Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Education 3-13

International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education

ISSN: 0300-4279 (Print) 1475-7575 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rett20

Redefining the importance of children's voices in personal social emotional development curriculum using the Mosaic Approach

Aimilia Rouvali & Vassiliki Riga

To cite this article: Aimilia Rouvali & Vassiliki Riga (2019) Redefining the importance of children's voices in personal social emotional development curriculum using the Mosaic Approach, Education 3-13, 47:8, 998-1013, DOI: 10.1080/03004279.2018.1553990

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2018.1553990

EDUCATION 3-13
2019, VOL. 47, NO. 8, 998–1013
https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2018.1553990

Redefining the importance of children's voices in personal social emotional development curriculum using the Mosaic Approach

Aimilia Rouvali and Vassiliki Riga

Department of Educational Sciences & Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Patra, Greece

ABSTRACT

The research explores the implementation of the Mosaic Approach into a Greek early years' setting. For the data collection, 21 children were observed using cameras, tours, mapping, and researcher's interviews with teachers and parents. Special consideration was given to the newly added tool of peer-to-peer interviews. Results depicted children's need for quality relationships with peers and adults and their favourite and least favourite places in their school. The authors suggest the adaptation of the Mosaic Approach into the Personal, Social and Emotional Development curriculum as an educational tool of children's rights which empowers their voices, as well as reinforcing their self-esteem and ability to form quality relationships.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 4 July 2018
Accepted 26 November 2018

KEYWORDS
Children's voices; rights; listening to children; participation; PSED

Introduction

Over twenty-five years have passed since the adoption of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, a period equal to a complete generation of school children. Yet, whilst it is one of the most extensively signed treaties, the lack of evidenced and empirically supported implementation of its principles appears rather disappointing (Lundy 2012). Even though there have been several distinguished and notable attempts (Bragg 2007; Sorrell 2005) they tend to be isolated, inconsistent and narrowly focused on mainstream primary and secondary aged children.

Due to Convention's constitutional nature, every five years all the signatory nations are obliged to reflect upon the progress in all aspects of the UNCRC, in line with the guidelines included in Article 44 (Elwood and Lundy 2010). In accordance with the Committee's published part of the monitoring process, an in-depth and meaningful listening and participation of children is generally scarce (Coomans, Grunfeld, and Kamminga 2009) with an apparent dearth in education (UN 2008). Over the years, extensive research has been conducted aiming to highlight the underlying causes of this phenomenon. Addressing the rather simplistic and old-fashioned notion of adults' unwillingness, or fear, to give away power to children, academics from around the globe have endeavoured to reveal the obstacles prohibiting the successful implementation of the existing policies (Bragg 2007). Initially, teachers highlight the lack of resources, knowledge and relevant training on how to listen to children's voices and how to include them in the decision-making process (Rudduck and McIntyre 2007). Alongside the lack of knowledge, the continuously increasing workload and demands around the curriculum have a great impact on teachers' ability to devote time on active listening and involvement of children. Especially, in the field of Early Years Education, where students' councils, simple questionnaires and discussion may not be the most appropriate and effective way of communicating with children, there is a significant need, not only for resources, tools and pertinent

CONTACT Vassiliki Riga vriga@upatras.gr

training on the matter, but also for a shift in the existing terminology and pedagogy in general (Howe and Covell 2007).

The aim of this article is twofold. Initially, to illustrate the implementation of the Mosaic Approach (Clark and Moss 2001) in a Greek early years' setting. Furthermore, the outcomes of the study are utilised to propose the implementation of the Approach, as a flexible and adaptable multimethod of actively listening to young children's voices, as a way of enabling young children to get to know themselves and others, and develop personal, social and emotional awareness. The article is grounded upon the principles of the Convention on Children's Rights, alongside an enhanced perception of the terms 'listening' and 'voice', as has been outlined by Clark and Moss (2001), the CRC and the approach of the Reggio Emilia preschools. Clark highlights that the Mosaic Approach's framework was greatly inspired by these settings as they were among the firsts to hinge around the idea of young children as component, and active individuals (Clark and Moss 2001; Clark 2005). Loris Malaguzzi, the first pedagogical director of the Reggio schools, acknowledged the young children's abilities, and introduced these schools to the pedagogy of listening and the pedagogy of relationships (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998) which are fundamental parts of both the Mosaic Approach and the current article.

Furthermore, the current article was influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach in one additional way. In the vast majority of cases, the educational research and the daily educational practice are segregated. Researchers are always working on new and exciting projects, that unfortunately very rarely can be utilised by the teachers as part of the educational journey. However, that it is not the case for the Reggio Emilia preschools where this distinction is constantly questioned (Clark 2005). In the Reggio Emilia schools 'the actions of instruction, assessment, documentation and research come to contain each other. They cannot be pulled apart in any practical sense; they are a piece. No dichotomy between teaching and research remains' (Seidel 2001, 333). Within the Reggio schools, the teacher is considered a researcher, engaged in a constant process of constructing knowledge about children and learning (Rinaldi 2005). Following the same philosophy, the current article suggests the implementation of the Mosaic Approach, not as a project created by researchers, for the researchers, but as a framework that enables the teachers to become the researchers of their own class in a flexible, adaptable and fun way that respects and celebrates children's rights and strengths.

The current article is initiated by a brief representation of children's Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), as part of their psychosocial development, as well as an area that has proven to be affected by educational experiences, and is directly linked to children's progress (WHO 2003). Moving forward, a more comprehensive way of perceiving the concepts of 'listening', 'children's voices' and 'participation' is presented and explained, followed by the implementation of the Mosaic Approach in a school. A tool proposed by the children becomes the focal point of the study, as it enabled the researcher to narrow the communication gap. The positive results of the project led to the proposal set out in the final part of this report.

