

Implementing Slow Pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare through Froebelian Principled Practice

The Froebel Trust Practitioner Grant Funded Collaborative Project 2021-22

Who is involved ...

Falkirk Froebel Network Lead in partnership with Alison Clark, the Froebel Trust and three Falkirk Early Learning and Childcare settings. Network Project: Carried out in partnership.

Donna Green: Early Years Pedagogue, Falkirk Froebelian Lead, Project Lead

Alison Clark: Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of South-eastern Norway, and Honorary Senior Research fellow, UCL Institute of Education, UK: Advisory role.

Project Leads and participating ELC Settings: Lynette Wilson & Linda Love, SEYO Tracey Sharples, SEYO Sam Hill, EYO

Gemma Paterson: Early Years Pedagogue, Marvellous

Mealtimes Consultant



Donna Green (2021) MSc Froebel pathway Dissertation Poster

Introduction

This MSc in Education, Early Childhood Practice and Froebel dissertation research study focuses on exploring slow pedagogy in Early Childhood through a Froebelian (1782-1852) lens in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). Examining slow pedagogy through the Froebelian lens in ELC settings may result in a culture of collaboration, agency and listening, which embraces all children having time to live and learn within holistic, unhurried nurturing places. Slow pedagogy can be defined in the following ways, where Cowan (in Clark, 2021:npn) argues that it is "...something you do with children, rather than to children and something that has time for wonder and uncertainty"; while Bateman (2021:npn) adds: "It is less about linear time...more about full engagement in the flow of deep time" (Clark, 2021:npn). Research from Clark (2020:21), namely "Slow Knowledge and the Unhurried Child", inspired and stimulated this dissertation. Clark's (2021) work invites others

(practitioners/parents/policy makers) to slow down and look deeper into what slow pedagogy means for children. It draws from a plethora of Froebelian literature (Froebel, 1826, 1847, 1856, 1885, 1887, 1908; Tovey, 2017, 2020; Bruce et al., 2019; Bruce, 1991, 2012, 2020, 2021) where the opening quote is used to provoke deep

"We grant space and time to young plants and animals because we know that, in accordance with the laws that live in them, they will develop properly and grow well. Young animals and plants are given rest, and arbitrary interference with their growth is avoided, because it is known that the opposite practice would disturb their pure unfolding and sound development; but the young human being is looked upon as a piece of wax, a lump of clay which man can mould into what he pleases" (Froebel, 1887:8).

Context

The literature review achieved an exploration of slow pedagogy in relation to ELC practice through a Froebelian lens, whilst encompassing relevant and theoretical literature. The focus was aligned to four key themes which emphasises the importance of 'starting with the child' and how 'time', 'space' and 'place' are significant to build capacity and focus on knowledge around research of slow pedagogy and how this links to Froebel's philosophy and modern-day principled practice. It also raised concerns through the theme of measurement and neoliberal constructs.

Beginning with the Froebelian principle of 'starting with the child' - as Bruce (2021) explains, "what children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point in a child's education" (Bruce, 2021:142). Additionally, Bruce asserts, "begin where the learner is, not where you want them to be, or they ought to be" (Bruce 2021:143). Furthermore, Bruce reiterates that "the focus is on what children can do, and it is not about deficit" (Bruce, 2021:144).

Limited literature was found supporting practice research of slow pedagogy through a Scottish context within Early Years settings. However, Realising the Ambition, Being Me (RtA) (Education Scotland, 2020) - advocates "starting with the child" (Education Scotland, 2020:65). The national guidance discusses the "basic principles" to support "Responsive and intentional planning through child-centred pedagogy in practice" (Education Scotland, 2020: 63). It also states that "much of what we now take for granted in Early Learning and Childcare has its origins in Froebel's ideas" (Education

The literature also revealed negative factors such as a culture of measurement, where Roberts-Holmes (2020) states that neoliberalism "attempts to reduce Early Years education into a 'school readiness' factory that prepares young children for success in primary school tests" (Roberts-Holmes, 2020:170).

In addition, Rosa (2016) highlights growing concerns regarding young children's learning: "We will have to be a little faster, more efficient, more innovative, if we want to maintain our place in the world.... In fact, success, strength and efficiency in the present are directly proportional to the strength of the compulsion to escalate the future" (Rosa, 2016:407). Clark (2021) agrees and claims that the pressures to hurry children are focused on finance, and not necessarily pedagogy or social concepts: "Children are viewed as human capital or future human capital within a neoliberal world view" (Clark, 2021:npn).

Additionally, the desire for a slower pace is not new - evidence from Holt (2002) shows that children learn better at a slower pace and for this reason he called for "slow schooling" (Holt, 2002:9). Additionally, Honoré argues that there is a problem with "academic hothousing" (Honoré, 2008:63), as parents accelerate childhood for returns of quick knowledge through rote learning. This could link to the writings of Bruce (1991) where she notes, "... we are influenced by the general philosophies of life that are dominant in our society" (Bruce, 1991:119).

Exploring Slow Pedagogy through a Froebelian Lens

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Green, D., (2021) Summary of MSc in Education Early Childhood and Froebel Dissertation



The work of Froebelian Helen Tovey (2017) is considered useful, as Tovey adds, "the use of adults' time is crucially linked to children's growing independence and autonomy" and that "Froebelian educators create long periods of openended uninterrupted time...". Therefore, "time is not 'filled' but is freed from all unnecessary interruptions" (Tovey,

Methodology and Ethics

The epistemology and ontology are discussed prior to the research design, followed by documentation of the data collection methods and procedures, and the data analysis. This continues with converse positionality and trustworthiness before moving on to ethical considerations, limitations, and the conclusion. MacNaughton and Hughes (2008:56) advise that "as your research progresses through new cycles, you should return regularly to the literature", which is an ongoing tool that supports this research. The aim of this study was to explore slow pedagogy through a Froebelian lens and the following research questions were examined by higher education student and early childhood practitioners as participants.

- 1. What is your understanding of the concept of 'slow pedagogy'?
- 2. From your understanding, what would 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC? 3. In what ways do children in your setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time?

The methodology used for this research study is qualitative, using narrative and participatory methods to gather data. Howe (1985) asserts that qualitative methods provide clear forms of values which show methodological intervention results. In addition, "qualitative data is not expressed numerically" (Tisdall, Davis & Gallagher, 2009:228), therefore, the plan is for the data to provide real stories with information gathered from real people.

The use of research codes of practice from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) and the United Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) (2009) were adhered to and enshrined at each stage. In addition, all Covid-19 guidance (Scottish Government and University of Edinburgh) was adhered to.

McNair "there is an expectation that children will do certain things at certain times" and argues that in early childhood "children need this time and space to pursue their own interests" (2021:npn).



References

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inted Kingdom Research Integrity Office (UKRIC) (2009)

Findings

This research study enabled and cultivated a platform of resources for the participants who were Higher Education Students/Practitioners. It collated the voices of participants through reflections of practice and the findings show how practice correlates with this research and theory.

A selection of findings from participants showed their perceptions of what slow pedagogy means to them. Ivy explained "slow pedagogy to me means pausing and taking time to build relationships with children, families and connecting with our local and wider community. We take time to observe the beauty of children's individual learning."

This connects with the Froebelian principle of "relationships matter" which are "... of central importance in a child's life" whilst expressing the importance of the "autonomous learner" (Froebel

Participant Rose responded "I would describe slow pedagogy as the practice of recognising children's need for space and time, to mould and immerse themselves in their own learning story. It is the ability to support children's exploration of the world around them at a pace which is right for them. For practitioners this means slowing down, allowing ourselves to be in the moment with the child and work with them in a non-didactic manner."

This aligns with Payne and Wattchow's (2008) "time, and our experiences of it, which warrants attention of 'place'" (2008:25).

Lilly added a further significant aspect, "we need to think what slow pedagogy means for practitioners, children and families. It's not just an approach, it's like a way of living." Which makes connections with Toyey (2017), where she discusses that the "Froebelian approach is not a method...it is underpinned by key principles" (Tovey, 2017:2).

The discussions end in opposition to neoliberalism and the hurried culture of measurement. The outcome of this research study chapter is in agreement with Clark (2020) - that there is a need for "transformative change" and a strong belief that ELC practice can draw upon the key messages within the findings of this research, including this pertinent key message from Bruce (2021), who invites the "reconnection of Froebel's principles and practices" (Bruce, 2021:145).

