

Varinthorn Boonying

: Faculty of Education, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand
: Benedek Elek Faculty of Pedagogy, University of West Hungary, Sopron, Hungary
: varinthornb@nu.ac.th

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE ON CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

*A kisgyermek nevelésének és tanításának hatása a
kulturális intelligenciára*

Učenje u ranom detinjstvu i briga o kulturnoj inteligenciji

There is a growing recognition that cultural intelligence is an integral and genuine part of everyday life. The changing culture that affects children's world vision in the early years, which should develop at intrapersonal level, interpersonal level, and cultural level within the key methods are (1) children swim in learning cultures; (2) cultures of pedagogy; (3) cultural perspectives on curricular framework; and (4) cultures of professional development.

Key words: Early childhood education and care, Cultural intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is the most important period of development in a child's life since it is the time of rapid cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and motor development when a child's brain depends on environmental stimulation, especially on the quality of care and interaction that the child receives. Children who are nurtured and well cared for are more likely to fully develop cognitive, language, emotional, and social skills; to grow up healthier; and to have higher self-esteem (UNICEF 2012). As a result, the 21st century began with national and international commitments such as the European Union (EU) which is a politic-economic union of 28 member states, or ASEAN Community that comprises the council of three pillars (political, economic, and socio-cultural) of 10 member states. They set out aspirational outcomes to start with early childhood being at the top of national and international policy, initiatives and regulations with aspirational outcomes and target for children, their families, communities, and societies. KEELEY (2007) claims about knowledge-based societies that the notion of brain and mind power forms the intangible human capital required to achieve long-term competitiveness, social cohesion, and equity. Na-

tional and international entities have now recognized that, in order to increase individual and societal competencies and well-being of children, there is a need for significant investment in the early years of children's lives. Pre-primary education has the highest rates of return in the whole lifelong learning continuum. These claims have been especially well substantiated by the long-term benefits of high quality early childhood service (MOYLES and PAPTAEODOROU 2012). There is a growing realization that cultural intelligence is an integral and real part of everyday work life. GARDNER (1983) indicates about contemporary conceptualizations of intelligence that emotional intelligence is more than cognitive capacity, and that human potential cannot be limited to cognitive ability the way it is described and defined in society. MAYER & COBB (2000) emphasise that emotions will naturally surface throughout daily life and habit. As GOLEMAN (2002), points out, a holistic conceptual framework of habit should be embraced; this includes human emotional intelligence and social intelligence as a natural, spontaneous, and integrated component of work activities, performance, and outcomes. By recognizing that cultural intelligence is an inseparable part of daily life, the impact of child and their abilities are seen as a strong and powerful force for success of development. In order to ensure that the high IQ children were not only academically successful, they also need to be raising emotionally abilities, so children require that parents, educators, and communities empathize with varied emotions what children feel. Emotional competence to help children problem-solve and think outside of them promotes the development of self, others, and cultural intelligence. The case study of the United States conducted by HECKMAN (2013: 4–6) found that life success depends on more than cognitive skills. The taxonomy of human abilities recognize that intelligence can include non-cognitive abilities (GARDNER 1993). Non-cognitive characteristics include physical and mental health as well as perseverance, attentiveness, motivation, self-confidence, and other socio-emotional qualities, which are also essential. Although public attention tends to focus on cognitive skills as measured by IQ tests with the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), it is not enough for students. The non-cognitive characteristics also contribute to social success and in fact help to determine scores on the test that we use to evaluate cognitive achievement.

