

The 'Joy To Learn' Research Project on Educational Experiences of Children: A comparison of Results from Bulgaria and Germany

'Öğrenme Sevinci' Araştırma Projesi: Bulgaristan ve Almanya'da Çocukların Eğitimle İlgili Deneyimleri İle İlgili Sonuçların Karşılaştırılması

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Abstract

The comparative study "Joy to Learn" is associated with an approach to child research in educational science exploring the perspective of children to gain a deeper insight into their experience of learning and teaching at schools. The "Joy to Learn" project focused on joyful or happy situations children experience at school in order to find out about relevant aspects of well-being and positive emotions. The objective of the study is to identify the factors which make children evaluate learning situations as enjoyable, motivating and effective. The scientific objective of the project was to examine the children's learning experience and process at school, particularly on joyful moments or situations in school. In this article, we present the research design, the methodology and the results of an international qualitative study with children in Bulgaria and Germany.

Keywords: Joy to learn, joyful learning environments, pedagogical child research

Öz

Karşılaştırmalı "Öğrenme Sevinci" çalışması eğitim bilimlerindeki çocuk araştırmalarına, çocukların okuldaki öğrenme ve öğretme sürecine yönelik deneyimlerine ilişkin derin bir içgörü elde etmek amacıyla onların bakış açısını keşfetmeye çalışan bir yaklaşım benimsemiştir. "Öğrenme Sevinci" projesi, olumlu duyguların ve esenliğin ilgili yönlerini keşfetmek amacıyla çocukların okulda deneyimledikleri neşeli veya mutlu durumlara odaklanmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, çocukların öğrenme durumlarını keyifli, güdüleyici ve etkili olarak değerlendirmelerini sağlayan faktörlerin ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Projenin bilimsel amacı çocukların okuldaki öğrenme deneyimlerini ve süreçlerini, özellikle keyifli anlarını ve durumları incelemektir. Bu makalede, araştırmanın deseni, yöntemi ve Bulgar ve Alman çocuklarıyla gerçekleştirilen nitel çalışmanın bulguları sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğrenme sevinci, keyifli öğrenme ortamları, pedagojik çocuk araştırmaları

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Introduction

A seminal study concerning successful learning conditions is the Hattie meta-analysis (Hattie, 2009). This meta-analysis study includes a review of 50,000 individual studies and analyzes the factors of influence on the learning of students. Hattie's analysis highlights that learning is determined by children themselves. Factors that influence student learning include: personal characteristics, motivation, self-concept, knowledge and cognitive conditions. Along with the findings related to student learning, another finding of the meta-analysis was that thirty percent of the success of learning depends on the teachers and their professional action. How teachers organize and structure their lessons is particularly important. Professional action means to see teaching and learning through the eyes of children. It should be included in lesson planning. Hattie emphasizes the active role of the teacher as a designer of teaching and argues against the teachers in the role of passive learning companion (ibid.) In terms of preparing teachers, it is important for teachers to understand the learning process of students.

The "Joy to Learn" project focused specifically on the children's perspective and experience related to learning and teaching processes at school. Investigating the subjective and individual perception of children provided us with important insights about the relation between learning and teaching and helped to improve lesson planning, classroom management and school organization. Furthermore, the „Joy to Learn" project allowed the researchers to compare children's experiences of learning and teaching at school in six countries¹ with different cultural backgrounds (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015, p. 9).

The comparative study "Joy to Learn" is associated with an approach to child research in educational science exploring the perspective of children to gain a deeper insight of their experience of learning and teaching at school.²

The "Joy to Learn" project focused on joyful or happy situations children experience at school in order to find out about relevant aspects of well-being and positive emotions. In this article, we present the research design, the methodology and the results of an international qualitative study with children in Bulgaria and Germany. The objective of the study is to identify factors which make children evaluate learning situations as enjoyable, motivating and effective. The scientific objective of the project was to examine the children's learning experience and process at school, particularly on joyful moments or situations in school. The very first interest in children and childhood came up in the 18th century, mainly with novels about education, for example Rousseau's *Emile*. However, the development of theories and the observation of children's development started at the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. Bühler, 1929). Research related to children was done from the perspective of adults and children's perspective was not included. This first changed in the 1990s with a new paradigm in childhood research considering children as social actors with their own rights in society. Children were now included in surveys to gain knowledge about their opinions, their social situation and their subjective perspective. This primarily happened in sociological research by using qualitative methods.

