

## **Learning modules in early childhood education (Kindergarten) – effects on children**

**Prof. Erath, Prof. Konrad, Dr. Köck, M. Rossa (Catholic University of Eichstaett)**

### **Theoretical and empirical background**

In the German early childhood education praxis constructivist and co-constructivist approaches of didactics are seen as most the appropriate for children between age 3 and 5. But – there is empirical and theoretical evidence (Neurosciences, PISA) that these approaches are not sufficient to offer children best chances for their future learning success and their ability to be in shape in the sense of a lifelong learning term.

If you follow the “Theory of mind” (Fonagy, 2002) and the connecting “False belief”-experiment (Wimmer/ Perner 1983), that is, to recognize that others can have beliefs about the world that are diverging, you get to know that children at the age of around 4 achieve this higher ability, which can also be called as “Metacognition”. (Flavell/Wellman, 1977) Kindergarten should be seen as the basic education area and use this ability to help children to gain further learning – skills.

### **Research plan**

In a 3 years project Prof. Erath, Prof. Konrad, Dr. Köck and M. Rossa, together with 4 PhD students will develop an educational approach which is based on the idea, that child educators should offer children as well a basic knowledge about fundamental ideas in important learning fields, e.g. techniques, mathematics, culture, languages, sports, etc, and learning - skills for an enhanced lifelong learning. In order to do this in a child-oriented manner learning modules are created which enable kindergarten teachers to present knowledge, wisdom and the mentioned learning skills in appropriate ways.

Starting by developing a theoretical background for the use of different didactical elements, as e.g. workshops, group work, discussions, etc. the project participants will develop modules and part curricula and use them as a frame for the work with children. In the frame of empirical studies PhD students will measure the effects of these learning modules and develop further theses about the use of such elements. Cross-national examinations will help to understand different learning cultures across Europe and enable the team to assess needs and chances for the further development of the German Kindergarten landscape.

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