Developing practice-based research with persona dolls for social and emotional development in early childhood

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Children's Identity & Citizenship in Europe

Thematic Network   Socrates

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Introduction

This is the third in our series of guidelines that focus on developing practice-based research. In 2006 we focused on co-operative learning, teaching and school counselling. Philosophy with children in relation to critical thinking was the topic in 2007. These guidelines are the outcome of our talks and workshops on creative teaching, emotional and intercultural learning with the medium of 'Persona Dolls'. All the visual material of our three-year project is collected on the CD-ROM, and we hope it will be useful in courses of higher education, and that it will stimulate colleagues to undertake practice-based research with their students and with educational fieldworkers.

We begin with the metaphor of a backpack to indicate the key components that are necessary to organise practice-based research within an educational environment. In addition we present the application of our workshop and some reflections. The latter is always necessary to do practice-based research.

Developing a culture of research inside the classroom

There are many important things we learn from research. There are also a number of important things to be said about research. We talk here about research as it is related to the practice of the teachers. This is not research about teachers, but rather, it is about teachers doing research.

Teachers have the skills and the ability to bring out the best in young, developing minds and hearts. Much of this takes place behind closed doors, and is often insufficiently shared or observed by peers. Teachers can learn from what they see in the classrooms of their peers and improve or change their own professional skills by observing and incorporating new performance into their practice, and new strategies into their mindsets, for their own benefit and that of the whole learning community.

Teachers have much to learn from each other and from their educational environments: teacher research is an ideal way of investigating these environments.

'What is going on?' is the most fundamental research question that generates sub–sets of questions in teachers' minds on topics meaningful to them. Another question for a practice–based researcher is 'do I like what I get?'

The research done by teachers can become a driving force for educational change and school development, in various and humble ways. Doing practice or practitioner–based research is no longer the privilege of a special group of people called researchers but, given certain conditions, available for any practitioner to do as a part of everyday practice (Bryant 1997).

Teachers are no strangers to data. In fact they are the generators, collectors and receivers of substantial amounts of data derived from the day-to-day learning outcomes of their pupils. Where teachers may need support is in analysing these data for their findings. However the skills of objective interpretation are, with an open mind, readily learnable. They are underpinned by reflexivity as Schön asserts in his concept of professionals as 'reflective practitioners' (Schön 1983).

The backpack of a practice –based researcher

The knowledge-component : Enough food for practice ?

The French philosopher Jean–François Lyotard identifies in the Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1984) two types of knowledge : scientific (logos) and narrative (mythos). Knowledge in general cannot be reduced to science, nor even to learning. Learning is the set of statements which, to the exclusion of all other statements, denote or describe objects and may be declared true or false. Knowledge includes notions of 'know–how' (savoir–faire), 'knowing how to live' (savoir–vivre), 'how to listen' (savoir-entendre).

Lyotard's ideas allow us to include under the umbrella of knowledge the stories that are told in order to cement the social bond between children, and which bind them together by their three-fold competence in the speech acts of 'know–how', knowing how to speak and knowing how to listen – through which the community's relationship to itself and its environment is played out. He wanted to promote the competence to have 'good' performances. This capacity to communicate and live with justice, beauty, truth and efficiency goes beyond scientific knowledge. It is a knowledge that is formed by shared and passed-on narratives (Colpaert 2007).

The development of knowledge is the goal of an inquiry. In practice–based research we try various ways of looking at experience, continually reinterpreting experience into workable principles and concepts.

The emotional component: Do you need a handkerchief?

To call a teacher 'emotionally literate' assuredly still requires inverted commas, despite the enormous success of Howard Gardner (Gardner 1983,1993) and Daniel Goleman (Goleman 1995, 1998), whose research and writing figure widely in so much current thinking. Gardner makes a tentative but compelling case for the theory of multiple intelligences, arguing that the commonly measured cognitive human capacities give an inadequate picture of the qualitatively different ways in which humans can show 'intelligence'. For Gardner, the inter- and intra-personal intelligences – knowing and relating well to yourself and forming good relationships with others – represent two strands of a single intelligence quite independent of other intelligences such as linguistic or mathematical capacity. Goleman expands Gardner's somewhat cognitively constrained fields to include the affective dimension. For him we need to bring intelligence to emotion, some thinking into our feeling. Salovey and Sluyter (1997) introduced the term 'emotional literacy' and were pioneers in that field. They mapped 'emotional intelligences' in five main domains:

1. Knowing one's emotions: being self–aware
2. Managing emotions: handling feelings in a way that is appropriate
3. Motivating oneself: stifling impulsiveness, delaying gratification, being able to get into the 'flow state' that characterizes productive and effective people
4. Recognizing emotions in others: empathy
5. Handling relationships.