This study aims to present the cultural intelligence which is available for children in kindergarten. Thus, this article presents the cultural intelligence that will be of great interest to researchers and practitioners because it will influence future research and managerial practice to develop cultural learning in kindergarten.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL INTELLIGENCES

It is vital to understand children's emotions, although they do not all emerge at the same time. Primary emotions are observable at a young age, when the child already displays a range of emotions in social situations through non-ver-

bal messages (e.g., giving a hug, crying). Secondary emotions (e.g., embarrassment, guilt, and shame) are usually obvious by the end of the second year of life. According to the teaching of the whole child—head, and heart for developing of children’s emotional intelligence (EI), social intelligence (SI) and cultural intelligence (CI), present a chance for the 21st century. EI in early childhood can be explained as intrapersonal skills – the ability to know and control one’s self; SI defines as interpersonal skills – understanding others and acting on that understanding, while CI defines as an ability to function effectively in a multi-cultural environment and to seek a way to foster tolerance and enhance cross-cultural interactions in their life. Along with environmental factors from society and culture, the cultural competences are also influenced by child factors including cognitive development, temperament and approach/withdrawal behaviors.

CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT ON CULTURES

Cultural differences in concentrated socialization practices may contribute to contrasting adult cognitive styles. These strong links between cultural context, educator, child, family, and community can potentially bring children to develop the cultural adhesion of the social, economic, and environmental factors of early childhood education and care (see Figure 1).

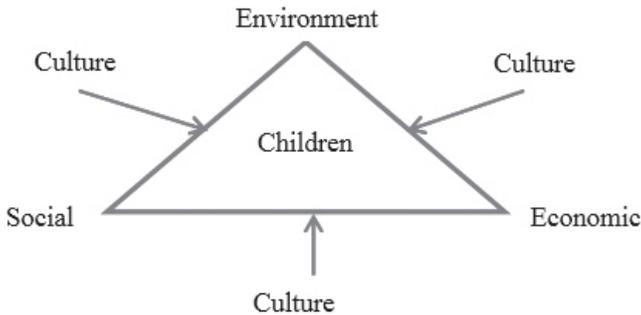


Figure 1. Culture relation of early childhood education and care

ROGOFF (2003) explored cultural human development in three levels (see Figure 2).

The intrapersonal level is the self-emotional intelligence where a child’s perception of school experience is recognized and feelings talked about. Kindergarten teachers try to help them to learn these essential lessons for life, using opportunities in and out of class to help students turn moments of personal crisis into lessons in emotional competence. It also works best when the lessons at school are coordinated with what goes on in the chil-

dren’s home. The reinforcements of emotional intelligence are not just in the classroom but also on the playground and in the home which are optimal. That means weaving school, parents, and communities together more tightly. It increases the likelihood that what children have learned in emotional literacy classes will not stay behind at school but will be tested, practiced and sharpened in the actual challenges of life.

The interpersonal level is the social intelligence with understanding and acting on that understanding with peers, parents and teachers, and opportunities provided in the form of learning environment. This includes children’s involvement in socially constructed collective activities that the children actively make meaning from experiences gained by interacting with their environment (ROGOFF 2003).

The cultural level is the cultural intelligence that includes cultural beliefs and routine practices, social expectations, politically and socially determined frameworks to support children’s education and participation. At this level, children are believed to learn their cultural practices and tools through guided participation in cultural attempt (ROGOFF 2003). Therefore children will have the ability to function effectively in a multi-cultural environment and to seek a way to foster tolerance and enhance cross-cultural interactions in their life.

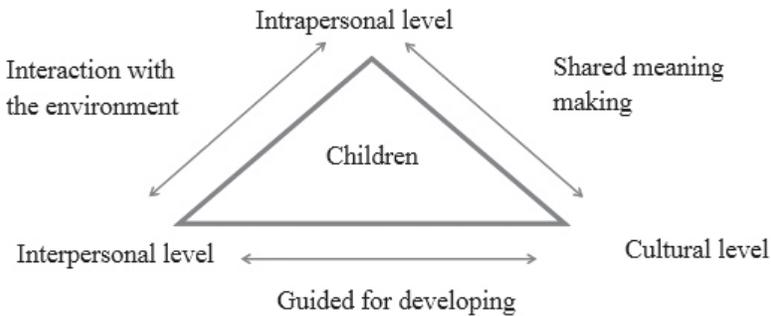


Figure 2. Development of three-level analysis for children’s culture (ROGOFF 2003)

DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE METHODS

METHOD 1: CHILDREN SWIM IN LEARNING CULTURES

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes “Children have the right to play” that refers to the right of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate

to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (UNICEF, 1989). Children's play is a universal phenomenon in development, and learning that is culturally grounded and is the basis of early childhood education (MOYLES and PAPTAEODOROU 2012). Contemporary works on children's play also focus on the cultural construction of initiative play in pretend activities that imitate and mirror adult subsistence activities, and adult role models served as material which children recreated in their play.