Liebschner (1992), drawing from Froebelian ideology, notes that:"... notions of freedom from something, freedom from rote learning and freedom from inappropriate teaching, led Froebel to a more positive notion of freedom, namely freedom for children to participate, to choose, to act, to observe, to play and above all to be allowed time to absorb new knowledge at their own speed of learning" (Liebschner, 1992:66).

Conclusion

The research study identified areas in practice where there are clear links and connections with slow pedagogy and Froebelian principles through practice. It was found that there is limited research within the Scottish context of exploring slow pedagogy in practice through a Froebelian lens. It answered the research aim and questions and the findings revealed that each participant's definition of slow pedagogy had strands of different elements which were relevant and valid, and a reminder that slow pedagogy, like Froebelian philosophy, is not a structured method. The focus group participants brought a wealth of discussions and became fully immersed in the study. Discussions and findings unearthed many fusions with research and theory to ELC practice. Clear links were revealed which showed elements of slow pedagogy from practice, such as Marvellous Mealtimes (a local authority approach to mealtimes) and the freedom to explore space and place, although some restrictions due to Covid-19 were having a negative impact. Participants identified that natural environments lent themselves to slow practice, in opposition to feeling hurried and completing tasks which some indoor spaces were found to show this. The findings also discovered a need for more shared vision and clarity where principles inform and underpin practice, findings show a need for opportunities to have team discussions and come to a consensus of what quality practice is and what words and concepts mean for each early learning community. This research study, while small in scale, will contribute towards several potential implications on policy, practice and research.

The participants' enthusiasm to learn more and share slow pedagogy through a Froebelian lens within their ELC settings instigated a future project which is planned to enable further development through a Scottish local authority ELC practice context. The project is called 'Implementing Slow Pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare through Froebelian Principled Practice' which is a collaboration in partnership with Alison Clark and funded through the Froebel Trust.

Through the Scottish Context

(Extract from: Green, 2021)

Within our Scottish Government Practitioner Guidance, RtA (2020) space is a key factor which holistically interconnects and works alongside interactions and experiences. Additionally, it discusses each of the elements – space, experiences and interactions – as being part of the environment in terms of more than the physical space, for example, "an unhurried environment allows me time to concentrate on whatever catches my attention without being rushed" (Education Scotland, 2020:31).



Bruce (2021) explains, "what children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point in a child's education" (Bruce, 2021:142). Additionally, Bruce asserts, "begin where the learner is, not where you want them to be, or they ought to be" (Bruce 2021:143). Furthermore, Bruce reiterates that "the focus is on what children can do, and it is not about deficit" (Bruce, 2021:144). When exploring this principle through the Scottish context, our practitioner guidance — Realising the Ambition, Being Me (RtA) (Education Scotland, 2020) — advocates "starting with the child" (Education Scotland, 2020:65). The national guidance discusses the "basic principles" to support "Responsive and Intentional planning through child-centred pedagogy in practice" (Education Scotland, 2020: 63). It also states that "much of what we now take for granted in Early Learning and Childcare has its origins in Froebel's ideas" (Education Scotland, 2020:102).

Creating Project Poster to support implementation

Improvement Project

'Implementing Slow Pedagogy into ELC through Froebelian Principled Practice'

Setting: Collaborative Project:

Priority Area: Froebelian Principled Practice: What Matters to Me: Marvellous Mealtimes and Nature.

Impact

- Slow pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings may result in a culture of collaboration, agency and listening, which embraces all children having time to live and learn within holistic, unhurried nurturing places.
- Presentations, Market style informal sharing of projects, academic posters and project books will all be produced to document any impact.

Methods

- The use of observation, narrative and participatory methods will be used to gather data
- · What are the Findings and Discussions telling us?
- The plan is for the data to provide real stories with information gathered from real people: Children, families and staff teams: learning together to promote autonomy and unravel and be reflective in practice to promote quality with our children, families and staff teams.
- Intentionally making Froebelian principles explicit connections with theory and practice
- Measure: 100% of Project ELC settings are demonstrating progress in slow pedagogy practice as evidenced through observations.

Rationale

- The main aim of this study is to examine Slow Pedagogy through Froebelian Principled Practice.
- Research from Clark (2020:21), namely Slow Knowledge and the Unhurried Child, inspired and stimulated a dissertation titled Exploring Slow Pedagogy through a Froebelian Lens (Green, 2021).
- Clark's (2021) and Green's (2021) work invites others (practitioners/parents/policy makers) to slow down and look deeper into what slow pedagogy means for children.



Methodology

- A significant ontological position for this research will be the viewpoint that "children are competent agents who actively contribute to shaping the social world through everyday activities" (Gallagher, 2009:67)
- The theoretical perspective of critical inquiry is applied, where the participants reflect on the nature of practice to inform the social reality and the participatory element of bains.
- The epistemological position within this study is that of constructionism.
- The methodology used for this research study is qualitative., using observation, narrative and participatory methods to gather data

Aim

This aim of this study is to examine: 'Implementing Slow Pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare Settings through Froebelian Principled Practice'.

The following research questions will be asked within our staff teams and observed and reflected through practice:

- 1. What is your understanding of the concept 'slow pedagogy'?
- From your understanding, what does 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?
- 3. In what ways do children in your setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time?
- Through observing and reflecting in practice your Froebelian principled practice, in what way does this connect to slow

Timescale

- Implemented through the improvement plans in August 2021 3 x Staff workshops (Alison Clark) on Slow Pedagogy September 2021, January and March 2022
- Throughout the year each establishment collates quality deep observations through the lens of the child and staff create fortnightly checks in regard to reflections of the practice.
- Jan 22 Update Froebel Trust Feb 22 Authority Slow Pedagogy CLPL
 Throughout the year Lead Froebelian supports settings with a minimum
- monthly visit and on an open consultancy basis

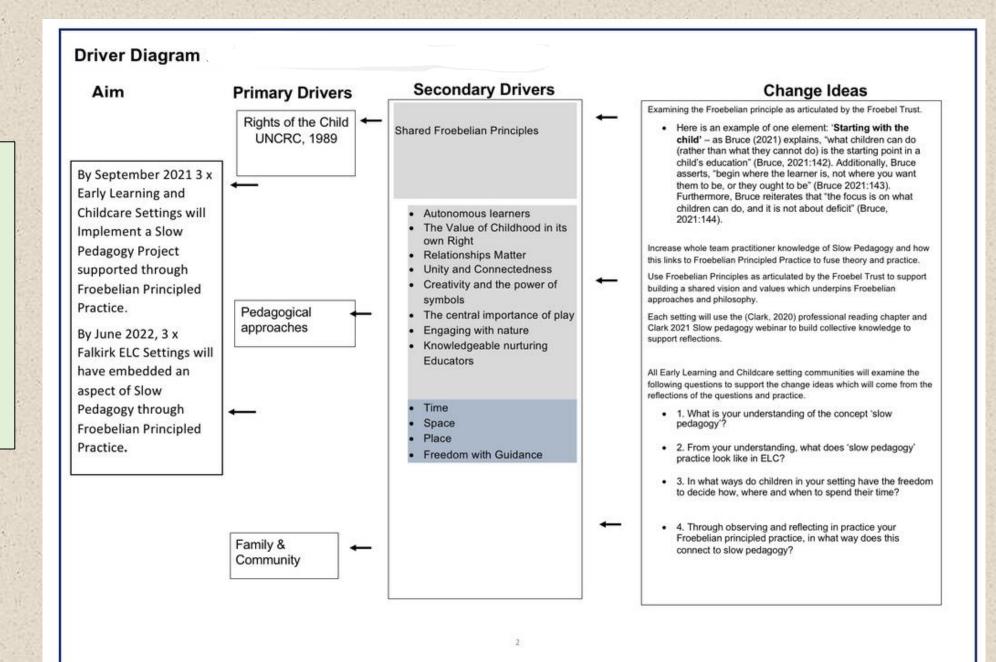
 April: collate through qualitative date and presentation of findings
- May 2021: Deliver a collective Keynote and presentation at our Falkirk Froebel Festival (All Leads in each establishment and (Alison Clark).
- June 2022 Write up a report to support the implementations and findings of this project (submit to Froebel Trust)

Scope

- This project will be implemented in three Falkirk ELC Settings.
- This project, while small in scale, will contribute towards several potential implications on policy, practice and research.
- Children and families are at the heart of Froebelian principled practice and will be consulted through every stage with a 'starting with the child' approach.
- Due to this being a collaboration and funded project, the findings will be shared within our authority and wider.