For teachers as researchers, simply to have a name to attach to the feeling they are experiencing in relation to the children gives them some foothold, some point of reference and even some rest. The children need positive commitments to both moral rules and to the well-being of their fellows. Teachers and caregivers in early childhood may look for 'tools', so that moral development is not stagnant in the early developmental stage. A young child must acquire the disposition to feel sympathy. This insight makes us aware of the utmost importance of early childhood (moral) education.

Exploring the potential of sentiments of compassion of the children might influence teachers' thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Martha Nussbaum (2001) as moral philosopher invites us to focus our attention on the ways in which people may be 'morally educated' in their imagination of suffering, thus acquiring a greater concern for social justice. Nussbaum proposes that it may only be on the basis of a 'compassionate training of the imagination', which involves devoting time and space to reflecting upon literary and artistic representations of what suffering does to children and teachers, that it is possible to develop educational applications that uphold principles of civic virtues.

Teachers asked for a sensitive language to pronounce the sensitive. Catherine Meyor describes her approach:

> *la parole sensible autorise la pause de goûter le monde, de sentir d'être différent les choses, d'éprouver la justesse du mot. Elle est un territoire ouvert sur la diversité du réel, conciliant les ambivalences, incluant les oppositions. Elle diffère du langage conceptuel qui embrigade en limitant, qui pose en éliminant, qui définit en excluant*

> *[A sensitive expression (la parole sensible) enables one to appreciate a taste of the world, to feel that you differentiate things, to experience the accuracy of the word. It is an opening on to the diversity of reality that reconciles ambivalences, encompasses the opposites. It differs from conceptual expression that enrolls and limits at the same time, that rules out so as to establish control, that defines by excluding.]*

(Meyor, 2002 p 228)

The narrative component : a notebook or a diary?

Beattie (1995) argues that narrative ways of knowing can help teachers to both construct and reconstruct their personal practical knowledge. Placing emphasis on teachers' personal and shared ways of knowing and on connecting the past, present and future are consistent with a key theme in this booklet. In our research we found that during the interviews we focussed on the motives and behaviour of pupils, and at the end they turned to themselves to find the same motives. The interviews have made sense of new 'revelations' in ways that have validated their practice. One describes it as an 'amazing process' another a kind of sudden breakthrough, a so–called ' disclosure'.

Social life is a narrative (MacIntyre 1981). Storytelling is an elementary form of human communication. Narratives are the stories people tell to each other. People recall what happened through narratives and put experience into sequence. Storytelling helps to make familiar events and feelings of everyday life. Different communities tell their stories with words that have given meanings. Mother tells fairy tales to her children before sleep; kids tell their stories to classmates.

There is an interesting debate in social science on the narrative that might be utilized in a pedagogical way – in this case in the context of multicultural value and emotional education. 'Are stories lived or are merely told?' Narrativism (a position between narrative realism and narrative constructivism) explains that the question is wrong. It is a false dichotomy: either lived, or told. Stories are lived because a human action has essentially a narrative nature and form. We put a history with future together by agency (by our actions). But stories are also told because we can understand narrative patterns backwards. American philosopher Brian Fay (1996) suggests that 'our lives are enstoried and our stories are enlived'.

The narrative component in the persona dolls method, as we will show, is of great importance because it enables us to use both interconnected levels – fiction and reality, or past and present – to put life through a story.

Practice–based researchers need the competence to tell or write their narratives. The difference between writing a story and telling a narrative is that the latter contains an evaluation of experiences linked with (innovated) scientific insights.

The ethical and attitudinal component: is a compass necessary?