In educational sciences, there is a focus to include the children's point of view to improve teaching and learning at school. For this, it is a main motive to learn about the opinion, needs and feelings of children (Schultheis, 2015).

This requires a focus that allow children to "give" their voice and let the researchers listen to children's own subjective perspective, their thoughts, opinions, needs, wishes and fantasies. This new approach to child research is based on the successful childhood studies in Sociology (Breidenstein & Prengel, 2005; Honig, 2009) and in Psychology (Lohrmann & Hartinger, 2011; Krapp & Weidenmann,

1 Participating countries: Germany, Bulgaria, Japan, Spain, USA, Romania, Poland.

2 Pedagogical Child Research (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015) in this new understanding focuses on the children's perspective of school, teaching and learning. The objective is to examine the children's learning experiences and processes at school and, in a broader view, in their residential environment which includes also learning opportunities provided by other institutions. The focus lies on the subjective perspective of children trying to make them speak about their own experience and view of their learning processes.

2006). For this reason, the project focused on the state of research in psychology as well as in sociological conceptions of child and childhood. Findings of psychology were referred in regard to the cognitive, social and emotional development of children. So, the developmental factor was considered in research with children. Different competences were also taken into account, which enable children to have their own ways of interacting, of understanding and of interpreting their relationships, environment and experiences (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015). The focus was also on sociological research, but the interest was not mainly focused on childhood as a social phenomenon, on social participation and roles that children have in society or in their social relationships or social constructions (ibid.). In conclusion, the research referred to the knowledge of psychology, philosophy and sociology. However, the approach was a genuine pedagogical one (ibid.). This comprises an understanding of learning which considers the relation to teaching and other pedagogical activities of the teacher and individual perception of children provided us with important insight information about the relation between learning and teaching. This knowledge can contribute to improve lesson planning, classroom management and school organization (ibid., p. 10).

Methodological Approach

In terms of methodology, research in the context of learning and teaching has often been based on quantitative methods (Helmke & Weinert, 1997). Recently, standardized procedures have been criticized. They are criticized, because the results often do not seem to be significant for educational practice. In addition, the results can hardly be implemented in concrete teaching situations (Gläser-Zikuda, 2008, p. 65). Although deductive approaches offer the greatest possible chance of a systematic and rule-governed procedure, they can reduce the openness of the research process. For the epistemological interest of the present research, an inductive approach (rather free of existing concepts) seems particularly suitable to explore children's "joy to learn".

The advantages of an inductive procedure are the following:

1. The researcher gets access to the subjective perspective of the children's world.
2. The researcher doesn't take into account only a few aspects without considering the contextual meaning (Huber, 1994, p. 27).

Special requirements in research with children

The research with children can hardly refer to the existing canon of qualitative methods. The following challenges need to be considered to assess the data quality: the reliability of children's statements, age differences and the interpretation of the data by adult researchers.

The development of valid qualitative methods to explore the child's perspective is just at the beginning (Heinzel, 2012). In the context of a changing social perception, the child must be regarded as an independent subject rather as an adult-to-be. On that condition, the development of specific methods of pedagogical child research can be justified: "They are no longer only socialized, but social actors" (Trautmann, 2010, p. 46, translated by the authors). For this reason, it seems often inappropriate or insufficient asking only adults about children's living and learning environment, their needs, and wishes or problems. As a consequence, children need to be accepted as experts of their living and learning environment and as research subjects. They themselves are interviewed and observed (Trautmann, 2010, p. 46).

Basically, methods of social science research can be used for this purpose. However, they must be adapted and modified in consideration of the child and of the researched phenomenon. For example, it is important to take into account the development of children. It is particularly important to get valid results. The decision on the selection of methods must be justified due to the research question and the research subject. The researchers have to be aware that a particular method produces specific findings (Mey, 2003, p. 5f.).

