Building Inclusive Societies: Effective Child Participation

Content:
Effective involvement of children in everyday life situations, such as school, play, family activities is critical for child development and the building of a fully functional and inclusive society. This course aims to create awareness of the importance of involving children and will give specific considerations to participation in relation to included and excluded children, for example children with disabilities, and how this relates to children’s involvement in school, and their academic and social development.

With children the nature of functioning and environmental settings varies greatly compared to adults. Play takes a greater precedence in children and is one of the most important developmental activities teaching us important skills such as social norms and expectations, how to reason and negotiate, judgement, etc. Thus assessing children’s involvement in activities is of particular importance to ensure effective and inclusive society building through education.

Methods:
Days 1-3: Children & Participation, Disability & Normality, Inclusion
- Lecturing, group work, discussion, present day’s case, solo work, PBL group work

Day 4: Groupwork & presentation preparation
- Lecturing – academic summary, seminar work, develop problem area for final presentation

Day 5: Summarising & student presentations
- Lecturing – course summary, closing & presentation

Competences and skills to be acquired:
The way we relate to one another is becoming more important as societies are increasingly multicultural and more inclusive. Our attitudes are formed when we are children and changing these later is difficult. Including children is thus key to creating more inclusive societies and central in children’s development is their engagement in activities.

Participation is the main part of an activity and can be defined as involvement in a situation (WHO, 2007). The frequency of attending and intensity of involvement both represent participation (Maxwell, 2012) so it is the right to be in the same activities as others and the level of engagement (Granlund et al., 2012); these two perspectives have two conceptual roots: sociology and developmental psychology (Granlund, 2006).

Outcomes:
- Participation as an involved experience
- Disability & normality and the effect on inclusion
- Child development in relation to participation
- Knowledge about the potential to create more inclusive societies
Prerequisites:  
An interest in child development, welfare, and inclusion. Basic understanding of psychology and sociology.

Language of instruction: English

Recommended for: Social Studies