Which kinds of ethical attitudes and considerations must a practitioner–based researcher–teacher take into account? In ethics attitude is a technical term which means in essence being for or against something. If we are for peace, we have a positive attitude

towards it, and if we are against wars, we have a negative attitude towards them. For the Dutch moral educator Ben Spiecker (1999) holding an attitude towards something is the same as evaluating it, and from his point of view emotions are moral only if they are based on (accepted) evaluations of others. The attitudes or evaluations of others are significant for a teacher-researcher if she is capable of being affected by her conviction that they have these attitudes. These attitudes (or evaluations) are important as they are relevant independent of all conditions of these attitudes and the effects that they could have, like satisfaction or frustration.

In the daily work of a teacher there is dominant perspective: to see things from the view of the pupils. It will be interesting to find whether it makes any difference to also see them as research participants.

Working with persona dolls with children (see below) can link to cornerstones of the ethics of relationships, namely responsibility, resilience, connectedness and trust (Dillen 2008). Responsibility precedes ethical choice and the concrete form of any relationship or engagement: people can decide to take up the responsibility or not. Responsibility refers to the ethical appeal of the other. The responsibility comes from outside, in the sense that it does not arise from nature or a complex of ethical norms given to an individual to be internalised but from the cry of the victims of social exclusion.

Resilience refers to the potential of teachers to recover and to rebuild their lives after suffering or bad experiences of exclusion. People can show a high degree of resilience even in peculiar circumstances. The concept of resilience shows educators and their target groups not merely as passive victims, but also as active subjects. Resilience makes it possible not only to focus on what goes wrong in situations, or on irresponsible behaviour but also opens our eyes to a variety of stimulating possibilities.

Responsibility and resilience are both ideas that form a broader theoretical framework about relationships, a framework characterised by 'connectedness' (the original meaning of religion). Connectedness is a different form of cohesion and does not mean that people have to do things together nor must stay together. But the idea of connectedness forms the basis of faith in our need of each other, and that we should try to find solutions.

Trust is the fourth main theme in this approach. One needs trust to prevent ethical or religious fanaticism and an excessively heavy burden of responsibility. These four cornerstones leave room for interpretation and an ethical response to concrete situations.

Elliott (1989) emphasised the importance of the ethical dimension in practice–based research. In practice, personal values are realised in concrete forms of action and this necessarily involves a continuous

process of practitioner reflection. The realisation of value is ultimately a matter of personal judgement in specific situations and is open to reinterpretation. In reflective practice, practitioners continually reinterpret their own beliefs and values in the process of reflection in and on action (Elliott 1989). In some cases practice-based research is remedial research to retrace the balance in the explored and disturbed class community. Applications with Persona Dolls can be a useful tool for a practice–based researcher.

Inquiry component: use a magnifying glass!

Inquiry is stimulated by confrontation with reality or with a problem. Knowledge results from the inquiry. Practice-based research is based on an event on which an individual can react to or puzzle over – a problem to be solved. Practice based research is remedial research.

Having identified and exposed bias or injustice in the classroom, teachers turn their attention to rectifying the imbalance. Means like Persona Dolls could be active agents for the cultivation of virtues and viewpoints in the world of the child. These educational toys were used to revisit previous events, that had either been omitted by children or assigned them stereotypical positions.

One of the challenges of practice–based research is conceptualization. How can a practice–based researcher conceptualise inquiry so that they recognise that knowledge is constrained by conditions confronted as external realities, not of our own making?

The visual component: don't forget your camera!

Recording visual data helps to construct a greater awareness for practice-based research. Educators and teachers must express their approaches, but also pupils and adults with disabilities require and deserve a forum where they can explain their problems, wishes and expertise.

Focussing on the class community through the lens of the camera encourages and empowers the teacher, giving them self esteem, and others stimulation. Products are built on knowledge in action, through a holistic bottom-up approach. Indicators and issues of professional identity that contribute to innovatory practice must become everyday topics. We need to awaken the empathy and empowerment that will help counter cultures of ignorance. Visual data will not only illustrate the policy of a school (such as co-operative learning) but will also better inform the wider community about how children react to new inputs and children's own designs of the world of play and thought (Verkest 2007).