The methodology of the “Joy to Learn” project is based on children’s own texts which provide the data for qualitative evaluation. Qualitative content analysis is used as evaluation method (Mayring, 2008; Kuckartz, 2012) by taking into account that certain methodological adaptations are required in research with children (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015, p. 11)

Data Collection

The data was obtained by using the method *children texts*. Generally, it is known as a non-reactive, qualitative method. Children texts are the ‘expressions of the children’s life’. They are authentic evidence of the child’s experience and their world (Fatke, 1993). The research focused on occurrences being only perceived introspectively. For this reason, texts are an appropriate method to collect data. The primary objective of research was to gather more information of situations in school causing joy to learn. Relationships have to be clarified between the experience of joy to learn and existing teaching conditions. The retrospective character of the method seems to be a disadvantage to gather valid data. According to Uhlich and Mayring (2003), retrospective reports (e.g. written texts) are a problematic data source, because it can be influenced by memory effects, by the problem of verbalization and by distorting effects but in conclusion, most of the elementary school children like writing and reporting on their experiences. Therefore, students are expected to describe meaningful learning situations. According to Seemann (1997), meaningful experiences are remembered correctly (only in case experiences are not meaningful, they are influenced by memory errors).

Recent research has shown that children can represent and symbolize the themes of their life experiences and their inner development. Freely-written texts provide insights into children’s lives. In such documents, children include information about their most current social lives, their well-being, their living conditions, and so forth (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009, p. 191). Therefore, they can be used as sources for research on children (e.g. Röhner, 2011). The children are asked to express their thoughts on “joy to learn” regarding situations, moments, practices they would judge as joyful. They are supported by an *initiating story* and a *writing task* (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015, p. 11)

Initiating Story: The researcher Dr. Tom

One morning, the researcher, Dr. Tom went smiling into his laboratory. He was in a very good mood because he had a nice job today: Many children have written texts for him. They told him in these texts, when they really enjoyed learning and when they had fun in school. The researcher Dr. Tom is interested in opinions of children because he wants to prove to his colleagues that adults do not always say the right thing when it actually comes to the views of children. He has the texts of children really well prepared and he knows exactly what he wants to learn from the children. He is particularly interested in the following questions:

Are there situations in which you have learned something that has particularly made you happy?

- What was so special about this situation?
- Is there a reason why the situation was so special?
- How did you feel in this situation?
- Do you often think of this situation?

When he opened the door to his office, he thought of all these questions. He was pleased to read the texts of children. But no sooner had he put his head through the door, he was shocked: His laboratory was devastated. The windows were smashed, furniture was overturned and even the plants, books and folders were crisscross on the floor. “Oh no, there was a burglar in my lab! That cannot be true!” Dr. Tom tried desperately to sort out everything and clean up again. But the texts of children were gone. That made Tom very sad.

Can you help Dr. Tom by writing a text for him? He has also already given some thought and prepared a worksheet for you. Tom will be pleased with your text. So he can forget the terrible slump.

The initiating story was chosen as an introduction to make children familiar with the subject. The support given ensured that children understood exactly the task and knew how to proceed. This way, they had the opportunity to describe their individual experiences and opinions based on their own understanding of "joy to learn". The children's texts were not corrected by the teacher.

Writing Task:

Describe in one page a context/ moment when you have really enjoyed learning at school. Let us know how it happened and why that happy moment was so special to you.

All the participating teachers followed a research guideline³ in order to make the international study comparative. Teachers should not affect the students. Therefore, the non-reactive method „children texts“ was particularly suitable.

Data Evaluation

The qualitative content analysis provides a methodological approach to free texts. Free texts are understood as personal testimonies of children's expressions. In the texts, children capture their personally meaningful experiences, feelings and thoughts. For text analysis, structured content analysis is useful. This makes it possible to obtain individual analyses. The aim of content structuring is to filter out specific parts of the material. These may be formal aspects, aspects of content, or certain other types (Mayring, 2002, 118). The establishment of categories must be well defined, but an unambiguous assignment of text to the categories is always possible.

Freely-written texts come from the children's own lives. These represent the immediate and important issues from their life experiences. By analyzing the verbal material, the researcher gets to know details about individual and social non-linguistic phenomena (Mayntz, Holm & Hübner, 1972, p. 151). The methodological approach of structured content analysis according to Mayring (2002) enables to identify structuring themes of the children's living environment. Current research (e.g. Hurrelmann & Andresen, 2013) refers to the presumption that children represent and symbolize the themes of their living environment and their internal development. This method is particularly suitable for the analysis of representative texts. The results of a free content analysis enable children to describe themselves and the circumstances of their life (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015, p. 13).

Children's texts were encoded using the MAXQDA software. The first step of the evaluation was reading the texts carefully. After repeated reading, first preliminary categories were formed inductively. The preliminary categories allowed structuring the texts. The material as the base of the analysis and an open approach to the analysis were essential if categories are generated in an inductive manner.

