There’s still a long way to go”: beyond bewilderment towards a hopeful reconfiguration of Early Years qualifications

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Professor Jayne Osgood
Reconfiguring Quality: Beyond Discourses and Subjectivities to Matter, Bodies and becomings in Early Childhood Education

Critical Examiniations of Quality in Early Education and Care, edited by Gaile S. Cannella, Michelle Salazar Perez and I-Fang Lee
Reimagining quality in early childhood

This special issue brings together a selection of rich, complex and challenging contributions that attempt to advance approaches to reimagining what might constitute ‘quality’ in early years education. The issue draws from a shared concern about what makes a ‘high quality’ early childhood education, and debates about quality have existed for a considerable time and, despite ongoing critique, remain relevant. This issue aims to record and extend the groundbreaking work undertaken by Gaila Dukerich, Peter Moss and Alan Guest (1999, 2007) at Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Restructuring Perspectives and the subsequent revised edition. In this issue, the authors invite five other researchers to contribute to the discussion of quality within early childhood education. They argue that we must go beyond the concept of quality (Helsvig et al., 2007) and, instead, suggest working with a new concept: “shaping making”.

This special issue attempts to understand ‘quality early education’ from multiple perspectives, including those that posit diversity and multiplicity as central to the reimagining. As such, it explores the concept of diversity and quality and their relation to inclusion, dialogue and empowerment, leading to a judgment of value, contemporary and problematic because it always invites an examination (Dukerich et al., 2017).

This special issue might therefore be understood as a practice of community where theoretical work that is emerging from new understandings and perspectives is brought to ‘quality’. In order to move forward, this paper explores the ways in which diversity, multiple perspectives, and subjectivity can be reflected upon.

As implied in the call for papers for this issue, the issue is a reflection on quality in early childhood education. The concept of quality is often discussed in the context of early childhood education, but the idea of quality is not limited to this field. In many ways, the concept of quality is related to the idea of diversity and multiplicity, and these concepts are often used interchangeably. However, the two concepts are distinct, and the idea of quality is often used to refer to the idea of diversity and multiplicity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of subjectivity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is often used to refer to the idea of diversity and multiplicity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of diversity and multiplicity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of subjectivity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of subjectivity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of subjectivity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of subjectivity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity. The concept of quality is also related to the idea of subjectivity, and this concept is often used to refer to the idea of subjectivity.
Submitting to Quality discourses is a form of self-control, protection

Discursive analysis shuts down opportunities to ‘go beyond’

Butler (1993) work with and beyond the subject

Quality is beyond the person – it is everywhere and part of everyday life.

Braidotti (2006:7) argues for ‘a more specific and grounded sense of singular subjectivities as collectively bound...a re-grounding of the subject in a materially embedded sense of responsibility’

Post-humanism takes subjectivity beyond the individual towards collective, connective, affective assemblage of other bodies, matter, things.

Move from quality as discourse to quality as processes of becomings.
Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care,
by Gunilla Dahlberg, Peter Moss and Alan Pence
Reconfiguring Quality: Flexible Frameworks
“The sector must play a role in determining how [standards] can be achieved as it strives for excellence. The sector is becoming more professional, and Government must support this diverse sector to make its own improvement. In all my recommendations I have specified high and achievable standards, and how Government might apply these. I have also aimed to allow flexibility in how the sector may work towards them” [p.5]
In search of leakages
Early years training and qualifications in England.

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Middlesex University
December 2016

In publications, please cite as:
• Literature review
• Stakeholder interviews
• Training provider survey
• 3 case studies
• One-day ‘blue skies’ event
All too familiar discourses...
professionalism quality school readiness accountability
disciplinary technologies
The aim of disciplinary technology is to forge a "docile [body] that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault, 1979)
Ruptures...
Colebrook (2014) urges us to focus on important problems and *matters of concern* in order to chart the conditions of creation so as to transform those conditions and the problem itself.
Early years qualifications and training research seminar: Considering the future

**Form Discussion Groups:**
1. Froebel
2. Reggio
3. Montessori
4. Te Whariki

**Within your group nominate:**
- A Scribe (to record main points of discussion)
- A Spokesperson (to sit on Closing Plenary)

**Reflecting on the presentation this morning, discuss:**

Your image of
- **The Child:** As 'rich', 'poor', protagonist, active, a citizen...
- **The Early childhood centre:** As public space, community resource, place for education...
- **The Early childhood worker:** As 'rich', as co-constructor of knowledge, as critical intellectual, as researcher/experimenter, as democratic professional...
What do we want for our early years workforce? Images, Qualities and Conditions (Malaguzzi)
“There are rich children and poor children. We (Reggio) say all children are rich, there are no poor children. All children whatever their culture, whatever their lives, are rich, better equipped, more talented, stronger, and more intelligent than we can suppose...if we start from the concept that all our children are rich children, and all need acknowledgement, all need great respect, much more than we can concede today, we are creating them with the capacity, the talents, the resources that must emerge because children possess these qualities.”
**Image of the centre**

- **Not** a business
- Not a place to apply technologies
- A public space/place
- Multi-purpose community resource
Image of the childhood worker

“An active and constructive child stimulates the teachers to place more attention on the organization and opportunities than on predefining objectives. The role of the teacher is removed from the fallacy of certainties and reassumes the responsibility to choose, experiment, discuss, reflect, and change, focusing on the organisation of opportunities rather than the anxiousness to pursue outcomes, and maintaining in their work the pleasure of amazement and wonder”

(Fortunati)
The ‘rich’ early childhood setting

- Manifest differently in different contexts, differ in scale
- Critical intellectuals
- Research, experimentation, innovation
- Democratic professionalism
- Learning communities
- Parents as partners
Throwing the PVI baby out with the bathwater...

- PVI very diverse sector
- The image of the ‘rich’ child exists there too
- Profit versus surplus
- In-house training
- Space for creativity and innovation
“The Red House has been frustrated by the confines of the normalising discourses of quality underpinned by developmentalism. As a nursery we found ourselves more aligned to a creative and playful approach that inspires and cherishes children. A few years ago the Red House engaged in flexible thinking and practice that reconfigured our own understanding of quality leading us to move away from dominant framings of quality that were embedded in our strategic plan at the time, to a narrative version that we think supports new, generative understandings of quality. We abandoned our narrow, formulaic, quantitative strategic plan and wrote a story instead.”

(The Red House Children’s Centre, 2016)
Collective Collaboration

• Respect diversity
• Advocates, whistle-blowers
• Embrace creative, fantastical, imaginative ways to work together
AND...
• Focus on the small stuff
Ruptures, leaky possibilities

- Imagined future assumes a deficient present
- Training versus Education
- Research, experiment, innovate
- Don’t throw the PVI baby out with the bathwater
- Work creatively in the in-between spaces
- Learning to unlearn
- Collective collaboration
- Get organised!
“Justice, which entails acknowledgment, recognition, and loving attention, is not a state that can be achieved once and for all. There are no solutions; there is only the on-going practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly. The world and its possibilities for becoming are remade in each meeting.”

(Barad, 2007:x)