This participatory approach generates contextualising or storytelling. Videos give voice to individual and collective experience. Schools

need to draw on people's knowledge to build capacity, through participation at local level, using local data to solve problems at ground level and through listening to and empowering local participation. Teachers become aware that solutions to their individual problems are met by the teaching staff and the school vision. This method enables people to define themselves and others: the most direct application of the visual approach. Participants in the videos have codified themes and patterns, or developed step by step views grounded in data.

The action component: becoming a coach

Photographing 'what a person does' tends to reduce the action to what can be seen through a camera. Photographs usually do not give enough information to understand what was taking place. Who else was involved, when and where did this happen, what were the expectations of doing/ not doing this, and what might have been the consequences over a shorter or longer period? All these questions (and more) refer to 'circumstances' – the elements that surround human art.

To morally evaluate an action, the motivations for the act must be understood. Not recognising and dealing with the complexity of an action can reduce any description of the act to its components. A description that only refers to 'what happened' - the material, physically described action – differs from the intention of those engaged in the event: does the intention and attitude involved in decision-making ensure moral rectitude or integrity (Selling 2008)? Observers should be aware that their primary function is not to give 'expert advice' to their colleagues in action, but to observe trainee teachers and observe the process to gain ideas for their own teaching. The teacher is the coach, in the sense that he or she is demonstrating a teaching episode. In teaching and being observed, the teacher becomes a coach.

Persona dolls, a tool for knowledge and emotions?

Dolls in an educational world

Dolls are not just for the play corner or only meant for girls! They have deservedly had a place in classes for many decades, used by teachers as well as children. Increasingly dolls are used to function in the same way as puppets, but without any strings.

As a result of an educational visit to a Belgian toy museum, four students in the teacher training college introduced a class doll during their teaching practice. Reflecting on their practice, the students argued that 'the dolls gave them extra security, extra ears and eyes'. They had the impression 'not being alone in front of the pupils' and 'that the doll was a partner, a supporter during their instructions'. To accompany the doll, the students often brought some extra effects: a basket, or a suitcase filled with small and attractive things to introduce new ideas and build a different environment.

One student teacher gave her doll the symbolic name Fidelio, in order to improve the children's self-confidence, and she practiced to move with the doll 'Fidelio' in a natural way. On one occasion she used Fidelio to listen to the children's experiences after a class visit to the dentist. Fidelio was included in circle time. The doll accompanied the student in managing silent working time.

Another teacher, Tom, used Barthel as an outdoor doll when he worked in a community school on the border between France and Belgium. Several pupils in the class come from French families and spoke French: this project stimulated children to reflect on their out-of-school activities and to express their feelings, desires and their way of living. 'Barthel' was an acronym: each letter makes a point in Tom's classroom.

Barthel

B (Beleefd): politeness to teachers, parents, pupils

A (Aandachtig): giving attention to others, the school and to lessons

R (Respect): for opinion, and for the work of other pupils

T (Tolerant): tolerance to other

H (Hulpvaardig): helpful to others, if you have the capacity

E (Eerlijk): to be honest

L (Lief): to be good to each other and to contribute to a good atmosphere

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Barthel became a mediator to create a great class atmosphere, helping introduce class rules based on the seven values. The teacher organized a forum with Barthel to discuss these values.

Creative writing about leisure and organising the weekend arose from work with Barthel. The children also used this as an ICT project, using a digital camera and the website.

The founding Mothers of Persona Dolls

Working with Persona Dolls is a practise that could help children understand cultural difference and enrich their lives with an intercultural perspective. Persona Dolls were creator by Kay Taus, a Californian pre-school teacher. She found she had little material in her classroom, and that the children in her class came from different cultures and ethnic groups. She made several dolls, designed with specific features to enrich children with different features to help them develop respect for each other. These dolls were created and prepared to represent children from different backgrounds and cultures (Nutbrown 2002).

The South African nursery teacher Babette Brown (2001) introduced Persona Dolls after her political exile in England. Books, video, DVDs and games now show how Persona Dolls can be used from the age of eighteen months in early childhood education, providing enjoyment and new perspectives for children to develop an identity and to cope with bias in society, and to build relationships with other people based on empathy and respect.