The meaning of "inductive" is explained by Mayring as follows:

1. The texts are the basis.
2. The categories will be formulated taking into account the content in the text.
3. The research question influences this process (Mayring, 2008, p. 11).

The encoding of the available data material was made without a preliminary determination of main categories, derived from the theory.

3 The class teachers realized the data collection with their students. They had a guideline, created by the research group. The guidelines provide the following: the initiating story, the writing task, the request not to influence the ideas of students. The research group was responsible for the representation and interpretation of the results.

Standards of qualitative research were taken into account when the data were analyzed:

1. Content analysis takes into account the notion that a text is written under certain terms and conditions. Therefore, it is particularly important to describe this context. Concerns of content analysis are drawing conclusions on blocks of contexts and making no statements about the text.
2. The focus of the content analysis is the use of categories. The categories are analytical aspects. These categories were taken into account while screening the material.
3. The categories were assigned to text blocks taking into account the standards of qualitative research. The procedure was interpretive.

A model described the individual processing steps and provided a rule-governed process. The category system and its application rules were reflected and amended if necessary. Finally, the whole evaluation was re-evaluated, by re-editing and encoding by a second researcher (Mayring & Brunner, 2010, p. 323). According to quality criteria for qualitative research (Kuckartz, 2012, p. 166), the categories are reflected and discussed in terms of consistency and distinctiveness. The categories were adjusted so that abstract categories remained but these were operationalized through concrete subcategories. In this way, a coding guideline was developed with categories and examples. Based on the coding guideline, students' texts are worked through again. Subsequently, the results of the evaluation were discussed, interpreted and expanded by theoretical references which enable connectivity to existing and future research. The data analysis will eventually discharge into a theory of "joy to learn" from the perspective of children. The international "Joy to Learn" project aimed to create a comparison of the research results. This required a strict separation of the coding process to be able to recognize even subtle differences in the children's perceptions in the different countries (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015, p. 14)

For data collection, 300 children from Bulgaria, aged 6-14 (grade 1-8) and 263 children from Germany, aged 7-10 (grade 2-4) participated. The main phases of data collection are described below: (Hiebl, Pfrang & Schultheis, 2015, p. 14)⁴

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 2014 Pre-test | In the pre-test phase, the methodology for data collection was tested with 20 students (primary and lower secondary age students; 7 to 12 years old). National differences were explored in regards of the categories for data evaluation. National samples were discussed for assuring comparability. Then, the research design was revised and the research manual for the main study was prepared. |
| Literature Review | An important work for the development of interpretation of the results was the literature review in each country. |
| 2015 Research | Each national research team establishes contacts with schools that agreed to participate in the research and created a database with details on general characteristics of these schools. A school supervisor (at classroom level, probably the teacher) collected children's texts (about 300 stories, the original format of the students work, handwritten) and indicated on a separate sheet <i>individual background information</i> ⁴ needed. Consideration to personal data management was given, based on national regulations. |
| 2016 Results | The data was evaluated and analysed, and then interpreted. Finally, a publication with national/ international comparative results was prepared. |

4 Variables taken into account: age, level of education, gender, area of residence, social and economic background, school performance (including struggling or underachieving students), ethnicity /migration background, special education needs.

Results from Bulgaria and Germany

Results from Bulgaria

The Bulgarian results point out six categories: Approaches to learning, feedback, cooperative learning, feelings, out of school learning and teacher. Most preferred among Bulgarian students' is a playful approach to learning. Considering the results, it can be concluded that the "timeliness of the gambling activity is maintained throughout the whole period" (Kirilova, 2008, p. 146) of primary school. Furthermore, students enjoy participating in different practical activities – crafts, working with paper or materials from nature, painting, etc. According to Campbell, these findings confirm results from a survey of the National Foundation conducted on the British educational system (Campbell, 1994, p. 13). In addition, students like movies and documentaries, which "facilitate memorizing of information and make them witnesses of events" (e.g. "We witnessed what really happened", "It was easier to remember")⁵. There were a few students who enjoyed the use of information resources, such as encyclopedia, internet sources, and geographic maps. Furthermore, they liked using research methods to explore and form useful skills (e.g. "We feel like detectives in literature classes" (Maria, grade 7). In addition, children emphasized that they were attracted to emphases on attractive activities like theatre performances which prompt creativity. Lastly, lots of students are interested in competitive learning. This can be explained by teachers and is experienced as a student-centered way of learning.