In this method, teachers try to develop activities that foster dramatic and guided play. For this purpose, for example, student-friendly classrooms are designed as a social studies center. This center is particularly important for themes such as "Learning about other countries." This theme focuses on getting along with others, recognizing, and appreciating differences and likeness in friends, with included materials such as map, a globe, flags, and artifacts from various countries and community figures.

METHOD 2: CULTURES OF PEDAGOGY

Cultures cover a broad spectrum in relation to children's learning that STEWART and PUGH (2007: 9) offered pedagogy as the understanding of how children learn and develop, and the practice through which they can enhance the process. It is rooted in values and beliefs about what we want for children, and supported by knowledge, theory and experience. The norms rooted in the culture of each particular school or setting, are influenced by the societal and cultural norms of the geographical context that ALEXANDER (2001: 510) suggested for empirical study of classroom transactions, and we should locate these transactions historically and culturally at the levels of classroom, school and system.

In this phase, children have an events day which is related to children's life and is celebrated. In the class, the teacher takes care of the order and safety while children take part in different activities; he/she plays games with the children, and motivates them through these activities to improve their language skills, to learn mathematics, to raise interest to the sciences, as well as encourages learning music, arts (mainly drawing, painting, visualization), and understanding and learning social norms.

METHOD 3: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

The impacts of national and international policies are nowhere else more evident than in the development of curricular frameworks implementation and in requirements to monitor children's progress. MOYLES (2010) points out that for assessment it is necessary for the process of reflection – based on practices in early childhood – to ensure continual improvement in pedagogy

and curriculum implementation. One of the purposes of assessment is to promote children's learning and development (NAEYC 2003). The assessment practice about cultural learning should be ongoing within the naturally occurring context of the classroom as the children engage in meaningful curricular activities. The cultural perspective for curricular development, for example, supports ASEAN community in using English for communication; therefore, schools are changing to become open to dialogue with society and be closely linked with science and technology. Teachers, instead of transferring knowledge, are moving to provide the children with multi-cultural learning (VARINTHORN 2013).

METHOD 4: CULTURES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The idea of professional development in early childhood education and care is rooted in a far older idea which referred to as in-service training; training in a specific approach, technique, or material that take place after an individual begins work (ROSKOS 2013). FULLAN (2007) points out that professional development involves workshops, courses, programs, and related activities that are designed presumably to provide teachers with new ideas, skills, and competencies necessary for improvement within classroom teaching as teachers work together to continuously improve instruction and learning. In cultural development, teacher education programs should prepare potential teachers to have the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to educate young children to learn in the 21st century.

A CASE STUDY IN THAILAND

Thailand has a long tradition of literacy and education. Buddhist monks imparted a way of life and knowledge which made life worth living and peaceful; both teaching and learning were social and religious assets taught to everyone from prince down to people (FRY 2002: 4–5). King Chulalongkorn Rama V, who ruled from 1868 to 1910, was committed to creating a modern school system in Siam (Thailand). For instance, education was seen as important for human resource development in training individuals to staff the various ministries associated with the creation of Siam's modern administrative system (FRY 2002: 6). Early childhood education at present is not compulsory but free by government agencies. There are three types of pre-primary education depending on the local conditions: preschool classes, kindergartens, and childcare centers. Private schools usually offer a three-year kindergarten program. Two-year kindergarten and one-year pre-school classes are available at public primary schools in rural areas (UNICEF 2012). Kindergarten education and care in urban and industrialized areas of Thailand is moving towards bilingualism and English language focus.