 Babette Brown (2001) bases her work on the adage: People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel. Her collection of Dolls includes the genius, the obese, the short, the glass-wearers, those with a teething ring, those with different colour skins, and many others. Brown agrees that the sense of identity is multiple, and children belong to many groups, even if each child holds some groups as more important to them than others.

The preschool is the first group encountered outside the family, within which each child has to establish a position and feel actively involved.

Persona Dolls are a tool that allows children to express their emotions of being happy, angry or sad, to understand what other people feel, and to respect people with different identities and characters. Pre–school teachers are specially trained in the theory and practice of using Persona Dolls. A recent book explains their particular use in citizenship education: Citizenship For All: respect, rights, responsibility (http://www.persona-doll-training.org/pd/index.php)

In Kids Like Us: Using Persona Dolls in the Classroom (1999) Trisha Whitney, an American elementary school head, explains her use of these dolls since 1995, showing the particular way that feelings and emotions can be supported with them through stories. She shows

how to map out stories reflecting real life situations that children face in social contexts such as the classroom. Her five-step method for a storytelling session begins with a short introduction of the dolls, followed by an outline of a the situation that will be the starting point for a discussion on the dolls' feelings. In this discussion there are spaces for problem solving, for changing perspectives and for exercises in empathy. The end of the session is resolution: she gives the story an ending that incorporates the ideas the children have offered.

The preparation and the stages of the application.

In this case study Duygu, a Turkish teacher, was briefed about the use of the dolls by a supervisor through workshops, books and articles. Several dolls were used in class, and she developed a story with a female doll situated in the Turkish context. This story was based on a time when a child from the Czech Republic spent several months in a Turkish school (Children's House), but eventually returned with her family to the Czech Republic. The dolls were used with the a group of children in the school to find out if they could develop a story with a male Persona Doll that linked with the story of the Czech girl. (see Appendix 2)

As well as employing the theoretical base, Duygu needed to use various practical skills and to develop the story with the trainer.

A group was selected in consultation with staff, of some children with Turkish roots and others with mixed family origins, all of whom had some experience of parents in academic surroundings. These children also had some personal experiences of foreign children, and of guest teachers bringing new creative inputs into the class. We wanted to use the Dolls to investigate their memories and views of foreign children living in situations of some sorrow.

Duygu worked with two groups, from two different classrooms. The first was a trial group, and the comments of the children, and the reflections of the teachers and the trainer were used to adapt the story and the experiment with the second group. As a result, the second session was more relaxed. After the telling the story of Peter, the children were invited into the second room to draw a picture for Peter. After watching this, the teacher talked with the children in room they were working in, based on their drawings. She recorded their comments.

Dugyu introduced the second part of the story five weeks after the Persona Doll Peter had first been introduced (see Appendix 2). During this time, a child with blond hair and blue eyes was noticed in the school surrounding. The children in the activity enthusiastic identified this boy with the figure of Peter. The teacher saw in this a sign that Peter was still in many of the children's minds.

In this second session it was important to arrange the various attributes and infrastructure with care. The teachers introduced the letter and pictures. It was particularly important that the teachers used expressions to show feelings of sadness. Dugyu and her colleagues saw at once how the children were fascinated by the pictures and linked these with the earlier session. The children were sensitive to the changes in their classroom. The teacher brought their questions into circle time, investigating their memories of Peter. The pictures with the parents of Peter convinced some of the children that Peter was a real boy, not a doll.

The various sessions were recorded on video, and this resource was important for the teacher as researcher to use for reflection and analysis. The children were confident with this kind of video taping, and the camera didn't disturb them or alter their behaviour. It was important to focus on both the expressions of the teachers and the reactions of the children, so it would have been better to have used two cameras: one to focus on the teacher, the other to record the behaviour of the children.

Dugyu had one–to-one interviews with the children on cushions in a relaxed atmosphere, asking them questions and allowing the camera to do the recording. Then, for creative work, she brought them again to the art room. She expressed surprise at how they had linked Peter's situation with that of the girl who had left the group. The children expressed their feelings through additional materials, like drawings in the shape of a tear. They then dropped the tears in a big handkerchief and whispered the content of their tears to their teacher.