Bulgarian students like competitive learning. They are eager to achieve a goal, while all other students fail to reach the goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Competitive learning can be interpersonal (between individual students), where rows are most important. It can also be intergroup (between groups), where a group setting is appropriate. Also, there are many criticisms of this type of learning (e.g. because there is only one winner, all other have to fail) whereas students prefer it and there are some advantages as well: competitive learning is the most appropriate when students need to review material. This bypasses the need to problem solve in regards to any new material. Intergroup competitive learning can be seen as an appropriate competitive strategy as it maximizes the number of winners, at least as long as there are homogeneous groups. Because competitive learning leads to joy to learn, teachers must be able to identify what kind of competitive activities would have constructive outcomes. Moreover, most of the students prefer to be active in the process of learning. They don't want to be only listeners. Especially, working together with partners and communicating with them lead to joy to learn. But, so far, research has shown the insignificance of cooperative learning in Bulgarian schools (Mirtschewa, 2006, p. 322).

Joyful emotions prevail upon successful execution of the tasks, which increases children's self-confidence and leads to positive motivation. The interest in learning decreases with age. Presence of fear and negative attitude towards learning in general can be encountered, which causes reflection on the reconstruction of the learning process.

Results from Germany

The German results include six categories as well: Experiencing competence, teacher personality, learning and teaching beyond routines, subjects/ topics, active and self-determined modes of learning and teaching and social relatedness. Most preferred among German students is learning and teaching beyond the routines. Considering the results, it can be concluded that children experience something special – like going on field trips or excursions, taking part in celebrations or welcoming experts in classrooms (e.g. "Learning is joyful, if we leave the classroom for learning."/ Anna, grade 3). Also, German students feel joyful to be active while learning or to be able to learn self-determination. The mode of learning is focused (e.g. "Learning is joyful if I can follow my own rhythm of learning."/ Max, grade 4 or "Learning is joyful if I can actively do something while learning."/ Lea, grade 2). Furthermore, students feel joyful as long as they experience competence. Positive feedback from the teacher, from other students or from tasks (e.g. "Learning is joyful, if I notice I have learned something."/ Maja, grade 3). Students feel joyful to be with friends in class or working with each

5 All statements of the children are translated by the authors.

other (e.g. "Learning is joyful if I can work with others."/ Nico, grade 2). As long as students are motivated and interested, they experience joy to learn. Especially, interesting topics or contents cause the positive emotion (e.g. "Learning is joyful if I'm really interested in something."/ Lea, grade 4). Last but not least, joy to learn depends on the personality of the teacher. Warm and kind teachers cause joy to learn (e.g. "Learning is joyful if the teacher laughs often or does unusual things." (Kevin, grade 3).

The analysis of texts demonstrated that children need to be motivated to be happy in school. Being motivated necessitates special pedagogical situations: children have to experience self-consciousness, competence, participation and social-relatedness. By providing free and open access to education and knowledge, students can fulfill these desires. This also includes possibilities for students to have the opportunity to actively participate in the learning environment (Kurt-Buchholz 2011). It is important for teachers to realize that all children have the right to be taught in a manner that provides self-determination and participation in classroom. Therefore, the results of the study related to students' point of view complement existing research on the development of school and lessons. For this reason, it should be the starting point for further considerations concerning teaching and learning. It can be summarized that a child's joy to learn is caused by different determinants: self-consciousness and participation are the most important.

Comparison of Results from Bulgaria and Germany

There are some differences but also some similarities between the results from Bulgaria and Germany. The way of teaching and how schools are organized seem to be the most important factor affecting joy to learn in school. In Bulgaria, studies show the dominance of the classic lecture format in teaching (Mirtschewa, 2013). Mirtschewa's study affirmed that the dominant teaching style was that of the classic lecture format and pointed out consequences for learning. The learning process is directly managed and controlled by teachers. There are hardly any opportunities for students to foster independence and self-reliance skills, which are necessary for students to have control over their learning process. Even in cases when students received independent assignments, those learning tasks were teacher directed and did not allow students to be creative. This was mostly characterized by working independently on workbooks and required only rote learning. There are only few tasks for developing and encouraging individual thinking and fostering the students' creative potential. As a consequence, students are not allowed to direct their own learning and implement educational activities. Furthermore, there is little space and time for cooperative forms of learning. Working with partners or in collaborative groups was not observed. In conclusion, closed educational concepts dominate in Bulgarian schools. These concepts are mainly influenced by the following aspects (Mirtschewa, 2013, p. 158):

1. Curricula are obligatory and determine the choice of educational content.
2. Textbooks play a significant role in learning. They often determine the content of learning. Sometimes the entire structure of teaching depends on them.
3. Teaching and teacher-training is in particular geared towards the cognitive side.