Driver Diagram



Timeline

Froebelian Slow Pedagogy Project Timeline and implementation stages/ significant events

We would like to use the element of the academic year 2021-22 to complete the following project: "Implementing Slow Pedagogy in early learning and childcare settings through Froebelian Principled Practice"

The project will commence in August /September 2021which will be incorporated into each of the 3 x Froebelian settings improvement plan for 2021-22. Collective Collaboration.

Marvellous mealtimes (Lunch and snacks) the connection between slow pedagogy and Froebelian principles through process and place - slow food for under three year olds

Marvellous mealtimes (Lunch and snacks) and the relationship to the connection with Froebel's Principles to time and space through the lens of the child.

Nature – enabling autonomy and choice of being whilst in nature – sense of place, unhurried slow knowledge opportunities that nature can bring – Connecting slow pedagogy with Froebelian Principles (off- site – on site)

*It is hoped that there will be no disruption in carrying out this research proposal from coronavirus (Covid-19). All guidance will be adhered to, and this has been considered throughout this project.

Professional Reading and Webinar Provided to all Project Leads to share within their Teams

Please find the Literature: Chapter 9 and link below to provide our reading and in addition a webinar from Alison Clark's research on "slow pedagogy" (Clark, 2020, 2021) which will support staff teams as a key resource to explore

Please access the literature link for a free download

Chapter 9 'Towards a listening ECEC system' pp.134-150 in *Transforming Early Childhood in England*, edited by Claire Cameron and Peter Moss.

https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/128464

Froebel Trust Conference: Webinar 2021: Growing through play (06.03.2021)

Slow Knowledge and the Unhurried Child: Time for Slow Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education.

Speaker: Alison Clark (University of South East Norway)

https://www.froebel.org.uk/training-and-resources/webinars-and-short-films



"Time is not 'filled' but is freed from all unnecessary interruptions" (Tovey, 2017:42).

Clark claims there is a need for "transformative change", contending that "listening has become counter-cultural in a system driven by measurement" (Clark, 2020:134).

Clark advocates that "listening can be understood as an integral part of valuing the difficult to measure" (Clark, 2020:134).

Friedrich Froebel advocated, "the child should, from the very time of birth, be viewed in the accordance with his nature, treated correctly, and given the free, allsided use of his powers" (Froebel,1908:21).

The Froebelian Principles can support, guide and reflect and always go back to the literature.



"...Both these notions of freedom from something, freedom from rote learning and freedom from inappropriate teaching led Froebel to a more positive notion of freedom, namely freedom for children to participate, to choose, to act, to observe, to play and above all to be allowed time to absorb new knowledge at their own speed of learning."

Liebschner, J. (1992) A Child's Work: freedom and play in Froebel's educational theory and

Making links to Slow Pedagogy

- Calming atmosphere
- Space
- Time
- Unhurried
- Place sense of belonging

"...Both these notions of freedom from something, freedom from rote learning and freedom from inappropriate teaching led Froebel to a more positive notion of freedom, namely freedom for children to participate, to choose, to act, to observe, to play and above all to be allowed time to absorb new knowledge at their own speed of learning."

Liebschner, J. (1992) A Child's Work: freedom and play in Froebel's educational theory and practice. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 66.

"An unhurried environment allows me time to concentrate on whatever catches my attention without being rushed" (Education Scotland, 2020:31).

The "child expresses their internal motivations towards leading their own learning through their actions.

This in turn helps them build theories about the world around them"

(Education Scotland, 2020:68).

Samples of significant qualitative findings to inform thinking

Child "Look how high the tree is, if we go to the top, we will see my grandpa. He is in the sky now"

Practitioner "An insightful training workshop where I took the time to re-evaluate how rushed our mealtimes were and look at ways to slow it down. Freedom for children to engage and absorb knowledge at their own speed of learning. Listening is key."

Practitioner "In order to find out a child's skills and interest it's important to observe the child and not interrupt their play."

Parent "I think its really important to be in touch with nature."

Parent "It gives her an understanding of the world around her..."

Our Project Aim

This aim of this project is to examine: **Implementing Slow Pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare through Froebelian Principled Practice** where the following practitioner enquiry questions will be asked in each project setting.

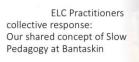
- 1. What is your understanding of the concept 'slow pedagogy'?
- 2. From your understanding, what would 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?
- 3. In what ways do children in your setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time?

4. Through observing and reflecting your Froebelian principled practice, in what way does this connect to slow pedagogy?

What do our findings show us?

What is your understanding to the Concept of Slow Pedagogy?

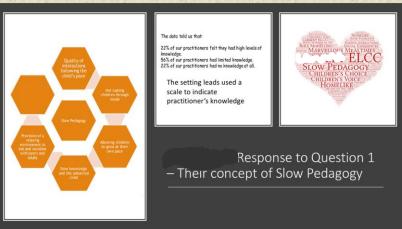
Each setting made this personal to their project e.g., concept of slow pedagogy in and with nature or through Marvellous Mealtimes specific to their project focus



Our shared statement

Slow Pedagogy is the practice of understanding children's need to engross themselves in their individual interests, without the constraints of time and space. This is the way in which practitioners do not unnecessarily interrupt a child's exploration with their own agenda and attempt to rush a learning experience. Instead we must observe and be present with the child in the moment, understanding that through deep engagement, a child is able to develop and accomplish their learning needs, at a pace which is individual to them. We can assist with this by providing open ended materials, with which the child can choose to support their play and we must listen to the child intensively. Froebel recognized the need for children to have freedom to explore the world around them and so too must we trust the agency of the child to unravel their aspirations and needs in their own way and in their own time

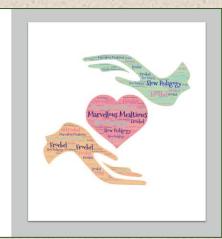




ELCC

ELC Centre our vision for children is to foster their learning and development in a holistic way. To shift away from fast Knowledge with quantitative results to one that is value driven and gives children time, place and space allowing them to make connections, reflect on their own thoughts and ideas and focus on the here and now. Thoughtful and attentive practitioners will support slow, deep and mindful learning experiences that move toward investigation, conversations and encouragement of children's autonomy. Emphasis is placed on children and communities, collaboration that will support creativity and self knowledge and critical thinking.

"I believe that he who sows utopia will reap reality"
Carlos Petrini



Each ELC Settings Collated a collective Response to Research Question One:

1: What is your understanding to the Concept of Slow Pedagogy?

The Concept of Slow Pedagogy: Provoked thinking......

Key points/findings:

- Value based
- Emphasis on the here and now. Clark's workshop enabled further appreciation of the past to inform the present and although the future is important so is the present.
- **Time**: is time filled or is it freed?
- Pace: self regulation/ hurried or unhurried who sets the pace.
- Place: sense of belonging
- Space: looking at these through the child's lens
- **Freedom**: exploring this further through the Froebelian concept of Freedom with Guidance



Exploring Collective Concepts of Slow Pedagogy linking with Froebelian Principles

- Slow knowledge is value driven and recognises the importance of time, place and space for every child whilst enabling them to make connections, reflect on their own thoughts and ideas. Where adults are present and value being which enables rich observations and attuning to
- Knowledgeable, nurturing adults embrace slow, deep and mindful learning experiences that support creativity, investigation, conversations, listening and encouragement of children's autonomy with quality thoughtful, sensitive and nurturing interactions naturally.
- Unfolding learning and development in a holistic way that facilitates children's aspirations to develop through their own interests and build capacity of knowledge with real life experiences and play, drawing on the concept of freedom with guidance.



What are our findings telling us?

Question 2: From your understanding, what does 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?

Each setting made this personal to their project e.g., concept of slow pedagogue in and with Nature or through Marvellous Mealtimes specific to their project focus

Question 2: Each setting collated their own responses:

From your understanding, what does 'Slow Pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?

ELCC Practitioner Reflections from Research Question 2

Things we do well:

Our open lunches encourages children's autonomy where they are supported to self serve their choice of foods and pour their own drinks. Children's confidence and self help skills have grown as they help to set the table with placemats, cutlery and a glass. Staff are mindful of seeing what a child can do and starting from there. We have different lunch sittings so children are not rushed to come for lunch and are able to choose who they sit with and for how long.