Personal, social and emotional development of young children

Over the past two decades, there has been significant international interest and focus on children's well-being, with relevant policies all around the globe (Dowling 2010). Despite the different aspects that each researcher/policy aims to highlight, leading to a bewildering array of terms, there is an evident support for the importance of children's PSED and well-being as part of pedagogy and educational practice (Banerjee, Weare, and Farr 2014; McLaughlin 2008; Zins et al. 2004).

This new reality could not have been foreseen by all the governments that have exhibited a shift to their pedagogy, highlighting the importance of schools' input on social and emotional development of children. Both in the UK (the country where the Mosaic Approach was created and first implemented by Alison Clark and Peter Moss) (Clark and Moss 2001), and in Greece, where this project took place, Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculums call for a higher attention to PSED as

one of the prime areas of learning (DfE 2017; MoE/PI 2002). Well-being and PSED are the basis for all the other areas (literacy, numeracy and understanding the world) to build upon. According to Baker 'PSED has three characteristics of learning: active learning, creating and thinking critically, and playing and exploring' (2013, 1115). Empowering young children to be actively involved and aware of their rights has proven to be rather beneficial for their self-esteem, their respect for others, and the development of critical thinking (Howe and Covell 2007). These aspects of PSED in learning include the notion of honest and transparent communication between adults and children. Thus, for all these aspects of PSED to be successfully achieved, there is a significant need for listening to young children's voices in a meaningful way.

'Listening' to young children's voices

The notion of 'listening' exists in our everyday communication agenda, as a word with a fixed and non-negotiable meaning. Rinaldi (2005) refers to 'listening' as an emotion, a reciprocity, a meaning and a meaningful change. For Langsted (1994) 'listening' is a part of our society, while in accordance with Moss's perception (2006) it is a part of ethics. Listening encompasses multiple senses, languages, symbols and codes that we use to express ourselves and communicate with our environment. Clark claims that 'listening' can be defined as an active process of receiving (through hearing and observation), interpreting and communicating. It involves all the senses and feelings, and cannot be limited to verbal communication. As an essential component of children's participation in matters that affect their lives, it is also a part of the consultation process regarding children's rights and choices, which affects the configuration of children's personalities as well (Clark 2010).

Thus, 'listening' should not be considered as a narrow term that consists only of the perceivable parts of oral and written communication. On the contrary, it refers to a pluralistic process, that requires all our senses, as well as transparency and honesty of all those involved.

The 'voice' of young children

The adult–child communication gap caused by the latter's limited oral communication abilities has been one of the most widely used arguments regarding the restricted participation of young children in research, and any other decision-making process. However, language is not a milestone to be achieved at some developmental point, like walking. The fact that a child will eventually learn how to talk, read and write, regardless in which language, is due to what Dolto refers to as 'symbolic function' (Liaudet 2008). Liaudet represents Dolto's interpretation of the term as every child's ability to give meaning to every action, thought, emotion and object. For human beings, everything has a meaning that can be conveyed through words, as well as other codes. Even the most absurd gestures and actions contain language: 'they have a meaning, occasionally forgotten, or unknown' (Liaudet 2008, 23). It is what Malaguzzi introduced as 'the hundred languages of children', declaring that 'All children are born with 100 languages, but by the time they are 6 years old they have lost 98 of them' (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998, 344). Thus, the problem of the adult–child communication gap lies with the adult who has lost these 98 languages. Therefore, there is a significant need for pluralistic, manifold and flexible approaches to enable more enhanced listening of young children's voices to promote the freedom of expression and participation.

Raising children's voices through participation

Over the past few years, children's participation has gained more and more attention and interest. However, in order to avoid an oversimplification of the notion, diligent steps and more attention are required during the process (Palaiologou 2014). Traditionally, children were not included in research on matters that affected their lives. However, a significant shift has taken place over the past few decades and today, children are perceived as active participants and subjects with their

own agency (Clark and Moss 2001; Harcourt and Hägglund 2013; Lundy 2012). There are two key factors that led to this change: (a) The adoption of the UN Conventions on Children's Rights (specifically, article 12 that emphasises young children's right to participate in the decision-making process in matters that affect their lives) (UN 1989) and (b) the development of childhood psychology that recognises children as autonomous individuals with emerging competences (Broström 2012; Harcourt and Hägglund 2013; Sommer 1998).

Still, the extent of children's involvement and participation in research varies among different research programmes (from objects to active informants and co-researchers). Nevertheless, the vast majority of researchers focus on developing approaches and tools that would enable children to participate as much as possible, often at the expense of traditional research methods that are increasingly sidelined (Nilsson et al. 2015; Palaiologou 2014). However, children's successful involvement in research is more than a quest for developing interesting techniques (Waller and Bitou 2011). Whilst being more than welcome, this new trend of continuously looking for new participating methods and tools may result in what Palaiologou refers to as a 'social epidemic' with the potential of 'bringing narrowed, mono-layered' approaches that do not allow for plurality, difference and diversity which are key issues in conducting research' (Palaiologou 2014, 690). When the main focus of research is the designing of child-friendly set of techniques instead of the commitment to do research *with* children based on mutual respect and recognition of both sides' capabilities and roles, then the actual participation of children is in danger.

Thus, it would be crucial to revisit the notion of children's participation and the way it is currently being implemented, and to move away from the participatory research, towards a new way of doing research with children. An approach where the tools are important, but the most significant element is the creation of an environment based on trust and care where the children are critically involved in roles that are increasingly challenging (Ghirotto and Mazzoni 2013). Dunphy (2012) suggests the use of guided participation, whereby children and adults work together to create meanings and knowledge. Meanwhile, Palaiologou (2014) highlights the need for ethical research with children.