General and specific features of Persona Dolls

Introducing the Persona Dolls in combination with creative activities encouraged the children to feel good about themselves and their culture, and to respect children coming from cultures different to theirs. Working with the Persona Dolls developed their sensitivity and understanding about subjects such as equality and justice. It also helped the children have positive feelings about themselves and develop strong and positive identities.

Persona Dolls are special dolls: they have their own characters, life stories, preferences and aversions (see Appendix 1). The hidden agenda is that the Persona Dolls represent children from different ethnic groups, social classes, particular family structures, religious minorities or disabilities. As Vanderbroeck (1999) observes, everyone can say that today we are all immigrants, and everyone who works with children needs to ask herself/himself, 'how can we adapt ourselves to the changes taking place around us?'

Reflections about the application in action

In training sessions with Turkish trainee teachers and teachers Ebru Aktan Kerem and Isik Kamaraj empolyed five stages in developing the applications of these Persona Dolls. In this study, we changed the resolution phase into a creative evaluation for the children, and a meta-evaluation for the teachers.

1. Introducing the Persona Doll to the class.
2. Describing and developing the features and identity of the Doll.
3. Presenting a particular event that the Doll has experienced.
4. Discussion and bringing to a conclusion.
5. Evaluation.

It is important to prepare to make observations of the children's responses throughout the process. As the teacher creates the identity of a doll, it should be introduced to the group. The doll usually visits the class during circle time, free play time or during group or individual work. Teachers report that children immediately see the dolls as their friends.

Persona Dolls embedded in stories with an intercultural orientation can be a strong and useful tool to counter bias and discrimination and in creating a comforting, warm and supportive climate.

Persona Dolls stories – like all stories- have a plot; but do not have a familiar ending. The teacher creates a situation in which the Persona Doll wants to share a problematic situation with the children, rather than presenting a scenario. This helps the children understand what the Persona Doll feels, show sympathy and empathy with it, express what the Doll thinks, and in solving problems.

As the story of a Persona Doll is being told the children relate it to their own lives, developing an awareness of who they are, their own identity and where they come from.

> *Even though they knew that Peter a doll, they cared about him when they took him into their arms. Although Peter was coming from a different culture, they easily accepted him. I think the role of having had children from different cultures in previous years is an important contribution to this. The children said that they wanted to draw pictures to make Peter happy and to write letters to him. (Duygu's account)*

The role of the teacher is to prepare the performance. The teacher turns to the children with Persona Doll in his arms, and says invitingly that Peter has come to visit them to share experiences. The role of the adult is as a facilitator, a simplifier. The teacher must be sensitive, flexible, clear and creative. The words used about different ethnic groups, cultures and physical appearances carry critical importance. Critical choices must be made: educating young children requires the teacher takes a meta-perspective (Bruner, 1996).

If the children play an active role during the narrative performance, expressing their feelings and opinions freely, then the aim has been achieved.

Duygu (teacher)	If you went to Germany because of your family's work, how would you feel about it?
Oyku	I would like to learn German from my parents.
Janberk	I would feel very good and make jokes.
Duygu	Peter said "I think my friends did not like me..." What would you like to say about it?
Group	We loved Peter.
Teacher	(asking again) What would you feel, if you were the one having gone to Germany?
Sevval	I would cry and miss Turkey so much.
	Children take Peter into their arms in turn, some expressing their feelings.
Oyku	(while giving Peter to Janberk) Don't hold him by his foot, you will hurt him.

The open-ended questions that the teacher asks should lead children to express themselves comfortably, while questions with yes/no responses make the teacher seem in control. The important discussion at the end helps children participate actively and articulate their own problems. Given the chance to speak about themselves and their families, they have the opportunity to recognise similarities and differences. The Persona Dolls inform them about the concept of difference.

Working in small groups generally gives better results, as it increases the opportunity for participation. In larger groups children may be bored waiting for their turn, and it makes it harder for the teacher to note who has taken an active role and who has not.