Children are involved in baking and cooking experiences a few times during the week.

Staff sit and have lunch with the children, role modelling manners and engaging in meaningful conversation to develop positive eating habits for our children.

Lunch menu displayed at entrances and put onto twitter weekly to keep parents informed of what children are having for lunches.

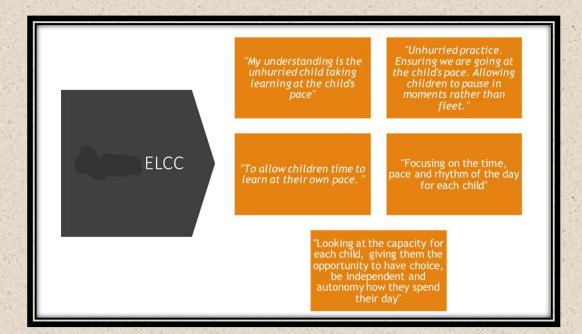
Future possibilities:

More ownership for children when putting together the shopping list for larder items and cooking /baking experiences. Look to identify gaps in our current menu where the larder produce could support a more enjoyable mealtimes that all children could enjoy.

To support sustainability look to grow our own fruit and vegetables, cascading slow pedagogy to the outdoors.

Make connections with children's home environments through adding photos of mealtimes from their own homes. Create a food policy that involves children and enable staff, children and parents/carers to understand their commitment to ensuring our mealtimes are truly Marvellous.

To support our larder money look to community initiatives: Local food banks that may donate out of date foods such as flour, corn flour etc for playdough. Contact local supermarkets with regards to food parcels.



ELC Common Threads from practitioner reflections Responding to Question 2: Our understanding what slow pedagogy practice look like through nature

- Children are given time and space to explore at their own pace.
- Freedom to return to and revisit their prior learning.
- Children are able to direct their own learning through exploration and personal space.
- Children use their senses to explore the natural world and are able to create their own wonder and curiosity.
- Adult's presence is enhanced, without themselves feeling rushed.

What does 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?

A collection of key findings in response to research question 2

Key words used, 3 x settings:

Time, Space, Pace, Freedom, Choice, Respect, Trust, Listen, Learning, Play, Real Life,

Children are given time and space to explore at their own pace.

I have Time and Space to explore at my own Pace.

Freedom to return to and revisit their prior learning.

I have the Freedom to return to and revisit my prior Learning.

Children can direct their own learning through exploration and personal space.

I can direct my own learning through exploration and personal Space.

Children use their senses to explore the natural world and can create their own wonder and curiosity.

I use my senses to explore the natural world and I can create my own wonder and curiosity.

• Staff are mindful of seeing what a child can do and starting from there.

I like when adults respect and appreciate what I can do appose to focusing on what I can't do, my future is not my current focus however, the here and now is important to meonia Green: Falkirk Froebel

What does 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?

Findings were showing we often write through the practitioner's view which led on to thinking how we truly value children's participation and perceptions. Writing up Children's Marvellous Mealtimes policies emerged from this and is causing a ripple effect

 Staff spend time with the children, role modelling, listening, observing and engaging in meaningful conversation which support the element of building positive relationships and attuning to each individual child.

I like when adults Listen to me, Talk to me, Show me and Watch me as I build positive Relationships with people who Value, Trust and Respect me. I also like that adults Learn from Me and think about what that Means to Me.

 The rhythm of the day focuses on each individual child enabling freedom of time and pace opposed to being rushed and dominated by the adult's agenda. Encourages children's agency and equal autonomy to learn together.

I have the **right** to make **Choices** in relation to **where, when** and **how** I spend my **Time** and who with throughout **My Day.**I have the **right to access sensitive, nurturing knowledgeable adults** who **Embrace Learning Together** and **Caring for Me**.

• Enable children's participation and perspectives to be embedded into practice oppose to tokenistic. Where quality experiences through real life and play support learning, deep engagement, opportunities to wallow, be curious and creative in all aspects of place in the Early Years Community, in nature and beyond.

I have the right to be involved in Real life experiences and Play to support my learning and understanding of my world.

"Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times" - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12









What does this Project Mean to Me?

What Matters to Me?





Dear

It was lovely to join the Stars room today and see you at snack time.

You were doing lots of pointing to decide what you wanted to eat from the snack table when self-serving your food. You selected "breadsticks" "cheese" and then nodded when Allana asked if you would like pear. You independently carry your plate and select a seat at the table.

I noticed you are **learning to use the food tongs to pick up your food** and Allana was giving you a little help with this. **You have fantastic skills as you managed to pour your milk from the jug into your cup**. At times I noticed **you like to dip some of your food into the milk before eating it**. This was similar to what you did with the breadsticks as **you liked to dip them into the soft cheese prior to eating**.

Whilst at the table one of your friends said she likes crackers and you replied, "I like crackers too". When you had finished all the food on your plate, I noticed you held your plate up to show Allana and then you finished drinking your milk before putting your cup away then returned to put your plate away.

Allana said would you like me to help with washing your hands and face and you said, "I can do it myself" and off you went to the sink and got your hands all washed.

It was very interesting to see that after snack you went on to play and **lots of food came into your play**. First you went to the block area "I've made a lolly pop" you told me and walked around with it saying, "lick lick" "more", and you add another block "bigger, lick lick". You then put some blocks into a yellow container and go and say, "I've got popcorn".

It was lovely to join you at snack time and play , thank you.

Love from

Donna

Reflection and discussions from Lee's observation story What Matters to Me? through Froebelian the Principled lens

UNITY & CONNECTEDNESS: Lee is making **connections** and learning how everything is **interconnected** in his **real-life experiences** and his **play** is supporting this.

THE VALUE OF CHILDHOOD IN ITS OWN RIGHT: Valuing the current here and now experiences with Lee.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER: Significant Adults, Peers, Referencing – Home – mum.

CREATIVITY & THE POWER OF SYMBOLS: Using the blocks as **symbolic representation** — lolly pop, popcorn.

THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF PLAY: Transferring the real experience of lunch into play - making sense of his world through play.

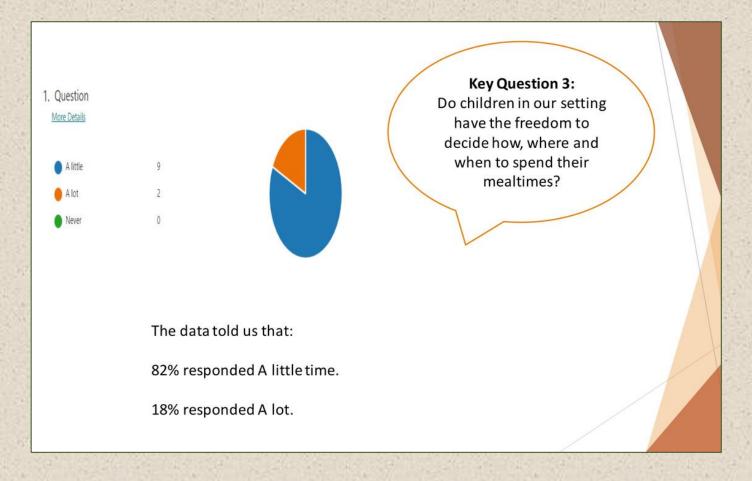
ENGAGING WITH NATURE: There were some elements through the discussions e.g. "Carrots" "I love carrots" further develop his love possibly through grow your own: Considerations and possibilities to explore: Dollar Park currently have carrots in the walled garden maybe the community gardens at Larbert HS may have some? This could provide rich first-hand experiences. Buying carrots at the local shop. Preparing the carrots for snacks/lunches

KNOWLEDGEABLE AND NURTURING EDUCATORS: Building capacity of **slow pedagogy** and Froebelian **Principles** along with **observation** to inform a **personalised starting with the child approach** which attunes to Lee and gives the **respect and value** of a **reciprocal relationship**.

AUTONOMOUS LEARNERS: Staff are identifying how to enable **autonomy** with Lee through the Marvellous Mealtime experience (snack) to which he is clearly seeking – "I can do it by myself" – **independence, confidence and self-esteem** – are all **flourishing** through these **opportunities** to enable Lee to **participate** and his **perceptions** to be **truly valued**.

Question 3: In what ways do children in your setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time?