The Mosaic Approach

The current project is an example of this framework through the implementation of the Mosaic Approach in an Early Years setting in Greece. The Mosaic Approach was developed as a framework during another project, in order to include the 'voice of the child' in an evaluation of a multiagency network of services for children and families (Clark and Moss 2001). It consists of a multimethod approach that enables young children to actively participate in the decision-making process in matters that affect their lives, through the co-creation of meanings with adults. This approach combines a variety of verbal and non-verbal tools to enable adults to understand in greater depth the young children's lives (Clark and Moss 2001).

Alison Clark and Peter Moss (2001) designed and proposed the Mosaic Approach, introducing simple and effective ways that allow each young child's voice to be heard. These methods facilitate the listening of each child's views, feelings and wishes and ensure that they will be respected and considered during the designing process of an appropriate and effective learning environment. By 'listening', a meaningful and thorough child–adult communication is meant, based on all communication in verbal and non-verbal channels, as well as all senses and emotions.

The Mosaic Approach recognises children as experts of their lives, and enables them to play an active role in their daily lives and decision-making processes through a shared construction of meanings with adults. It uses a variety of creative tools (observation, child conferencing, cameras, tours, mapping, role play, adults' perspectives) for listening to the voices of children and for interpreting what 'the 100 languages of children' have to say (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998).

The Mosaic Approach is not simply a technical or instructional methodology. It is a bridge between adults and children to revise concepts, discuss and negotiate meanings (Clark and Moss 2005). Within this negotiation of meanings lies the most important element of this approach, the creation of

environmental conditions that facilitate, rather than inhibit, all kinds of communication so that children feel the security they need to talk about their concerns (Clark and Moss 2001).

The implementation in Greece

In this article, we present briefly the implementation of the Mosaic Approach in a Greek arly ears' school used to explore the needs, desires and thoughts of children about the spaces, facilities and services offered by the school where they spend their day. The research questions included

(1) What children like to do when they are in the preschool?
(2) Which is their favourite space in the preschool?
(3) What is most important for children in the preschool?

The primary aim of the study was to answer the research questions. However, there was also the need to investigate the extent to which the Mosaic Approach could be a valuable option in the context of the emerging need for flexible and easy to use tools to promote children's voices and participation as a new pedagogy and everyday practice. Despite the fact that the current project was based on the original research regarding the data collection tools that were used, it is also characterised by its flexibility and adaptability, as can be seen by the embracement the new tool proposed by the children.

The participants

In the present study that took place in a three month period 21 children attending an early years' school participated, as well as their parents (21-one for each child) and teachers (5). Children's ages ranged from 26 months to 5 years old. Among the 21 children, 18 were boys and three girls (eight boys in reception, three girls and seven boys in nursery, and three boys in early nursery). The specific school was randomly chosen, and all children had the freedom to be involved to the extent they desired. Parental consent forms were sent and returned signed before the initiation of any data collection. All teachers involved were holders of a BSc in Early Years Education with professional experience ranging from one to 20 years.

The tools

The methodology of research was based upon the use of various verbal and non-verbal tools (Table 1).

Observations

Observations consist of a very common method of data collection in research related to early years settings that enables the researcher to obtain information and information about the characteristics of a group or individual that would be impossible to discover in any other way (Bell 2005). Even though observations constitute an additional tool, rather than the main in the framework the Mosaic Approach (Clark and Moss 2001), they can provide the researcher with valuable information

Table 1. Data collection tools.

Non-verbal tools	Verbal tools
Observation	Adult-led interviews
Cameras	Child-led interviews
Maps	Guided Tour
Drawings (part of the map creation)	Researchers' field notes Questionnaire (for parents) Semi-structured interviews (with teachers)

to assist in the interpretation of children's opinions and ideas collected using the rest of the tools. In the current study, a detailed, non-structured observation that lasted a day for each child was used as the initial tool to enhance impartiality, due to the lack of pre-existing knowledge about each child.

Adult-led interviews

Alongside the observations, interviews led by adults (based on close or open-ended questions) are equally popular in the field of educational research (O'Reilly and Dogra 2017). In this project, open-ended questions were used in interviews formed as adult-led discussions between small groups of children and the researcher. These questions were the following:

> Why do you come to school? What do you like the most doing at school? What you don't like doing at school? Who do you like the most? Who do you love the least? Is there anything that you find hard at school? What is your favourite area at school? What do you think adults do here? What do you think they should do? So far, which was your best day at school?

As in every part of the study, all children were free not to answer questions, or even to walk out of the room if needed.

Child-led interviews

At this point and after a consultation with the children that found the process of interviewing interesting, the idea of adding a tool emerged. Observations and child interviews are very helpful methods of giving voice to the children, but only as informants (Jørgensen and Kampmann 2000). To further empower children's voices, to highlight their ability to be experts about their lives, and minimise possible misinterpretation deriving from the communicational gap between adults and children, the interview was repeated, with one child volunteer taking the role of interviewer, with a complete absence of adults (Table 2). In order to facilitate the analysis of the data, all interviews were recorded.

Before the interview, a discussion between the researcher and the children interested in the role took place, in which they had the opportunity to ask any questions and roleplay the interview so that the child ending up with the role of interviewer would feel more confident. This addition was harmonised with Clark's (2010) notion that children tend not to express their real feelings and thoughts to adults. It is a common fear among the children, that their feelings, thoughts and wishes, are not important, or significant enough to be heard (Broström 2012). Despite that this fear pinpoints children's lack of knowledge regarding their rights and how this affect their, this significant fact is often overlooked.

Table 2. Peer to peer interview.