The training is oriented to children's achievements rather than to their interests. At the end of 4th grade official tests are administered for the purpose of evaluating student's knowledge. There is no attention given to the development of social skills. The orientation to learning objectives dominates the educational system.

4. Teaching is controlled directly and the way of teaching depends on the personality of the teachers.

This way of teaching influences the joy to learn of Bulgarian students. Some Bulgarian teachers chose a playful approach to learning and which promotes the concepts of "joy to learn". In these few cases, children are allowed to choose materials on their own, to do things they like or to work together in groups. According to Deci & Ryan (1993), children experience joy to learn if they are allowed to make their own decisions, feel competent and socially integrated. Some Bulgarian teachers respect these needs. In order to promote joy to learn, teachers need to teach in a manner that promote a sense of

competence and social integration. This is important because joy to learn influences not only students' achievement, but also their behavior and well-being (Hascher & Edlinger, 2009; Hascher, 2011).

Similar to the students in Bulgaria, German students prefer active and self-determined learning methods although German students don't focus on the playful approach so much. German studies (e.g. Brügelmann & Brinkmann, 2009) showed that the dominance of classic lecture format in teaching is not as prevalent like in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, teaching is characterized by classic lecture format as well. According to Brügelmann and Brinkmann (2009), there are following results concerning "open learning"⁶ in teaching:

1. Different forms concerning the opening of school and teaching in respect of institution (e.g. flexible time-structures).
2. Daily forms concerning the opening of school in respect of contents (e.g. children can choose between different contents they want to work on.)
3. Specific forms concerning the opening of school in respect of methods and organization (e.g. different learning stages, Project-based-learning, individualized instruction).

German curricula are more flexible than in Bulgaria. German primary school teachers are mostly motivated to open education. They accept the students as active in guiding their own learning. They allow children to actively choose materials, methods and the place of learning and they favor a more student-centered instruction. Especially the following indicators are taken into account by the teachers:

- Students are active agents in their own learning process.
- Learning should be self-motivated.
- Students are active participants rather than recipients of commands.
- Teachers trust in students' ability to choose their own learning experience.
- Teachers and students develop the learning environment.
- Teachers care for a democratic learning atmosphere.
- Teachers respect the students' freedom and responsibility for their learning and development.

For this reason, many German students are used to learning on their own, participating actively in their learning process or making their own decisions. However, studies (e.g. Brügelmann & Brinkmann, 2009) point out that there even isn't enough space and time for open learning in most elementary schools so far. The children's perspective on joy to learn shows the importance of open learning in order to learn happily and successfully.

Bulgarian and German elementary school children experience joy to learn in situations which allow them to explore things, to be active in their learning and to find their own ways of learning. Teaching, as well as the curricula and school organization must be reconsidered in order to foster the joy to learn and the student's individual achievement. Further empirical research is needed to differentiate teaching more precisely. The main objective of further research must be to respect the perspective of children in order to improve learning processes in school.

Discussion

There are some important aspects related to joy to learn from the perspective of children. In regard to the methods of teaching and learning, it is important that children experience autonomy in the learning process, e.g. making own choices and decisions about tasks, topics and time. Moreover, children experience joy to learn when they are actively learning, e.g. researching, experimenting, testing or exploring new things. This can be realized by offering project-based-learning (Lam, Wing-yi Cheng & Choy, 2010; Mitchell, Fougler, Wetzels & Rathkey, 2009) in a learning workshop (Hiebl, 2014).

6 "Open learning" includes any form of education whether or not it includes the use of information or communication technologies.

Children experience joy to learn if methods are supported by new media and technology such as tablets or whiteboards. In regard to social relationship, children experience joy to learn if they are allowed to work in groups and to communicate about contents and tasks. They like being with friends and prefer a positive atmosphere in classroom. Cooperative learning methods or tutorial-systems in class can support these needs. Furthermore, joy to learn is related to experiencing competence and capability. It is important for elementary school children to notice their own learning results. Therefore, spaces and time must be given for presenting results. Also, positive feedback promotes a joy to learn. Activities or events outside the daily routines of teaching and learning also contribute to the joy of learning. There are different possibilities shown by the children like learning in the natural environment (e.g. forest), field trips, excursions, celebrations or special events (e.g. theatre). Related to the topics and subjects children experience a joy to learn if they are really interested or they have previous knowledge and are eager to learn more about a special topic. Surprisingly, the teacher was rarely mentioned by the children in the study. One reason for this could be that they were asked to describe a situation of learning in which they experienced joy. In this case, further empirical research is needed.