After the story, the teacher reviews who has given which response (a video camera can be helpful). Each child's response can be evaluated and their response analysed – and the teacher can also note how well he has interacted with each child. The teacher becomes a practice–based researcher. The teacher also needs to evaluate the end of the project. Did it follow the plan? Did something unexpected happen? Did the application satisfy expectations?

The evaluation with the children follows Baart's (2001) presence approach, of one-to-one interviews. Through the children's feelings, words, thoughts, experiences and actions, all the imaginable and unimaginable ups and downs, joys and sorrows of the children involved come flooding in. The working principles underpin the presence approach are:

freeing yourself,

opening up,

getting involved,

connecting,

seeing things from someone else's perspective,

making yourself available,

controlling yourself,

dedicating yourself (Baart, 2001).

The teachers' self-evaluation was also a one-to-one interview based on the following questions:

Did you enjoy the Persona Doll session?

Did you like Persona Dolls?

In which situations would you like to use Persona Dolls in your group?

How did you feel while you are constructing his/her identity?

What are the obstacles/difficulties you might confront during the application?

Any questions, comments or ideas to share with us about Persona Dolls?

This process can also be carried out with other colleagues and families, but to do this Persona Dolls need to be introduced to the parents, and families need to be told how children benefit from the process.

Conclusions

The use of Persona Dolls has had an extremely positive reception from pre-school teachers and child development specialists. They help them get a deeper understanding about bias, to develop empathy with children and to support personal sensitivity. The Dolls help children change their approach, express their feelings and opinions, and to build up self-confidence. One workshop participant described the Persona Doll as 'a silent citizen who gives children a voice'.

In order to create a research community in the class or school, there needs to be authentic collaboration between researchers and teachers. All of them must work together for the benefit of the school. As well as collective responsibility, there must also be a level of individual commitment, talent and resources. If teachers are providing authentic instruction, they have to take the children seriously. Maybe the children could be co-researchers too.

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For more information about Persona Dolls: http://www.persona-doll-training.org/pd/index.php

about Barthel: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri5o_ZXFnZA

Appendices

> ***Appendix 1: Create the context and the profile of your doll and a story with your Persona Doll. Integrate a problem, a situation linked with your practice.***
>
> - Name
> - Gender
> - Citizen
> - Country
> - Language
> - Family structure
> - Social Background (refugee, immigrant,...)
> - Social class (lower, middle social class,...)
> - Member of.....
> - Physical appearance
> - Key emotions
> - Daily rituals
> - Leisure Activities
> - Likes/ dislikes
> - Food preference
> - Values
> - Virtues/ qualities
> - Talents and gifts
> - Problems with...
> - Responsible for...
> - Dreaming of...

Appendix 2

Peter is a German boy. His mother is a nurse working in the academic hospital, and his father a professor in the faculty of medicine

He goes to a German school in Hamburg, and his class includes Turkish boys and girls. From one of the boys he learned from one of the Turkish boys some words like 'top', 'in' and 'at'.

He is alone at home, and has no brother or sisters. He likes football and playing with his lego. When his parents are away from home, he stays with his grandparents and his grandfather picks him up from school.

His father got a scholarship to join the university in Canakkale, and during the school holidays he goes with his family to visit his new school, Children's House. He tells his friends that he will miss them, but that he is pleased that he already knows some Turkish expressions.

After the visit he was very happy to in Children's House. He will miss his grandparents and his friends in Germany. The teachers were very nice and supported him.

Peter's parents came to Çanakkale for a week and then decided to return the next year for twelve month. But when they were back in Germany, Peter's grandma had a car accident and needed extra support from Peter's mother to recover.

Peter's mother sent a letter with some pictures to Children's House: she explained the situation and told the children that Peter is still very sad.

keywords : relationship, family, sadness, emotions, suffering, to be guest, to be stranger, to trust, happiness, 'homeless'...

Appendix 3

The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe (CiCe) Thematic Network links 28 European states and some 80 universities and college departments which are engaged in educating students about how children and young people learn about and understand their society, their identity and citizenship.

A cross-disciplinary group, we include lecturers in social psychology, pedagogy, psychology, sociology and curriculum studies, and those who educate various professions such as teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, early childhood workers and youth workers.