Dimitris: Angelica, what do you like the most to do at school?
Angelica: I like to play.
Dimitris: Play with what?
Angelica: I don't know … .
Elias: I like to run!
Angelica: I like to run.
Dimitris: And what do you like the least at school?
Angelica: I don't like my shoes to get muddy!
Dimitris: And who do you love the most?
Angelica: My mummy and daddy.
Dimitris: At school!
Angelica: Oh! At school, I love Elias the most.
Dimitris: And who else?
Angelica: My best friend Anna-Maria.
Elias: I love Aggelina!
Dimitris: Which is your favourite place at school?
Angelica: My class, because I like colouring.
Interview extract conducted by Dimitris 5 years old with Elias 3,5 and Angelica 4 years old

For both sets of interviews (adult-led and child-led) the qualitative analysis of video data method was used. Initially, the researcher documented in transcripts all the answers received initially by her, and by the child interviewer later, including any comments made during the discussions. The researcher read these transcripts twice and tried to identify any words, sentences, or phrases relevant to the research questions. These were coded into categories named after the research question that they were used for (such as 'Favourite things to do', 'Favourite places'). Then, the researcher calculated the frequency of the various responses. When the frequency of two or more related responses was low, these responses were combined, forming a more generic one (e.g. the dining hall, the staffroom, and the toilets were combined into a category called 'other spaces').

Digital cameras

During the next stage of the process, children used the digital cameras to capture people, objects and places important to them (Figure 1), depicting the way they perceive their environment (Clark and Moss 2001). Visual research methods (such as photographs, video observations, puppets, modelling clays and drawings) are often used in child-centred research as they are considered a natural and motivating way of engaging young children in the process (Fanea et al. 2016; Velasco et al. 2014). At this stage of the research, we focused on the use of photographs, as they can provide opportunities to capture moments of reality, emotions and interactions that can later be reflected upon (Banerji 2004).

Every child was given all the time needed to complete the activity, along with the freedom to enter all areas of the school, and stop the activity at any point.

Maps of the school

The photos taken during the previous stage were later used during the creation of the map of the school (Figure 2). The maps were another visual way of enabling the young children to illustrate their unique view of the school. Every child was provided with a big piece of card, felt pens and group of pictures that were carefully chosen by the researcher to include all the places, people

Figure 1. The wooden house in the playground (taken by 4-year-old Manolis).

Figure 2. Spyros (4 years old) during the map making.

and objects that each child chose to photograph. Following the same strategy as during the photo shoot, all children could work individually or in pairs. Alongside the activity and the picture selection process, a discussion enabled the researcher to approach each child's interpretation of the setting. Each child was free to edit the map in any way desired. Most children chose to draw something, either directly on the map or on a separate sheet that was later attached to the map. In addition, they chose to annotate the pictures, explaining in greater detail each one's actual focus.

Guided tours

Furthermore, children individually or in groups guided the researcher in various areas of the school. Chambers (1997) states that the use of guided tours provides children with the opportunity to observe, ask, listen, discuss and learn to investigate their environment. It is a child-friendly approach which activates the body and motion (Clark and Moss 2005). All children chose the starting point of the tour, as well as its length.

Parents' questionnaires

Parents of all the children involved in the project were also invited to participate through the completion of a questionnaire. Parents were asked questions similar to those children were asked by both the researcher and their peer (Table 3). This similarity enabled the researcher to compare all the answers and find possible contradictions between them. Although the main methods for data collection were created to be used by children to promote their participation and voice their ideas, the parents' questionnaires were not excluded. As the participants' ages, cognitive development and understanding varied, there was a significant need for greater degree of interpretation. The use of various methods (such as different types of interviews), as well as additional perspectives on the same issues can assist this interpretation process (Nilsson et al. 2015). For Clark (2007), both children's and parents' views are important elements of the listening process in the Mosaic Approach.

Table 3. The questionnaire for parents

Michali's (5 years old) mother
1. How do you think Michalis feels at school?
He is happy and content. He enjoys it.
2. How would you describe a good day at school for Michalis?
Full of educational and play-based activities with friends.
3. How would you describe a bad day at school for Michalis?
When he gets told off, or, he doesn't get the attention he wants.
4. What do you think Michalis likes the most to do at school?
He likes playing with his friends and be involved in group activities. He likes winning.
5. What do you think Michalis likes the least to do at school?
To be inside when his friends and the rest of the children are outside playing.
6. Who do you think Michalis loves the most at school?
His teacher Stavroula and his friends (Nikos and Charalampos)
Extract from a parent's questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaires

Teachers' working with the participants were also involved in the data collection process. We collected their views by open-ended questionnaires based on the same questions those children were asked. Nowadays, children spend more and more time with their teachers, not only during the school day, but also in breakfast and afterschool clubs. The daily interactions enable both sides to develop a better understanding and knowledge of each other. Teachers' everyday observations and exchanges with the young children can potentially add greater depth to the young children's image of their lives in the preschool. Teachers' contribution to the research (as well as parents) is not aimed to overpower the young children's voices. On the contrary, it acts as an extra tool intended to further empower their voices and assist in their interpretation.

For the study of parents' and teachers' questionnaires, the authors decided to use the method of summative content analysis (Hseih and Shannon 2005). In this analytic approach, the researcher identifies the common themes that may emerge from the responses and the frequency of their appearance to create a better understanding of a situation (Hseih and Shannon 2005; McKenna, Brooks, and Vanderheide 2017). In this project, the researcher initially read the text twice to identify the most frequently observed responses and created corresponding themes. These themes were later coded into categories and sub-categories that were named after the topic that they coved. These categories were then identified to assist the interpretation process.

All the data collected were combined with those emerged by children, to compile the Mosaic's pieces and create an accurate representation of each child's daily life in the school.

