

Workshop Sessions

Now Virtual on New Dates! *Strengthening the Evidence Base for Culturally Relevant Interventions in Early Childhood Care and Education* has been rescheduled for November 8-10, 2020 from 9:30am-12:30pm EST each day.

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Strengthening the Evidence Base for Culturally Relevant Interventions in Early Childhood Care and Education

Session Leader: Tom Weisner

Gold standard intervention science today at its best, is based on integrated mixed qualitative and quantitative methods. Conceptualizations, design, samples, measurement, analyses and outcomes all require understanding of variables and structures; person-centered understanding of the people engaged in any way in interventions and their experiences and intentions; and the specific communities, family, and national context in which interventions are embedded. Interventions have a moral direction, and ethical considerations, regarding what is good development for a community, as well as a logic model for the variables and mechanisms that will produce that change. This workshop session will bring together exemplars of this kind of framework, and critiques of circumstances where this standard is not being used. This topic is likely to consider broadly current use of research to design, plan, and evaluate ECCE interventions and alternatives to this. Many issues can be nested within this topic, including the assumptions associated with the developmental and intervention and sociocultural science. Some of the ideas that will inform our conversation could include: ‘how do we make research more relevant’; ‘what type of research informs’; ‘what else do we need to know’.

Children in Poverty Contexts: Re-examining Global Definitions of Risk and Enablement in Family Interventions

Session Leader: Nandita Chaudhary

A large number of children live in difficult circumstances, with little or no access to adequate services related to health-care, food security, housing, clean water and/or education. In such situations, families need assistance in the care of their children. Help has been extended from several different sources: Concerned individuals, philanthropists, religious groups, volunteers, Government agencies and voluntary organizations, both local and international. Over the years, intervention programs for the poor have shifted away from the missionary zeal and charity model to welfare from a rights perspective in which voluntary organizations are key players. Most recently, ‘philanthrocapitalism’ has become a trend, where large companies dedicate funds for causes like world hunger or disease prevention. Several models of partnerships and collaborations are available across the globe, with international aid agencies, private companies, industrialists, religious groups, governments and local groups joining forces for the cause of children and families living with poverty. In this shift from local assistance to national or global policy, justification for the allocation of funds or inviting donations has compelled organizations to define the problem and develop solutions.

Cultural Strengths and Programs to Foster Children’s Learning

Session Leader: Barbara Rogoff

This interactive session focuses on fostering early learning, and discussing strengths for learning, ethics of intervention and issues with interventions that try to foster learning, and how to address those issues. The session will organize discussion to help move beyond the deficit model to examine building on and learning from strengths. For example, some strengths for learning among young Indigenous-heritage Mexican and Guatemalan children include sophisticated collaboration and wide, keen attention. A strength for learning among young Native American children is their advanced understanding of systems thinking. The discussion will also consider the principles organizing some successful interventions fostering learning by building on strengths, such as in a program fostering literacy and computer use among young Latinx California children, and early childhood development research and practice in Africa.

Children's Care and Network Relationships

Session Leader: Heidi Keller

Attachment theory has reached worldwide prominence as the “scientific” foundation for family and educational programs and interventions. This is based in the universality claim of attachment spanning from its definition, its emergence to its consequences. This session will problematize the doubtful scientific base related to fuzzy and wrong assumptions and the exclusion of scientific evidence regarding the relational networks of children other than in Western middle class families and the communities normative assumptions in which their development and education are based. Examples for programs (e.g. responsive feeding; STEEP) as well as interventions (e.g. UNICEF, ECCE) will be discussed regarding the underlying, often implicit assumptions (e.g. adult, mostly mother as major attachment person; dyadic dialogical communication format; importance of verbal elaboration and mentalization, individualized). Besides the scientific quality, also the ethical implications need to be addressed. Cornerstones for culture sensitive programs and interventions will be developed.

Children's Language Development and Socialization

Session Co-leaders: Elinor Ochs and Doug Sperry

For decades scholars have debated neuro-cognitive, socio-cultural, and political economic parameters of children's competence as speaker-hearers of local, regional, and global language varieties. The debates include the complex affordances of caregivers' communicative ideologies and practices on young children's linguistic and communicative skills. Inevitably, communicative differences in early childhood beget postulations of deficits or at least gaps that beget contested interventions. Addressing linguistic and communicative resources in the early years of life in relation to what children need to know calls for cross-disciplinary collaboration, yet scholars invested in children's language rarely sit in the same room to work through the constraints of disciplinary paradigms and attendant methodologies. In this workshop session, we imagine how a fearless dream team of intrepid discipline-transgressors might respond to the following questions: What are children asked to do as they come of age? What kinds of linguistic and communicative skills are critical to meeting these social expectations? How are these skills variably scaffolded through socially distributed caregiving? How can we turn our analytic lens to comprehend the heterogeneous communicative ecologies of children over the arc of a day? How can we recruit the full methodological

capabilities of anthropology and psychology to understand children as ratified speakers and hearers, full participants in the language-learning process? Should communities seek educational intervention for language growth? How might community answers to the questions we pose above inform decisions and outcomes regarding interventions? Our discussion addresses hard issues surrounding regimes of language and knowledge in relation to poverty and technologically propelled global capitalism.

Challenges of Scaling Up Interventions with Local Validity

Session Leader: Martin Packer

In Colombia, undergraduate students in psychology take at least one course in psychological interventions. They are taught how to conduct interventions in clinical, organizational, community, and educational settings. Some universities also have master's programs in psychological intervention. In addition, in Colombia a national evaluation of early child education quality and outcomes was recently conducted by the National Ministry of Education and UNICEF. One key question is how such a national evaluation (upon which intervention is planned) can successfully coordinate with the many local communities that exist in Colombia, many of them indigenous cultures with their own ethnotheories about early childhood education. The answer to this question would have implications for the way students here (and elsewhere) are taught about interventions in the undergraduate curriculum. This session, then, will address the issue of the coordination of multiple local interests in scaled-up (regional or national) efforts at intervention.

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