- Nursery is free flow, almost throughout the whole session
- When the children come into the nursery, they have the **choice to decide** if they want to **play outside or go straight inside**, the **outside area is open all the time for the children, so they have the choice** The children get to choose if they want to eat lunch inside or outside.
- Three options for going into the community and the children have the freedom to decide - fully child led and not rushed or hurried.
- When children request to go somewhere or do something interesting in the community e.g. local shops, building constructions etc staff really try to facilitate that this happens.
- Within our open lunches children have the choice and freedom when to come for lunch and control over what they want to eat and control to decide where they want to sit and leave.
- Children's voices are heard as they decide what they choose to eat, and personal power is encouraged as they decide what to make to supplement the nursery menu.
- Children are **free** to make **decisions** over the **time** they spend at mealtimes and to **engage** in meaningful conversation with staff and their friends.
- We are trying to offer the **opportunity** to ensure children can eat outdoors if this is their **choice** but at present is inhibited by weather and staffing, tending to happen in warmer weather.



One setting's data: explored at the beginning of the project

Tovey (2017) states that "the use of adults' time is crucially linked to children's growing independence and autonomy" and that "Froebelian educators create long periods of openended uninterrupted time...".

Tovey stresses an important element to the freedom with guidance concept within our Froebelian approach – "free movement, free choice and self-activity are important... however, these should be within a framework of guidance in which the role of the adult is crucial" (Tovey, 2017:3).

Unravelling the concept of 'Freedom with Guidance'



A FROEBELIAN APPROACH

Froebel's principles and practice today



This pamphlet has been produced by the Froebel Trust as part of a series focussing on various themes closely associated with Froebelian practice today. The pamphlets are an accessible e-resource for those supporting children 0-8.

Freedom with guidance

'[The] child is free to determine his own actions according to the laws and demands of the play he is involved in. Through and in his play he is able to feel himself to be independent and autonomous'. (Froebel in Liebschner 1992:69)

Freedom for Froebel was about helping children to think for themselves, make choices, solve problems and pursue their own interests and talents. It was about allowing uniqueness and individuality to flourish within a strong, supportive community. In Froebel's kindergartens, children were free to move, explore, play, create, participate and to learn at their own pace.

However, freedom, he argued, cannot be given to children; rather, they have to attain it for themselves through their own efforts. Often this involves a struggle. So, for example striving to do



Fig.2: Gaining skill involves struggle and practice.

things like mastering the use of tools develops a sense of autonomy with less dependence on adults. New understandings can open up new areas of thought. Ultimately Froebel saw education as freedom.



Fig.3: A well-planned block area includes freedom to choose and adult guidance in sharing the space.

Froebel's notion of freedom was not just licence to do anything and everything. Clearly some children's freedoms interfere with and constrain those of others. Freedom can only operate within a framework of responsibility and respect for others. the resources and the natural environment.

Adult guidance was therefore central to Froebel's notion of freedom. The adult played a significant role as a sensitive guide helping children to gain and use their freedom in worthwhile and mutually



Fig.4: Open-access, independent cooking area. Adult guidance includes a well-planned environment and pictorial recipe books. Children take responsibility for the area including the washing-up.

Froebel's notion of the adult making rich provision, guiding children in their play and interactions, opening up possibilities rather than constraining them, helping children develop autonomy and self-discipline within a framework of respect for others remains a powerful approach today. Freedom is not just about removing barriers, it requires opportunity and encouragement. The role of the adult is therefore essential in ensuring that all children's freedoms are protected.



Fig. 5: Adults offer guidance in using woodwork tools in safe and effective ways.

A FROEBELIAN APPROACH to freedom with guidance includes:

- Helping children make choices from a range of options, for example supporting them in selecting the resources they need for a particular purpose.
- Providing opportunities to move freely, indoors and outdoors.
- Helping children to do challenging things for themselves, like using real tools. This involves guiding children in safe ways of using them.
- Helping children to think for themselves, listening to and respecting their ideas. 'That's a good idea, shall we try it?' 'That's interesting, what made you think that?'.
- Helping children develop selfdiscipline through gradually understanding the consequences of their actions and the feelings of others.



Froebel's principles and practice today



Froebel's principles and practice today

What supports and informs our thinking





A Froebelian approach

Observing young children

by Dr Stella Louis

How are observations interpreted?

through written records, photographs, and films we can interpret what the child is doing. This important process involves us thinking about what we have seen and striving to make sense of it, helping us to figure out and gain insight into how and what a child is learning. Our interpretations are likely to be subjective, based on our own personal knowledge of child development, cultural background, relevant curriculum and our understanding of what we observe. Having regular opportunities to discuss our observations with colleagues will help us to think more deeply about our unconscious biases.

How are observations used?

By using what we know about the child Observations are used when we talk with parents, carers or colleagues about the child's or baby's development, giving examples of their play and learning. They can be used for assessment and planning, to inform individual learning and interests, enhance the immediate learning environment, or review a child's development and learning over time in relation to relevant curriculum frameworks.





are in preparing wool - weaving under and over and then starting a new row



"Observation is more than watching, it means listening carefully, being open and wanting to know more."

Tovey 2017: 112

Froebel Trust

Understanding the individual

For Froebel, understanding the individual child was dependent on three things:

- Equity recognising, valuing and supporting each child's diverse experiences, unique attributes, qualities and ways of being.
- Equality experiencing fairness as their relationships with the world around them expand.
- Diversity understanding the relationship between the whole of humanity and the multiplicity of different groups that make up that whole.

Fig. 12: A child mixes soil, water grass and a range of other

Fig. 13: Two children pretending to have imaginary tea - one child is pretending to pour





To observe without reflection was 'empty observation' and could never lead to real understanding."

Liebschner 1992: 141





and preparing a meal side by side

Question 4: When reflect

When reflecting through observation, in what way does your Froebelian principled practice connect to slow pedagogy?

"Slow pedagogy links hand in hand with our Froebelian Principles, Froebel recognised the importance of children's autonomy and them having the freedom of choice over their own lives. They complement each other so well" (Project setting Practitioner).

"Time is not 'filled' but is freed from all unnecessary interruptions" (Tovey, 2017:42).



Froebelian principles

Unity and connectedness

Everything in the universe is connected. The more one is aware of this unity, the deeper the understanding of oneself, others, nature and the wider world. Children are whole beings whose thoughts, feelings and actions are interrelated. Young children learn in a holistic way and learning should never be compartmentalised for everything links.



Autonomous learners

Each child is unique and what children can do rather than what they cannot, is the starting point for a child's learning. Children learn best by doing things for themselves and from becoming more aware of their own learning. Froebelian educators respect children for who they are and value them for their efforts. Helping children to reflect is a key feature of a Froebelian education.

The value of childhood in its own right

Childhood is not merely a preparation for the next stage in learning. Learning begins at birth and continues throughout life.

Relationships matter

The relationships of every child with themselves, their parents, carers, family and wider community are valued. Relationships are of central importance in a child's life.

froebel.org.uk

Creativity and the power of symbols

Creativity is about children representing their own ideas in their own way, supported by a nurturing environment and people. As children begin to use and make symbols they express their inner thoughts and ideas and make meaning. Over time, literal reflections of everyday life, community and culture become more abstract and nunneed.

The central importance of play

Play is part of being human and helps children to relate their inner worlds of feelings, ideas and lived experiences toking the to new levels of thinking, feeling, imagining and creating and is a resource for the future. Children have ownership of their play. Froebeilan education values the contribution of adults offering 'freedom with guidance' to enrich play as a learning context.

Engaging with nature

Experience and understanding of nature and our place in it, is an essential aspect of Froebelian practice. Through real life experiences, children learn about the interrelationship of all living things. This heips them to think about the bigger questions of the environment, sustainability and climate change.

Knowledgeable, nurturing educators

Early childhood educators who engage in their own tearning and believe in principled and reflective practice are a key, aspect of a Froebellan approach. Froebellan educators facilitate and guide, rather than instruct. They provide rich real life experiences and observe children carefully, supporting and extending their interests through 'freedom with guidance'.



When reflecting through observation, in what way does your Froebelian principled practice connect to slow pedagogy?



F "look, look, this branch has wee green bits on the back. There are so many of them. Are they seeds?