The movement is initiated by educated elites in the private sector, supported by upper class parents who can afford to pay extra fees. Education lies at the core of ASEAN's development process, so kindergartens adopt the pedagogical policy about ASEAN's contributing to the enhancement of ASEAN's history, languages, culture and common values to children. The model kindergarten for provincial areas has already moved quite successfully towards the Mini English Program: both to hire foreign teachers and to employ well-trained English language teachers from former western colonies in Asia (like the Philippines), which could be an alternative for a kindergarten in the provincial area.

It is known that traditional ways of life, especially religion, is what most influences Thai culture. Tradition is an adopted and integrated practice into a variety of lifestyles that influence children. In school it is child-centered; it takes into consideration the differences between children, such as different age, different physical and mental requirements, and different maturing processes. In the classroom, a teacher is taking care of the order and safety, while he/she organizes different activities, plays games with the children and motivates them through these activities to improve their language skills, to learn mathematics, to raise interest to the sciences, as well as encourages learning music, arts (mainly drawing, painting, visualization), and understanding and learning social norms. In playing cultural games outdoors, children can take the initiative in applying surrounding environments to games, and they are also expected to apply what they learn from the games to their daily lives. Such a practice can become a pattern or guideline for them in growing up to adulthood, alongside with the benefit of doing exercises, which is vital for children's development such as developing physically, cognitively, linguistically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Furthermore, they can also learn to observe the rules of the games, they learn how to compromise, as well as how to be a good winner and loser. The most popular and well-known Thai folk games are kite-flying, wheel-rolling, catching the last one in the lines, snatching a baby from the mother snake, spider clutching the roof, pebbles tossing and picking, hide-and-see, touching a finger on the hands, hiding a cloth behind one's back, monkeys scrambling for posts, trapping the fish, and banana rib hobby horse riding.

CONCLUSION

Education should be integrated with daily life. It is a part of the journey to mind that should be integration with the domain of skills with each other. It is interesting to recognize the importance of the culture context in the development and learning of early childhood, that while growing up as members of a family, community, and globalization, children learn the rules

of their culture – by explicitly learning either directly or indirectly through the teaching and behavior of those around them. The changing culture that affects their world vision in the early years should develop at intrapersonal, interpersonal and cultural level within the following key methods: (1) children swim in learning cultures; (2) cultures of pedagogy; (3) cultural perspectives on curricular framework; and (4) cultures of professional development. A case study of Thailand has shown that kindergartens have moved towards bilingualism and English language with major support. The culture of children, acquired through their plays and games both indoor and outdoor, is crucial for their physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual development.

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A kisgyermek nevelésének és tanításának hatása a kulturális intelligenciára

Mindinkább nyilvánvaló, hogy a kulturális intelligencia szerves része a mindennapi életnek. A változó kultúra hatással van a kisgyermek világnézetére, ezért fejleszteni kell intraperszonális, interperszonális és kulturális szinten, a következő módszerekkel: (1) a gyermekek természetesen ismerkednek a kultúrával, (2) pedagógiai kultúrák által, (3) kulturális perspektívákkal a tanterv keretén belül, és (4) szakmai továbbfejlesztési kultúrák által.

Kulcsszavak: kisgyermek nevelése, kulturális intelligencia

Učenje u ranom detinjstvu i briga o kulturnoj inteligenciji

Sve se više prepoznaje da je kulturna inteligencija integralni i autentičan deo svakodnevnog života. Promenljiva kultura, koja utiče na detetov pogled na svet u ranom detinjstvu i treba da se razvija na intrapersonalnom, interpersonalnom i kulturnom nivou, neguje se u okviru sledećih ključnih metoda: (1) da deca prirodno usvajaju kulturu; (2) kroz pedagošku kulturu; (3) kroz kulturne perspektive u okviru nastavnog plana; i (4) kroz kulture stručnog usavršavanja.

Ključne reči: obrazovanje i vaspitanje u ranom detinjstvu, kulturna inteligencija

Beérkezés időpontja: 2015. 04. 10.

Közlésre elfogadva: 2015. 04. 30.