Ethical reflections

Involving the young children as co-researchers is considered a democratic and right-based approach in research. However, important ethical issues lurk in this child-centred methodology and a very carefully designed process is essential. Informed consent is one of the key processes when engaging the children in research (Harcourt and Hägglund 2013). In this project, both parents and young participants were fully informed about the researcher, her role at the university, the project's objectives and design, as well as its innovative nature for the Greek educational system. Initially, parents were sent a thorough report with all the information about the project, alongside a consent form to sign in order to permit their child to participate in all the tools s/he would like, including the group adult-led and child-led interviews which were video recorded. After the forms were signed and returned, all young children whose parents had signed the forms were offered an introduction to the researcher, followed by a discussion regarding the project and their possible involvement that required their consent.

The results

Digital cameras

The cameras, as a tool, were used by all the children in the study group with each child ending up with around 50–70 photos. Regarding the method of analysis, this part of the project was framed in the participatory framework of 'photovoice', whereby each child was given a digital camera to photograph objects, places and people that are important to them, along with the opportunity to be involved in informal discussions before and after the photo shoot to enable them to narrate their meanings collaboratively (Baker and Wang 2006). Whilst it is common practice among researchers to use the SHOWeD set of questions[1] to obtain more information about the photographs when using the photovoice, in the current project it was not used as the questions were considered too abstract for the young participants. Instead, the researcher adapted the questions and used them as verbal prompts to elicit informal discussions in small groups. The questions used were: 'What is it in this photo?', 'Why did you choose to photograph that?', 'Who is in this photo?', 'What is … doing in the photo?'.

The children's preferred subjects as they emerged from the use of cameras (Figure 3) included friends and school-mates (37%), the playground (Figure 4) and outdoor equipment (29%), toys (11%), indoor learning environment (9%) and educational staff (including support staff and dinner ladies) (6%).

The guided tours

After the completion of the photo shoot, a guided tour took place and each child showed the researcher the spaces s/he considered important for his/her daily life in the preschool (Figure 5). A checklist of all the places in and outside the setting was created to assist in the recording of the different places that each child chose to show the researcher. The results of the guided tours included an impressive percentage of (100%) appearance of the playground, followed by each child's class (85.71%), other classes (71.43%), the dining hall (50%) and the staff room (35.71%).

The maps of the school

The map making activity (Figure 6) was the next part of this project. During their participation in this visual task, all children were given the opportunity to work either individually or with friends.

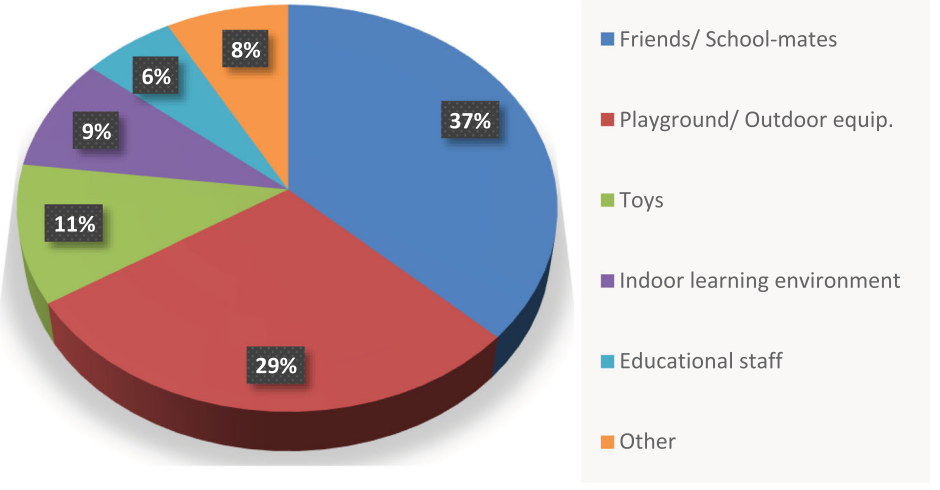

Figure 3. Results from the use of cameras.

Figure 4. The yard (photo taken by Ilias, 3.5 years old).

However, all participants expressed their preference to work alone with the researcher. Each child created a map of the preschool, choosing from the pictures s/he had taken during the photo shoot, the ones that were the most important places/people/objects for him/her. The photovoice methodology was again used for the data analysis. For purposes of continuity, the adapted version of the SHOWeD set of questions presented earlier was also used, with no changes. Through the reflection on the photos and the children's narrations, the researcher could construct a 'universe of meaning' (Broström 2012, 263). As it can be seen (Figures 2 and 6), during the photovoice analysis, both the child and the researcher annotated the map, providing further information about each photo and the reasons behind its selection. This is an example of what Clark and Moss (2001, 337) refer to as the collaborative 'meaning making process'.

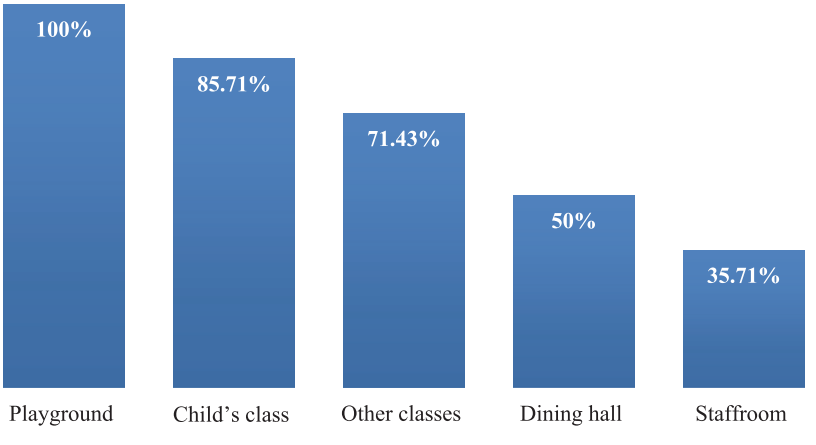

Figure 5. The results of the guided tour.