"Autonomous Learners"

'Many aspects of Froebelian theory can be closely linked with the practice of cooking, giving it an important role to play in supporting learning and teaching' (McCormick 2012: **153)**



UNCRC

 Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Autonomous Learners

- "We identify what children can do."
- "Encourage them to be independent and praise them for their achievements."
- "We encourage children to make choice during snack/lunch."
- "Opportunity to self-serve and make choices."
- "Use language to model, support or challenge during food tim wonder? What would happen if?
- "Using cutlery and table manners."

Engaging with Nature



The child who has cared for another living thing... is more easily led to care for [their] own life' (Froebel in Lilley 1967: 128)

"That's my Granny's plants, I wanted to grow carrots and green beans". E

"Froebel found the garden to be a place where there is beauty, peace and tranquillity" (Bruce, 2021:11 Donna Green: Falkirk Froebel

Dollar Park

"This tree feels funny, smooth and lumpy" F

ENGAGING WITH NATURE: Experience and understanding of nature and our place in it, is an essential aspect of Froebelian practice. Through real life experiences, children learn about the interrelationship of all living things. This helps them to think about the bigger questions of the environment, sustainability and climate change.



Growing our own food





Unity and Connectedness







'Learning, Froebel argued, should be connected to children's own lives and experienced as a meaningful whole so that children can connect new ideas to what they already know.

Start where the child is'.

(Helen Tovey 2017)

"Froebel believed that everything in the universe is linked" (Bruce, 2021:19) while advocating that "Froebel's concept of Unity is central to his holistic way of thinking" (Bruce, 2021:33).



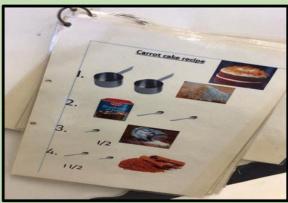
Connecting real life into play experiences



Creativity and the Power of Symbols and The Central Importance of Play

Creativity and the power of symbols:







'A new world of ideas and objects opens before him. For one begins to understand that which one strives to represent'. (Froebel in Lilley 1967:87)



Falkirk Wheel "How does it work?" S

"Can we go in it?" J

"Look the boat is moving!"

CREATIVITY & THE POWER OF

SYMBOLS: Creativity is about children representing their own ideas in their own way, supported by a nurturing environment and people. As children begin to use and make symbols, they express their inner thoughts and ideas an make meaning. Over time, literal reflections of everyday life, community and culture become more abstract and nuanced.



Using objects to represent food



Using creative ways to enable children to revisit and bring nature back to the setting indoors.

Knowledgeable, Nurturing Educators

- "Role model."
- "Reflecting on our practice."
- "Rich, real life experiences around meal times."
- "Attending CPD."
- "Team discussions."
- "Evaluating the playrooms and if they meet the needs of the children."
- "Extending children's interest."

Knowledgeable responsive adults who support independence, confidence and self-esteem by extending children's interests and choice.



Additionally, the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (Scottish Government, 2010) states that "children have a natural disposition to wonder, to be curious... staff have an essential role in extending and developing this...", promoting autonomy "where the child is at the centre and leading the curriculum as opposed to the curriculum leading the child" (Scottish Government, 2012:30).

"Can we ask Laura (Cyerians employee) what these jaggies are? They are green!" E

Relationships Matter

The relationships of every child with themselves, their parents, carers, family and wider community are valued. Relationships are of central importance in a child's life



What Does Marvellous Mealtimes mean to me?

Dear Hs,

It has been truly wonderful to see you blossom and grow at nursery this year. I remembered when you first arrived full of energy and fun. Mealtimes were at times challenging for you but now I see a calm boy who is independent at coming to mealtimes, choosing where to sit and is always ready to help his friends whether that be passing them some sandwiches or helping to tidy up.

Through our time spent together we have developed a strong relationship and you have grown into a independent boy. I know your favourite thing is to help set up lunch and you are always there ready with clean hands, your apron on and your infectious smile. You are able to confidently choose what you want to eat and are so good at using the tongs to do so. When you are finished you carefully collect your dishes and follow the washing routines. You even kindly remind your friends to do the same.

Your love of cooking and baking is evident and you are always the first there to make playdough, soup or choose what baking we will do for that day. I see such focus where you lead the experience and show others what to do.

I think my favourite moment will always be the joy I heard in your voice as you independently poured your milk without









C, it was lovely to spend the day together! We were able to connect over your love of birds, discuss how we could search for hidden treasure and consider how we can stay safe and look after each other in the woodland environment. Afterwards, you approached me in nursery to cuddle up and discuss our day together further.



Relationships Matter

- · "Our family wall."
- "Discussions with the children throughout the day and mealtimes."
- "Daily diaries of food sent home."
- "Through our own practice and body language."
- · "Encouraging peers to engage with each other."
- "Value children's choice at snack."
- "Discussions with the children at the table."
- "Nuturing and positive relationships."
- "Responsive to children and parents in regards to eating/independence and self-help."
- "We have good relationships with the children and their families."

The Value of Childhood in its own right





Attuning to every child's here and now and not enabling systems such as routines and the future to inform the present or influence agendas. Start from where the child is at: What Matters to Me?

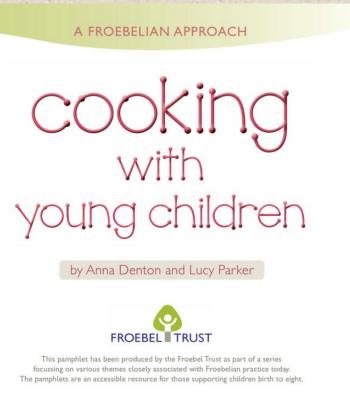
Bruce (2021) explains, "what children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point in a child's education" (Bruce, 2021:142). Additionally, Bruce asserts, "begin where the learner is, not where you want them to be, or they ought to be" (Bruce 2021:143). Furthermore, Bruce reiterates that "the focus is on what children can do, and it is not about deficit" (Bruce, 2021:144). When exploring this principle through the Scottish context, our practitioner guidance – Realising the Ambition, Being Me (RtA) (Education Scotland, 2020) – advocates "starting with the child" (Education Scotland, 2020:65).

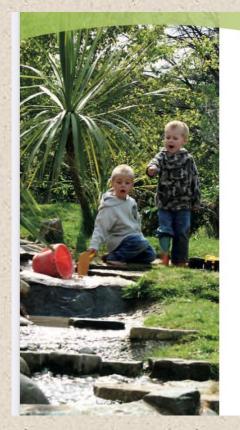
Froebel advocated that children should be understood as "essential members of humanity" (Lilley, 1967:95).

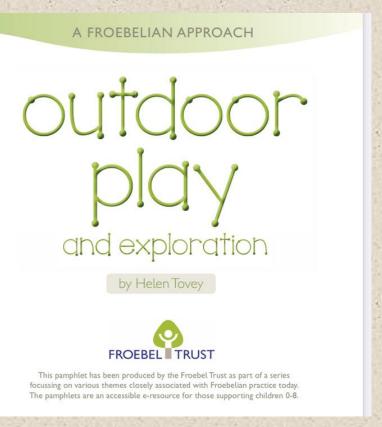
Children should be respected as "human beings, not human becomings" (Qvortrup (2009: 639).

What other resources supporting the projects through the Froebelian Principles lens.









Some reflections of significant developments

- 1. Professional reading /webinars enabled practitioners building capacity of knowledge in relation to slow pedagogy/Froebelian principles with whole staff teams along with ongoing opportunity for coaching, workshops and collective collaboration has provided positive impacts in practice.
- 2. Increasing children's perceptions and participation in practice inclusive approach additional real life experiences.
- 3. Added value: Children's autonomy, confidence / self esteem.
- 4. Opportunities to explore their community and spend time outdoors in and with Nature and Food is creating a sense of belonging and well being in these spaces.
- 5. More focus on slow process and slow knowledge.
- 6. Naturally cascading through other elements of practice beyond the project.

Considerations and possibilities implemented and ongoing practice

- 1. Creating Children's Marvellous Mealtime Policies.
- 2. Creating systems which highlight children's likes and less desirable foods on the menu. Children's shopping lists create additional larder choices.
- 3. Community links and grow your own slow food. In addition, the project gift of growing potatoes shared with all communities.
- 4. Ongoing reflections of practice through Froebelian Principles guide and make links and connections with slow pedagogy.
- 5. Ongoing collation of deeper observation and lived stories to document meaningful narratives for each child individual child what Nature and Marvellous Mealtimes means to the children. Reflect with Froebelian principles to enable ongoing depth of the principles in practice.
- 6. Family learning together: continue to build on the work established now covid restrictions have eased.
- 7. The concept of 'Freedom with Guidance' each community continues to revisit this to enable a robust collective understanding how we view both the child and the adult role in each community.