These aspects may have consequences for teaching and learning. First of all, it is important for teachers to use various teaching methods such as different learning stages, educational games or projects. The students must be able to participate actively and to make their own decisions and choices. Possible learning methods are for example experimenting, learning circles and researching or exploring learning methods. Also, it is important to provide students with the space and time to practice, to explore, and to find alternative ways of approaching a learning task. This provides the students with the ability to develop critical thinking skills that will foster their own intrinsic learning. To achieve these aims social forms must be varied (e.g. group work, partner activities, but also individual work). Teachers must be able to create a social atmosphere that allows communication and cooperation. This includes regularly giving feedback and praising students for achievement. Also, the tasks must be adapted to the level of the individual students' performance. Primary school children must feel capable of doing tasks by their own. Furthermore, it is important to interrupt the classroom routines by incorporating celebrations, field trips, guests and experts into the curriculum. Finally, teachers have to choose topics that are really "interesting" for students (e.g. by exploring their previous knowledge).

In conclusion, "Joy to learn" from the children's point of view bears consequences for teaching and teacher training. The perspectives of the children in the "Joy to Learn" study conveyed the importance of self-determination and active participation in their learning process. Children need the opportunity to plan and organize their learning by themselves. Children like deciding about tasks, special themes or the time it takes to complete their work. They prefer to be active learners, to do experiments, research and explore new things. Children feel competent in pedagogical situations as long as their individual way of learning is respected in the social context of school. This was evident from the statements written in the text by the children in the project. In addition, this research study has important implications for teachers. Teachers need to create pedagogical environments that stem from children's interests and are differentiated to meet the needs of each child in their classrooms.

The results of this study demonstrate that teacher training programs should incorporate child-directed and differentiated instructional practices into their curriculum. Teacher training should include phases in which pre-service teachers experience self-consciousness and participation in a social context. Furthermore, time is needed to reflect these experiences in class and to refer them to future work in school. Pre-service teachers have to experience the role of an active learner in order to allow their future students to be active learners in class. Moreover, questioning and verifying the own biography of learning is fundamental for planning lessons from children's point of view.

Qualitative research looks for possibilities to explore the experiences of children. In order to organize pedagogical situations from children's point of view, it is important to know something about childish learning experiences. Also, it is important to know the conditions that result in positive learning experiences. This is just as important as knowing what conditions result in negative learning experiences. In addition to quantitative research, qualitative research offers different possibilities for becoming aware of knowledge for optimizing schools and teaching.

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Geniş Özet

'Öğrenme Sevinci' Araştırma Projesi: Bulgaristan ve Almanya'da Çocukların Eğitimle İlgili Deneyimleri İle İlgili Sonuçların Karşılaştırılması

Başarılı öğrenme durumlarına ilişkin ufuk açıcı çalışmalardan birisi de Hattie'nin (2009) gerçekleştirdiği meta-analiz çalışmasıdır. Bu meta-analiz çalışması 50,000'den fazla çalışmayı kapsamakta olup öğrencilerin öğrenmesini etkileyen faktörleri analiz etmektedir. Hattie'nin analizi, öğrenmenin çocukların kendileri tarafından yönlendirildiğinin altını çizmektedir. Öğrencilerin öğrenmesini etkileyen faktörler şunları içermektedir: kişisel özellikler, güdülenme, öz-algı, bilgi ve bilişsel durumlar. Öğrencilerin öğrenmesine ilişkin bulguların yanısıra, bu meta-analiz çalışmasının sonucunda öğrenmenin başarıya ulaşmasında öğretmenlerin ve mesleki eylemlerinin %30'luk bir etkiye sahip olduğu da ortaya çıkmıştır. Özellikle öğretmenlerin derslerini nasıl organize ettikleri ve nasıl yapılandırdıkları özel bir önem taşımaktadır. Mesleki eylem, öğretme ve öğrenmeyi çocukların gözünden görebilmeyi ifade etmektedir. Hattie, öğretimin tasarımcısı olarak öğretmenin aktif rolünü vurgulamakta ve öğretmenlerin pasif birer öğrenme yoldaşı olma rolüne karşı çıkmaktadır (a.g.e.). Öğretmenleri yetiştirme açısından, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin öğrenme süreçlerini anlaması oldukça önemlidir.