Figure 6. Panayiotis (4 years old) during the map making activity.

For their maps, children mostly chose pictures of the playground (45%), indoor learning environment (18%), various toys (15%) and other items (22%) (Figure 7).

The interviews

The results of the interviews draw special attention to the initial assumption made by the researcher regarding children's reluctance to share their actual thoughts and preferences with the adult. When asked by the child interviewer 'What do you like best to do when you're at the preschool?', the responses that received the highest percentages were: playing in the playground (39%), painting (17%), reading books and playing with blocks (11%). When asked 'Which part of the preschool is

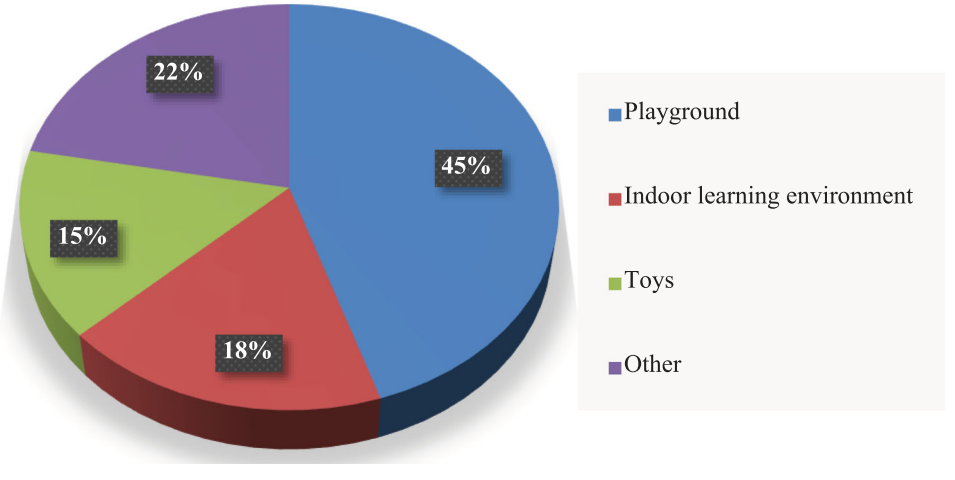

Figure 7. Map making results.

your favourite?', the responses included the 'playground' (50%), 'my classroom' (28%) and 'other classrooms and other spaces' (11%). But when the researcher put the same question to the children, they replied in a different way: 45% of them chose the classroom and 33% the playground. It seems that the children answered according to what they thought adults expected them to like, and not what they actually did. That highlights children's unawareness that their feelings and interests are valuable, and that they have the right to express them and utilise them in the decision-making process.

The parents' and teachers' questionnaires

The categories that emerged from the two sets of questionnaires were nearly identical and included 'relationships' (both with peers and teachers), 'places' (indoor and outdoor learning environment) and 'activities' (choosing time, literacy, numeracy etc.). The results of parents' and teachers' questionnaires completely matched those of the tools that the young children used to express their ideas and preferences.

Discussion: creating the Mosaic

All the data collected by the various tools constitute the different pieces of the Mosaic and were put together to create an image of children's daily lives. In the vast majority of cases, the outdoor learning and the relationships with peers and adults held prominent places in the answers provided by both the young children and their familiar adults (teachers and parents). However, the focal point of this paper was not to simply answer questions about these young children's everyday lives. This article outlined and examined principles and approaches for listening to young children, and the possible link between the pedagogy of listening and the young children's PSED. Thus, the best way to conclude this paper would be to discuss the outcomes of this listening.

Following a pattern similar to the previous implementations of the Approach, the process of listening produced outcomes both at an individual and organisational level (Clark 2001).

Outcomes for children and their PSED

The young children involved in this study appeared to benefit in several ways. All young children were given the opportunity to represent their everyday lives through tangible portraits that make sense to them. In many cases, the children expressed pride in what they were doing, either by commenting to the adults about the experience or sharing their experience with peers. Being enable to lead and take responsibility of some of the tools (cameras, maps, tour) gave the children the opportunity to actively explore, and develop confidence and sense of ownership which are main parts of Baker's definition of PSED's characteristics of learning (Baker 2013). The Mosaic Approach also gave young children the chance to reflect on their own experiences and to explore their own understandings. This emerging self-reflection, which was also apparent during the creation of the school's map, consists of an extremely important step to the development of critical thinking (McCall 2011). Whilst using the Mosaic Approach tools, children were more keen on sharing their thoughts, wishes and concerns, as well as managing relationships and communicating with others. These elements are of significant importance for the development of not only the PSED but also the children's emotional intelligence.

Outcomes for practitioners and parents

Listening to young children can also be beneficial for the adults who can achieve a greater and more in-depth understanding of children lives. The more creative the tools, the more likely adults are to build up a clearer and true picture of young children's perspectives. Alison Clark provides a new

insight on the matter, talking about how listening to the children's voices can enable adults understanding of children's 'sense of place' (Clark 2001, 339). 'Surveys and audits, questionnaires and interviews are all excellent techniques to record information, but sometimes they are not appropriate to explore the subtle and hidden feelings that connect us with a place. They do not reveal the experiences and memories of childhood and youth that contribute to creating a sense of place' (Adams and Ingham 1998, 149).