Nursery: What have we learned

Practitioners being aware of their own lived experiences and assumptions.

When implementing slow pedagogy, the practitioner learns with the child. Respectful and nurturing relationships are fostered.

Children are given the space and time to explore the world around them gain a deeper and more meaningful learning experience.





Donna Green: Falkirk Froebel

Children need freedom from rote learning to follow their own interests and motivations.

Each child has their own pace of learning; slow pedagogy allows this process to occur naturally and encompasses all of the child.

Practitioners must become comfortable with the "uncomfortableness" (Clark, 2020, p146). We must trust the process of letting go of our own agendas.

Nursery: Moving forward

Increase the number of full days in nature through the week.

We are striving to bring the slow pedagogical approach to enable this to flow through the nursery and not just limited to full days in nature.



Possibly increase our options to more locations – e.g. Callendar Park be an option.

Continue to enable the children to plan for full day outings.

Continue to support individual lines of interest back within setting.

Weekly reflections from staff – factoring in time for slow pedagogical reflections.

Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principled Practice'.

Reflections Past, Present...



- Rethinking Clock time...?
- Increase and transfer of Knowledge for staff.
- 'Stretched' time as opposed to 'filling' time.
- Living and using Froebelian Principles in Practice.

'Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous Mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principled Practice'.

Moving forward



- Sustainability within our new nursery building.
- Our collective evolving learning of slow pedagogy...revisit.
- Looking outwards, where can the concept of slow go next?

Reflections following Workshops

Practitioners felt much more reflective on their practice, consideration giving further to the experiences we are providing and how they are slow.

That we want our slow approach to be something we do with children rather than to children.

We put more thought into how to be slow in our practice and within our core experiences.

Knowledgeable and Nurturing Educators

- "Role model."
- "Reflecting on our practice."
- · "Rich, real- life experiences around mealtimes."
- "Attending CPD."
- "Team discussions."
- "Evaluating the playrooms and if they meet the needs of the children."
- · "Extending children's interest."

Donna Green: Falkirk Froebel

Setting questions for going forward?

- How to fully embed a slow approach in our practice with under 3's?
- Ways to cascade this further through our centre?
- Opportunities to learn together with parents/families to share the benefits of this project and consider slow approaches with their children or share any slow approaches with us from home?





The Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Froebelian Principled Practice Project Charter enabled a robust and rigorous plan which was bespoke to each setting but underpinned through theory and research. How to be slow with Marvellous Mealtimes and in Nature and consider: what does this mean to children and EY communities.

Our workshops strengthened our knowledge of slow pedagogy and deepened our understanding of rethinking clock time, stretched time and how time is viewed through listening. This then moved onto supporting how to be slow educators, how to create unhurried environments and how to support slow moments with children.

Professional chapter reading, webinars (Clark 2020/2021) enabled increasing knowledge of Slow Pedagogy.







Reflection of project



Our previous knowledge together with collaborative team meets and project lead visits supported the reflection, mentoring and coaching of individual settings. This also supported the transferring of slow knowledge into practice and deepened our understanding of Froebelian principled practice being used as underpinning principles to guide and reflect upon.

Donna Green: Falkirk Froebe

The research questions enabled a whole team approach to exploring, where answering collectively in each setting has enabled the findings to reflect a shared understanding of a slow pedagogy concepts, opportunities to explore what this looks like in **ELC.** This then led onto discover what ways do children in the settings have the freedom to decide where and when to spend their time and lastly the observations identified how slow pedagogy connects to Froebelian **Principled Practice. Where the** findings have been documented and continual ongoing reflection was identified.



Links to Slow Pedagogy

- Calming atmosphere
- Space
- Time
- Unhurried
- Going beyond clock time
- Starting with the child
- Place sense of belonging
- Beyond Listening
- Deep observation

"...Both these notions of freedom from something, freedom from rote learning and freedom from inappropriate teaching led Froebel to a more positive notion of freedom, namely freedom for children to participate, to choose, to act, to observe, to play and above all to be allowed time to absorb new knowledge at their own speed of learning."

Liebschner, J. (1992) A Child's Work: freedom and play in Froebel's educational theory and practice. Cambridge:
Lutterworth Press, 66.

The "child expresses their internal motivations towards leading their own learning through their actions. This in turn helps them build theories about the world around them" (Education Scotland, 2020:68).

"An unhurried environment allows me time to concentrate on whatever catches my attention without being rushed" (Education Scotland, 2020:31).







Creating and implementing Children's Marvellous Mealtime Policies in each setting. Which truly values the children and considers their perceptions and participation.

Project Reflections

Revisit and continue to take time to reflect upon slow pedagogy concepts and Froebelian Principles to enable depth and analysis.



The Cogwheel: You need one to inform the other

Sustainability: reviewing how to incorporate e.g., transition, what matters to me, incorporating into settings e.g., handbooks etc. Time for ongoing reflections, observing and analysing.

Being reflective and having systems in place e.g., highlight and support children's likes and less desirable foods on the menu to create manageable additional larder choices to be made consistently.

Autonomy for children in and with nature and mealtimes, continue to develop the ripples spreading throughout nursery to enable children through the slow approaches and principled practice their interest being reflected in setting (both indoors and outdoors).

Making the key project findings visible

Continue ongoing reflections of the Freedom with Guidance and what this concept means collectively for children in each setting.

What Matters to Me? Findings showed deep observation through lived stories which documented what Nature and Marvellous Mealtimes means for the Children. Whilst reflections of Froebelian principles and the concept of slow provoked meaningful narratives with and for children.



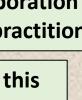
Project elements become embedded into practice: continue to reflect on the identified project developments using Froebelian Principles and Slow Pedagogical concepts: Cascade, scale and spread the concepts in other identified spaces, places and practice.

Connections: whole community collaboration of 'Grow your Own', Gifting to celebrate, learn together and support dissemination of significant key messages with families and communities and beyond. The opportunity to share collaboratively slow food experiences: the 'Potential of a Potato' to keep the conversations going.

- May 10th and 12th - Alison Clark delivered a Keynote. Each setting lead presented the project findings from practice along with disseminating project posters and books from each setting were shared. A project snapshot leaflet and the gift of growing your own was also distributed at these events.

Compile a project report for: The Froebel Trust where a film will be produced to share this research collaboration of research and practitioners.

Considerations & Moving Forward



A Proposal for this project has been sucesful to share this research via a poster presentation at EECERA Glasgow in August 2022.

Continued ongoing collaboration and further opportunities will be available for Froebelian leads and Practitioners of setting to apply for a Practitioner Inquiry Froebelian Futures Course which will enable a platform to further explore action research through practitioner inquiry.

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Embed a slow pedagogy approach which encompasses the framework of listening, observing, the uniqueness of every child and family, embracing the Falkirk approach to 'what matters to me' which begins at home to nursery transition and is ongoing and meaningful to each child to truly value all children's perceptions and participation with knowledgeable nurturing educators enabling Froebelian Principles to be lived in practice.

Falkirk Froebel Slow Pedagogy Symposium in Conversation with Alison Clark

Learning Together: Dissemination of the Froebel Trust Practitioner Grant Funded Project

Venue: Arnotdale House, Dollar Park, Camelon Road, Falkirk. FK1 5SQ

When: Event dates: Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th May 2022

Keynote Speaker:

Professor Alison Clark – Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Southeastern Norway, and Honorary Senior Research fellow, UCL Institute of Education, UK

'Symposium' sharing

Welcome Gathering: Time to chat, view the project posters and books

Donna Green, Early Years Pedagogue and Project Lead: **Opening words. An introduction & exploration of Slow Pedagogy through the Froebelian Lens in Early Learning & Childcare, evolving onto implementation presentation followed by a conversation with Alison Clark.**

Keynote from Alison Clark: Thinking about time in early childhood: the clock, the timetable and the child.

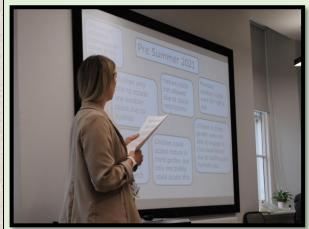






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'Symposium' sharing









Sam Hill, Early Years Officer: Examining the notion of Slow pedagogy through the experience of the natural world.