Karşılaştırmalı "Öğrenme Sevinci" çalışması eğitim bilimlerindeki çocuk araştırmalarına, çocukların okuldaki öğrenme ve öğretme sürecine yönelik deneyimlerine ilişkin derin bir içgörü elde etmek amacıyla onların bakış açısını keşfetmeye çalışan bir yaklaşım benimsemiştir. "Öğrenme Sevinci" projesi, olumlu duyguların ve esenliğin ilgili yönlerini keşfetmek amacıyla çocukların okulda deneyimledikleri neşeli veya mutlu durumlara odaklanmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, çocukların öğrenme durumlarını keyifli, güdüleyici ve etkili olarak değerlendirmelerini sağlayan faktörlerin ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Projenin bilimsel amacı çocukların okuldaki öğrenme deneyimlerini ve süreçlerini, özellikle keyifli anlarını ve durumları incelemektir.

Bu makalede, araştırmanın deseni, yöntemi ve Bulgar ve Alman çocuklarıyla gerçekleştirilen nitel çalışmanın bulguları sunulmaktadır.

Özetle, araştırmanın sonuçları çocukların bakış açısından öğrenme sevincinin önemli ana yönlerini gözler önüne sermektedir. Öğrenme ve öğretme yöntemleri açısından, çocukların görevler, konular ve zaman hakkında kendi kararlarını vermek gibi otonomiye ilişkin deneyimler elde etmeleri oldukça önemlidir. Ayrıca, çocuklar öğrenme sevincini araştırma yapma, deney yapma, test etme ya da yeni şeyler keşfetme gibi aktif bir şekilde öğrendikleri zamanlarda deneyimlemektedirler. Bu süreç proje tabanlı öğrenme (Mitchell et al., 2009; Lam et al., 2010) ortamları ile gerçekleştirilebilir (Hiebl, 2014). Çocuklar öğrenme sevincini öğretim yöntemleri tabletler veya beyaz tahtalar gibi yeni medya ve teknolojilerle desteklediği zaman deneyimleyebilirler. Sosyal ilişkiler açısından çocuklar öğrenme sevincini grupla çalışmalarına izin verildiğinde ve akranlarıyla içerik ve görevler hakkında etkileşim kurduklarında deneyimlemektedirler. Çocuklar, arkadaşlarıyla birlikte olmaktan hoşlanmakta ve sınıfta olumlu bir atmosfer olması tercih etmektedirler. İşbirlikli öğrenme yaklaşımının sınıfta işe koşulması bu gereksinimleri giderebilir. Ayrıca, yeterli olunduğuna dair deneyimler öğrenme sevincine neden olmaktadır. İlkokul öğrencilerinin kendi öğrenmelerinin sonuçlarını fark etmeleri önem taşımaktadır. Bu nedenle, sonuçların sunulacağı alan ve zamanı yaratmak gerekmektedir. Bununla birlikte, olumlu dönütler öğrenme sevincine neden olmaktadır. Yine, günlük rutinlerin dışında gerçekleşen etkinlikler veya olaylar da öğrenme sevincini desteklemektedir. Konular ve alanlara yönelik olarak, çocuklar gerçekten ilgilerinin olduğu konularla, daha önceden bilgi sahibi oldukları konularla ve daha çok öğrenmek istedikleri konularla karşılaştıklarında öğrenme sevincini deneyimlemektedirler.

Bu araştırmanın sonuçları göstermektedir ki öğretmen eğitimi programları çocuklar tarafından yönlendirilen farklılaştırılmış öğretimsel uygulamaları barındırmalıdır. Öğretmen eğitimi, öğretmen adaylarının sosyal bir bağlama katılımı ve samimiyeti deneyimlemelerine ilişkin süreçleri kapsamalıdır. Ayrıca, bu deneyimleri sınıfa yansıtma ve okula aktarmaya ilişkin zamana gereksinim vardır. Öğretmen adayları, gelecekteki öğrencilerinin aktif öğrenenler olmaları için kendileri aktif öğrenen rolünü deneyimlemelidir. Buna ek olarak, kendi öğrenme biyografisini sorgulamak ve doğrulamak çocukların bakış açısından dersleri planlayabilmek için elzemdir.