Outcomes at an institutional level

Responses to listening at an institutional level may include specific issues but also a change in culture (Clark 2001). In this specific project, the results were submitted to the Head of the early years school as suggestions for possible future changes. Despite not being a part of the initial plan, the suggestions were welcomed by the setting's senior management, who not only took them into account, but utilised them as the basis of the renovation plan that took place a few months later. Furthermore, teachers in the setting started using some of the tools (cameras/ maps/ discussion with peers) as part of their social skills and PSED groups, as a way of developing confidence and promoting social and emotional development and well-being. They also utilised them to modify both their medium and short-term planning to fulfil children's needs and wishes (e.g. many of the activities started taking place in the outdoor area). During informal interviews a few months after the aforementioned changes in the setting, teachers mentioned changes in the majority of the children that took part in the project. The same children seemed more engaged and keen on expressing views and wishes with both adults and peers. However, the exact impact of the Mosaic Approach in the children's PSED needs further and more thorough investigation.

It is obvious that the data collected both during and after the completion of the project not only answered the questions posed by the researcher but also created new ideas. Information and comments obtained highlighted a possible further step to the utilisation of the Mosaic Approach as a daily methodology for engaging children and as part of the PSED curriculum.

Conclusion

The results of the current research, although encouraging, are subject to limitations due to project's design and methodology. The first limitation is that the study was conducted in a specific early years setting, which makes any inference and generalisation of the results to schools with children from different socio-economic or cultural backgrounds unreliable. The available sample size was the second limitation of this study, since it was relatively small and unbalanced with regards to the gender of the children. Finally, the feelings experienced by the young participants due to their involvement in this process, as well as the long-term impact of the project on both their social and emotional development and the empowerment of their voices, were not officially recorded.

Thus, it would be beneficial for future research to investigate the implementation of the Mosaic Approach in more Greek early years settings and with a larger and more diverse group of participants. Also, it would be interesting to examine the use of the Mosaic Approach as a framework of empowering children's voices in a daily basis, as a part of their progress in the PSED curriculum.

This article has examined a particular framework for listening to young children, which was created to be used by the children, and not on the children. The Mosaic Approach encourages listening at different levels and in different contexts, in order for all the 'hundred languages of children' to be listened to (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998). In this case, 'listening' could involve children 'listening' to their own reflections, enabling multiple listening to take place between children, their peers and adults or creating possibilities for visible listening (Clark 2005, 17). This is a significant endeavour that needs further development because 'unless adults are alert to children's own ways of seeing and understanding and representing the world to themselves, it is unlikely that the child will ever manage to identify with the school's and teacher's ways of seeing' (Brooker 2002, 171).

Notes

1. What do you see here? What is really happening? How does this relate to our lives? Why does this problem or strength exist? What can we do about it? (Wang et al. 1998).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Vassiliki Riga http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2124-4031

References

Adams, E., and S. Ingham. 1998. *Changing Places: Children's Participation in Environmental Planning*. London: The Children's Society.

Baker, F. 2013. "Responding to the Challenges of Active Citizenship Through the Revised UK Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum." *Early Child Development and Care* 183 (8): 1115–1132. doi:10.1080/03004430.2013.792254.

Baker, T. A., and C. C. Wang. 2006. "Photovoice: Use of a Participatory Action Research Method to Explore the Chronic Pain Experience in Older Adults." *Qualitative Health Research* 16 (10): 1405–1413. doi:10.1177/1049732306294118.

Banerjee, R., K. Weare, and W. Farr. 2014. "Working with 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' (SEAL): Associations with School Ethos, Pupil Social Experiences, Attendance, and Attainment." *British Educational Research Journal* 40 (4): 718–742. doi:10.1002/berj.3114.

Banerji, R. 2004. "Impression: Snapshots from Sitamarhi." *The Hindu*, August 22. http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2004/08/22/stories/2004082200190300.htm.

Bell, J. 2005. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Sciences*. Wallingford: Open University Press.

Bragg, S. 2007. "'But I Listen to Children Anyway!': Teacher Perspectives on Pupil Voice." *Educational Action Research* 15 (4): 505–518. doi:10.1080/09650790701663973.

Brooker, L. 2002. *Starting School: Young Children's Learning Cultures*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Broström, S. 2012. "Children's Participation in Research." *International Journal of Early Years Education* 20 (3): 257–269. doi:10.1080/09669760.2012.715407.

Chambers, R. 1997. *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. London: Intermediate Technology.

Clark, A. 2001. "How to Listen to Very Young Children: The Mosaic Approach." *Child Care in Practice* 7 (4): 333–341. doi:10.1080/13575270108415344.

Clark, A. 2005. "Ways of Seeing: Using the Mosaic Approach to Listen to Young Children's Perspectives." In *Beyond Listening: Children's Perspectives on Early Childhood Services*, edited by A. Clark, A. T. Kjørholt, and P. Moss, 29–49. Bristol: Policy Press.

Clark, A. 2007. "Views From Inside the Shed: Young Children's Perspectives of the Outdoor Environment." *Education 3-13* 35 (4): 349–363. doi:10.1080/03004270701602483.

Clark, A. 2010. *Transforming Children's Spaces: Children's and Adults' Participation in Designing Learning Environments*. London: Routledge.

Clark, A., and P. Moss. 2001. *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic Approach*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Clark, A., and P. Moss. 2005. *Spaces to Play: More Listening to Young Children Using the Mosaic Approach*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Coomans, F., F. Grunfeld, and M. Kamminga. 2009. *Methods of Human Rights Research*. Antwerp: Intersentia.

DfE (Department for Education). 2017. *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, March 3. https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf.

Dowling, M. 2010. *Young Children's Personal, Social and Emotional Development*. London: Sage.

Dunphy, E. 2012. "Children's Participation Rights in Early Childhood Education and Care: The Case of Early Literacy Learning and Pedagogy." *International Journal of Early Years Education* 20 (3): 290–299. doi:10.1080/09669760.2012.716700.

Edwards, C. P., L. Gandini, and G. E. Forman. 1998. *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach-Advanced Reflections*. Greenwich, CT: Ablex Pub. Corp.