Tracey Sharples, Senior Early Years Officer: Implementing Slow Pedagogy through Marvellous mealtimes underpinned by Froebelian Principles.

Linda Love and Lynette Wilson, Senior Early Years Officers: Implementing Slow Pedagogy during Marvellous Mealtimes through Froebelian Principled Practice with under three-year-olds.

Open forum: In conversation with Alison Clark and Falkirk Froebel Project Practitioners/Leads.

Gemma Paterson, Lead Pedagogue – Froebel and Slow Pedagogy Project Highlights

Lisa McCabe; Early Years Education Service Manager Closing remarks

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Some Feedback given from attendees at the symposium event ...

"I am so inspired to see how you have all really flown with Froebelian principles into your work and are making such a difference for children."

"Fantastic energy in the room, great to have colleagues from across Scotland."

"Very rich professional dialogue. Talking away lots of ideas and new connections made."

"A movement, a family, a community – really felt today that this is so well embedded with Falkirk Froebelians."

"Loved the child at the centre of all the conversations."

"Slow is urgent – always a great reminder."

"Alison's research is so important and is being disseminated by informed and passionate practitioners – and having a widespread impact."

"Great to have Alison Clark's input. Need to spread the good work, the rippling effect, amazing, well done."

"Really like the deliberate notion of slowing down – having the confidence to justify our slow pedagogy."

"After two years of on-line, there was a real sense of Unity and Connectedness. I feel motivated to go on this journey."

"Let's make Falkirk a place where slow pedagogy is valued, our children and families need this."

Filming ...

Capturing Froebel and Slow Pedagogy in action through Marvellous Mealtimes in settings and Nature at Dollar Park and Falkirk Wheel.

Conversations: with children, advisory consultants, settings leads, and project lead.



Thank you to Film maker Emma Baker at Comesteria and to the Froebel Trust for organising and funding the research/project collaboration to be captured on film.

Implementing Froebelian Principles and slow pedagogy collaboration project Poster



Implementing Slow Pedagogy in Early Learning and Childcare through Froebelian Principled Practice







Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times" - UN Convention on the Rights of

Links to Slow Pedagogy Calming atmospher Space rate learning and freedom leading their own Time teaching led Proebel to a Unhurrled more positive notion of This is here helps Going beyond for children to participate. about the world clock time observe, to play and alone all to be officered time to 2020-685

their own speed of

Place - sense of

belonging

Findings

The implementation of slow pedagogy in the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings

resulting in the communities cultivating a shared vision through informed theory and

literature and then fusing this with the practice. However, this took time to reflect and

establish as the interpretation of knowledge required reflective dialogue within each

team. The Froebelian Principles (Froebel Trust) with the descriptors supported a shared

understanding which were used to reflect on practice which assisted in unpicking concepts

through the lens of the child as sometimes there were times practitioners thought children

such as 'Freedom with Guidance' (Tovey 2017). Taking time to reflect on these supported

practitioners viewing children perceptions at a deeper level and attuning to what these

had autonomy, however, examples of videos helped reflect further. This evolved into of

Consistent feedback revealed from practitioners that the support and knowledge gained

Impacts in practice became evident, the increased opportunities for children's perceptions

and participation in practice created greater autonomy for children and increased staffs

Opportunities for children and practitioners to explore their community through nature

The focus was nature and marvellous mealtimes, for this project, however, the concepts

The research questions provoked discussions and enabled the opportunities as whole staff

teams to respond which were reflective and informed through observations of practice.

challenged practice and unconscious bias, as it helped to discover that some practitioners

shared they saw mealtimes as a task and did not fully embrace the value of these learning

experiences that some practitioners felt was part of their role, however freeing time to 'be'

present with the children with no predefined script was when the practitioners lived what

Tovey (2017) describes "the use of adults' time is crucially linked to children's growing

independence and autonomy" and that "Froebelian educators create long periods of

open-ended uninterrupted time...". Therefore, "time is not 'filled' but is freed from all

This project enabled policies to be reviewed and children's policies to be written.

together opportunities, however they do now. "Now that we see that the children are

The outdoors was once driven by clock time and filled with many adult planned

The project enabled practitioners to view children in their own right and provoked

mindset shifts and nursery routines to view what these routines mean to children. It

through webinars, chapter reading (Clark, 2020, 2021) and bespoke project workshops

supported a deepening of understanding of Froebelian Principles (Green, 2021) and

mean to each individual child. On occasions video footage was used to truly reflect

recording lived stories of individual children to document relevant narratives.

building knowledge of slow pedagogy (Clark, 2021) and how this fuses.

understanding of children's individual capacity.

increased and unravelled slow process and slow knowledge.

were naturally spreading through other areas of practice.

more than capable it makes perfect sense" (participant).

Tarumbunied time to concentrate a nahed" Househor

The Froebelian Principles. (Froebel Trust) poster was used to reflect upon to discover how these linked to the practice or not. The descriptors supported whole staff teams to guide and articulate a deeper understanding.

Frontier Froebelian principles the power of symbols



*patience can be a resilient, persisten active, brave quality. There is room for this type of powerful patience in a timefull

Clark, A. (forthcoming) Slow knowledge and the unhurried child: time for slow pedagogies in early childhood education. Abingdon

Conclusion

This collaborative project has enabled a learning together community of professionals to focus on Froebelian Principled Practice and deepen their knowledge of slow pedagogy. It enabled theory and research to underpin practice and provoked deep analysis of how practice is linking to our Froebelian Principles and what this means to children. It enable time to reflect and truly observe to inform thinking. New knowledge gained was fused through reflection of practice and changes were made collectively and informed through deep observation which led to discussions and improved changes. It enabled practitioners to create a lived understanding of slow pedagogy and Froebelian principles with the main areas focused on for this project being nature in one setting and the other two settings with Marvellous Mealtimes. However, the unity and interconnectedness became apparent and the sharing helped settings to naturally review other areas of practice. Due to the positive impacts these inquiries will continue to be embedded and sustained. Many robust systems have changed within each setting, including policy changes which involved children's policies being created. Each early years community have identified other areas of practice they would like cascade slow pedagogy which is underpinned through living the Froebelian Principles to enable reflective holistic experiences which truly value and respect the process and capacities of every individual child and enable autonomy and respect for all.

The main aim of this study was to examine slow pedagogy through Froebelian Principled

Research from Clark (2020:21), namely "Slow Knowledge and the Unhurried Child" (2021) inspired and stimulated along with a dissertation titled "Exploring Slow Pedagogy through a Froebelian Lens" (Green, 2021). Clark (2021) and Green (2021) invite others (practitioners/parents/policy makers) to slow down and look deeper into what slow pedagogy means for children.

Methodology

A significant ontological position used for this research was the viewpoint that "children are competent agents who actively contribute to shaping the social world through everyday activities" (Gallagher, 2009:67).

The theoretical perspective of critical inquiry is applied, where the participants reflect on early learning and childcare (ELC) practice to inform the social reality and the participatory element of being

The epistemological position within this study was constructionism. The methodology used for this research study was qualitative.

The following research questions where asked within each early years community, practitioners provided a consensus through reflective Froebelian Principled practice and gained knowledge through workshops and literature to increase knowledge of slow

- 1. What is your understanding of the concept 'slow pedagogy'?
- 2. From your understanding, what does 'slow pedagogy' practice look like in ELC?
- 3. In what ways do children in your setting have the freedom to decide how, where and when to spend their time?
- 4. Through observing and reflecting in practice your Froebelian principled practice, in what way does this connect to slow pedagogy.

The use of observation, narrative and participatory methods were used to gather data. Providing real lived stories gathered from real people to truly understand the experiences and tell the story.

The use of research codes of practice from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) were adhered to and enshrined at each stage. In addition, all Covid-19 guidance (Scottish Government and University of Edinburgh) were adhered to.

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unnecessary interruptions" (Tovey, 2017:42).

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Thank you to **Lynn McNair** for establishing links and supporting Donna Green's journey of 'slow pedagogy' through the Froebelian lens on the MSc Froebel pathway dissertation. In addition, you have been a significant part of each Falkirk Froebelian's journey.

Thank you to all other Early Years Practitioner's in Falkirk and beyond for your valuable interest to learn more about 'slow pedagogy' through Froebelian Principled practice.

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