

Aim

To answer the question:

How does the 'image of rich child' influence the work of professionals using social pedagogy in a residential care setting for looked-after children?

Using Engestrom's practical ideas on how to facilitate the process of ascending from the abstract to the concrete, (which I combine with aspects of Freire and Boal's work with the 'Oppressed'), I ask a team of professionals using social pedagogy to examine the seemingly fragmented, unrelated experiences and dilemmas they encounter in their practice. They do this through the lens of an abstract notion, such as Malaguzzi's 'rich child'. The underlying principles they draw from this are then used to create specific solutions to the dilemmas they encounter in practice. If successful, this process gives them a truer understanding of the context in which they work, thus facilitating their capacity to act in line with their intentions.

The image of the 'Rich Child'

...is used in the early-years setting of Reggio Emilia. Malaguzzi (1993), who ran the schools, describes the child as "rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and, most of all, connected to adults and other children".

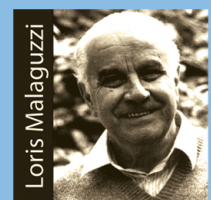
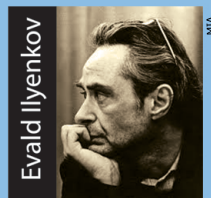
Previously, Karl Marx and Thomas Moore give accounts of how society can be transformed to foster, as well as reflect their image of a rich human being.

Ascending from the abstract to the concrete

...is a method used by Karl Marx to understand and explain capitalism. It has been applied to support learning and consists of "moving from sensory experience, which characterises the day to day, to generalisation, which operate through language, and then onto the tangible and concrete."
(Freire, 2005. 35)

Key Ideas

Key Thinkers



is used to question daily practice by understanding contradictions or dilemmas, such as the part technology has on child development, friendships, defining a 'child in need', etc... to arrive at a renewed understanding of concrete reality

The study is conducted to fulfill the requirements of a PhD at the UCL Institute of Education under the supervision of Prof. Cameron and Prof. Petrie.

The fieldwork will be carried out within an innovative residential care setting for looked-after children and young people in England.

Context