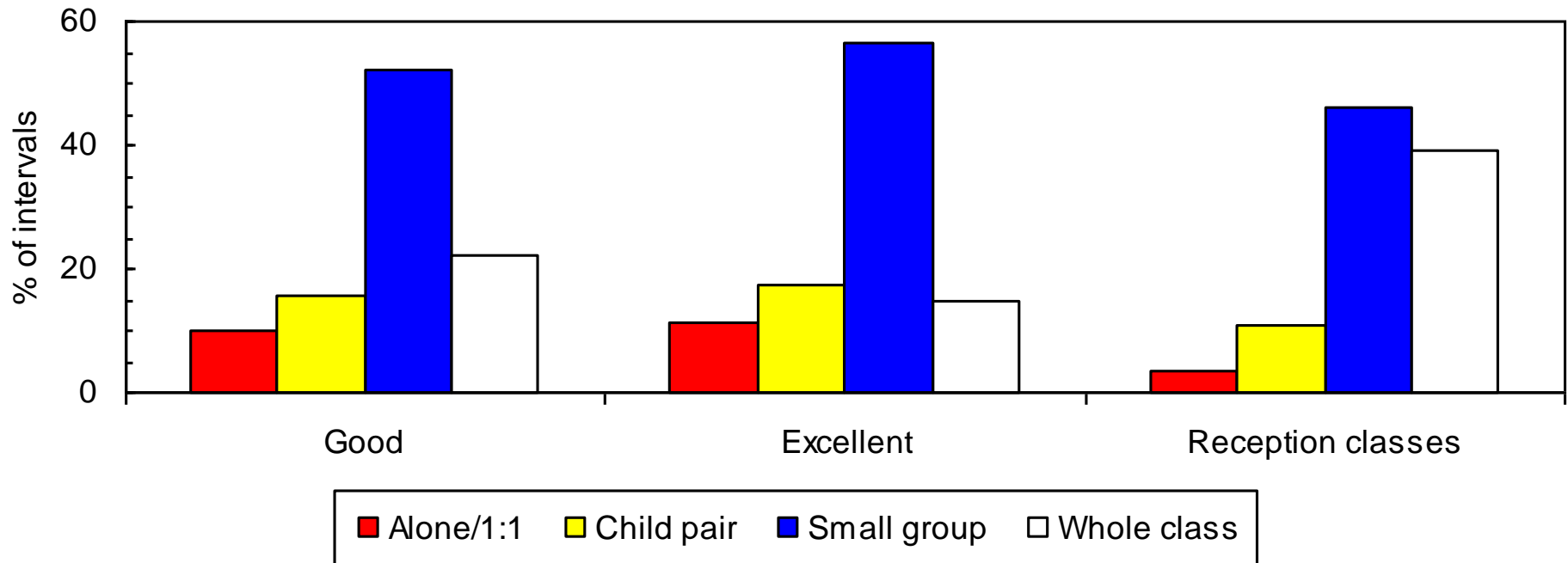
Play-Learning: The major features of progression are:

- **the child initially manipulates symbols/signs in their emotional communications with adults and peers and engages in significant gestures**

- **they begin using symbols and signs in pretend play**

- **pretend role play and object substitution become internalised as imagination**

- **the child is first able to be another to herself, develops the capability of 'interacting with pretend others (increasingly acknowledging 'their' perspective), and then 'switches' freely between roles in play.**

(Cont.) Play-Learning: The major features of progression are:

- **socio-dramatic play becomes more collaborative as partners at first share symbols and then reciprocally negotiate roles**

- **conceptual knowledge and understanding of the 'other', and of the 'self', develop further and learning 'dispositions' become more significant**

- **most children become oriented more towards more formal learning and school subjects and disciplines (communities of practice)**

Pedagogy

Curriculum

(..the "collection of experiences")

Play in the development of 'self' —
ooooooooooo*— improvised play with partners —*
oooooooooooooooooooooooo*— improvised collaboration —*
oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo *— disciplined collaboration*

Pedagogy

"Significant gestures"

The creative process:

'Smile' from adult 'objectified'

⬇

Child recontextualises adult
behaviour that leads to smile
= eye contact

➡ Child creatively makes
eye contact to produce adult smile

development of 'self' —

Curriculum

A cyclical creative process of:
'progressive continuous re-contextualisation' (van Oers, 1998)

Pedagogy

Play is increasingly reciprocal and collaborative

Sharing symbolic representations:

The symbol must be 'second hand' for one partner – but they creatively reconstruct it for this particular collaborative play context.

Curriculum

oooooooooo*— improvised play with partners —*

Pedagogy

**Play becomes even
more collaborative**

*Play partners provide scaffolding of
the 'other':*

*"... Within the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (Vygotsky) ... children are able to do those activities that they can do
successfully with the support of their peer.*

Curriculum

— improvised collaboration —

Metacognition

Whenever play partners communicate they do so from their own historically constructed perspective, which includes their understanding of the perspective of themselves constructed by the other participant in the communication:

 "…the child's position towards the external world changes…and the ability to co-ordinate his point of view with other possible points of view develops" (Elkonin, 1978, p282).

The development of these sophisticated levels of abstraction (and metaconciousness) also facilitate the development of a wider metacognition.

This metacognition required in **learning to learn,** also develops as the child finds it necessary to *describe, explain and justify* their thinking about different aspects of the world to others.

Pedagogy

The transition to 'learning activity'

"...when children consciously reflect upon the relationship between their 'pretend' signs and 'real' meanings in play they are engaged in a form of semiotic activity that is a valuable precursor to new learning activities" (van Oers, 1999, p278).

Curriculum

— more structured collaborations —

Pedagogy

Learning Activities:

"...g Activity" (van Oers)

"Socio-dramatic play" (Lieontiev)

"...t-centred joint activity" (Elkonin)

"Emotional communication with caregivers" (Lisina)

Curriculum

"emotional communication with caregivers" (Lisina)
development of self

"Object-centred joint activity" (Elkonin)
Improvised play with partners

"Socio-dramatic play" (Hobbie)
Improvised collaboration —

Learning Activity (collaboration)
disciplined collaboration

The implications for Early Childhood Education:

- **Providing progressively more experience, knowledge, and stimulus (through the provision of challenging play environments and guided or direct intervention (Within the Zone of Proximal Development [ZPD])**

- **They can also scaffold the creative 'cycles' by progressively encouraging more sophisticated Sustained Shared Thinking** (Siraj-Blatchford et al 2002) **(within the ZPD).**

Characteristics of Playful Learning

Playful learning for children is based on some of the following ideas:

- Building on and extending the child's interests

- The child is usually active physically, socially and intellectually

- The learning is exploratory without necessarily fixed outcomes in mind

- Playful learning motivates children to try more challenging learning

- Children use, apply and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding through active exploration

- In social contexts children develop their capacities for cooperation and collaboration and can often explore complex ideas

Playful Learning

Supporting playful learning involves the use of a suite of strategies including:

- Creating well resourced environments with rich materials

- Being involved and interacting with children as they play and explore

- Maintaining a purposeful focus on the child's learning and development

- Modelling expressive language and consciously extending children's vocabulary

- Constructively engaging with children to scaffold and extend learning

- Using sustained shared thinking strategies to build on child-initiated activity to extend knowledge, skills and understanding

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