

Help to fill the gap or promotion of agency?

what makes a good educational experience for migrant children? Theoretical foundations of an alternative view, plus some suggestions from research

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Background: solid narratives of children's incompetence

Positioning Theory (Harr´ and Van Langenhove 1999)

Intergenerational order (Qvortrup, 1990; Alanen, 2009)

Position of children and adults in educational contexts

Positions become consolidates as social roles

Roles can be ordered hierarchically

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Background: solid narratives of children's incompetence

Children narrated as incompetent or 'second best' in authoring and sharing knowledge (James and James, 2004)

Adults are the legitimate authors of valid knowledge

Low epistemic status (authorship of knowledge)

Low epistemic authority (rights to express knowledge)

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The position of migrant children

Young children as the lowest epistemic status and epistemic authority

Narrative of children's dependence on adults
(Alaasutari and Karila 2010)

Position of children as dependent and incompetent linked not only to age but also migrant background

Migrant children narrated (positioned) as 'in need of (extra) help

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Positioning of migrant children as 'children in need'

Negative social construction of 'ethnicity' as linked to
'deficit' (Seele 2012)

Categorising migrant children by helping them

Help to children to fill alleged gaps against active
participation

Helping/fill the gap can reproduce low epistemic
status/authority

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Positioning of migrant children as 'children in need'

Migrant children in need of 'extra-education' to
catch-up

Categorising migrant children by helping them

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An alternative: promotion of children's epistemic status

Upgrading children's epistemic authority (Heritage and Raymond 2005)

Value of children's active participation

Active participation as agency

Dialogic teaching

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An alternative: promotion of children's
epistemic status

Limits of scaffolding and SST

High epistemic authority but low epistemic status

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An alternative: promotion of children's epistemic status

The radical upgrading of children's epistemic authority of the Reggio Emilia Approach

High epistemic authority AND high epistemic status

Children as authors of valid knowledge autonomously from adults (Dahlberg 2009)

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An alternative: promotion of children's epistemic status

Not 'speaking well' but rather 'what I do with language' (Blommaert 2008)

Key is recognition of children's epistemic status

Change in migrant (and all) children's positioning

Linguistic difficulties do not need extra-education but promotion of active participation

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An alternative: promotion of children's epistemic status

Agency as rights and responsibilities for constructing knowledge

Adults ready to downgrade their epistemic status

Real listening

Children's voices not as a risk but as a resource for education

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An alternative: promotion of children's epistemic status

Children's positioned as persons not as roles

Children's action as personal expression rather than role performances

Promotion of equity, empathy and expectations of personal expressions

(www.sharmed.eu; www.child-up.eu)

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Promotion of children's voices and implication
for construction of identities

Challenge to essentialism and 'otherness' which are
problematic for intercultural education (Devine 2013)

Avoiding assumption about identity

Rejection fixed, pre-determined assumptions

Taking children's construction of their identities
seriously (real listening)

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Summarising points

1. Upgrading epistemic status/authority as a way to approach linguistic challenges alternative to deficit approaches
2. Intercultural communication as constructed in interaction through personal expressions
3. Dialogic teaching rather than scaffolding or SST (the Reggio Approach)
4. Children as authors of their own identities

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