Elwood, J., and L. Lundy. 2010. "Revisioning Assessment Through a Children's Rights Approach: Implications for Policy, Process and Practice." *Research Papers in Education* 25 (3): 335–353. doi:10.1080/02671522.2010.498150.

Fanea, J., C. MacDougalla, J. Jovanovicb, G. Redmondc, and L. Gibbs. 2016. "Exploring the Use of Emoji as a Visual Research Method for Eliciting Young Children's Voices in Childhood Research." *Early Child Development and Care*, doi:10.1080/03004430.2016.1219730.

Ghirotto, L., and V. Mazzoni. 2013. "Being Part, Being Involved: The Adult's Role and Child Participation in an Early Childhood Learning Context." *International Journal of Early Years Education* 21 (4): 300–308. doi:10.1080/09669760.2013.867166.

Harcourt, D., and S. Hägglund. 2013. "Turning the UNCRC Upside Down: A Bottom-up Perspective on Children's Rights." *International Journal of Early Years Education* 21 (4): 286–299. doi:10.1080/09669760.2013.867167.

Howe, B., and K. Covell. 2007. *Empowering Children: Children's Rights Education as a Pathway to Citizenship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hseih, H., and S. E. Shannon. 2005. "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *Qualitive Health Research* 15 (9): 1277–1288. doi:10.1177/1049732305276687.

Jørgensen, S., and J. Kampmann. 2000. *Børn som informanter [Children as informants]*. Copenhagen: Børnera det.

Langsted, O. 1994. "Looking at Quality from the Child's Perspective." In *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services: New Approaches to Defining Quality*, edited by P. Moss, and A. Pence, 28–42. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Liaudet, J. C. 2008. *Françoise Dolto expliquée aux parents*. Paris: L'Archipel.

Lundy, L. 2012. "Children's Rights and Educational Policy in Europe: The Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." *Oxford Review of Education* 38 (4): 393–411. doi:10.1080/03054985.2012.704874.

McCall, A. L. 2011. "Promoting Critical Thinking and Inquiry Through Maps in Elementary Classrooms." *The Social Studies* 102 (3): 132–138. doi:10.1080/00377996.2010.538759.

McKenna, L., I. Brooks, and R. Vanderheide. 2017. "Graduate Entry Nurses' Initial Perspectives on Nursing: Content Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Questions." *Nurse Education Today* 49: 22–26. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2016.11.004.

McLaughlin, C. 2008. "Emotional Well-Being and its Relationship to Schools and Classrooms: A Critical Reflection." *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 36 (4): 353–366. doi:10.1080/03069880802364486.

MoE/PI (Ministry of Education/ Pedagogical Institute). 2002. *Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education (DEPPS)*. Athens: Ministry of National Education.

Moss, P. 2006. "Listening to Young Children - Beyond Rights to Ethics." In *Let's Talk About Listening to Children: Towards a Shared Understanding for Early Years Education in Scotland*, edited by Learning and Teaching Scotland, 17–23. Edinburgh: Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Nilsson, S., B. Björkman, A. L. Almqvist, L. Almqvist, P. Björk-Willén, D. Donohue, K. Enskär, M. Granlund, K. Huus, and S. Hvit. 2015. "Children's Voices – Differentiating a Child Perspective from a Child's Perspective." *Developmental Neurorehabilitation* 18 (3): 162–168. doi:10.3109/17518423.2013.801529.

O'Reilly, M., and N. Dogra. 2017. *Interviewing Children and Young People for Research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Palaiologou, I. 2014. "'Do We Hear What Children Want to Say?' Ethical Praxis When Choosing Research Tools with Children Under Five." *Early Child Development and Care* 184 (5): 689–705. doi:10.1080/03004430.2013.809341.

Rinaldi, C. 2005. *In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia Listening, Researching and Learning: Contextualising, Interpreting and Evaluating Early Childhood Education*. London: Routledge.

Rudduck, J., and D. McIntyre. 2007. *Improving Learning Through Consulting Pupils*. London: Routledge.

Seidel, S. 2001. "Perspectives on Research in Education." In *Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners*, edited by C. Giudici, C. Rinaldi, and M. Krechevsky, 330–335. Reggio Emilia: Reggio Children.

Sommer, D. 1998. "The Reconstruction of Childhood–Implications for Theory and Practice." *European Journal of Social Work* 1 (3): 311–326. doi:10.1080/13691459808413792.

Sorrell, J. F. 2005. *Joinedupdesignforschools*. London: Merrell Publishers.

UN (United Nations). 1989. *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Geneva: United Nations.

UN (United Nations). 2008. *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention (CRC/C/GBR/CO/4)*. Geneva: United Nations.

Velasco, M. L., I. Berckmans, J. V. O'Driscoll, and G. Loots. 2014. "A Visual Narrative Research on Photographs Taken by Children Living on the Street in the City of La Paz - Bolivia." *Children and Youth Services Review* 42: 136–146. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.04.006.

Waller, T., and A. Bitou. 2011. "Research with Children: Three Challenges for Participatory Research in Early Childhood." *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 19 (1): 5–20. doi:10.1080/1350293X.2011.548964.

Wang, C. C., W. K. Yi, Z. W. Tao, and K. Carovano. 1998. "Photovoice as a Participatory Health Promotion Strategy." *Health Promotion International* 13 (1): 75–86. doi:10.1093/heapro/13.1.75.

WHO (World Health Organization). 2003. *Creating an Environment for Emotional and Social Well-Being: an Important Responsibility of a Health Promoting and Child-Friendly School*. Geneva: World Health Organization. November 5. http://www.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42819.

Zins, J. E., R. P. Weissberg, C. M. Wang, and H. J. Walberg. 2004. *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research say?* New York: Teacher College Press.