

CIEC Special Issue: Revisiting Diversity & Difference in Early Childhood through Children's News Media

Guest Editors: Jayne Osgood, Kerry Robinson, Camilla Eline Andersen, Michelle Salazar Perez, Alex Gunn & Nicola Surtees

Children's access to certain knowledge, often deemed inappropriate for children by adults, has been at the core of many controversies in children's early education. This is particularly the case in terms of the censorship associated with children's access to what has been broadly viewed as 'difficult knowledge' – bodies of knowledge pertaining to sexuality, death, war, poverty, and violence, for example. In some western countries, the discourse of childhood innocence has been a powerful mediator/regulator of children's access to knowledge and has influenced how children are viewed as active citizens in their everyday lives (Robinson, 2013). However, it is now more widely accepted that children are competent, knowing beings in and of the world, readily taking up, processing and challenging messages about a raft of uncomfortable and inequitable realities, from global warming, to sexism, to racial intolerance, to class prejudice (Osgood et al., 2016). This view of children and childhood requires that approaches to pedagogy, policy and practice around diversity and difference in early childhood education attend to children as knowers and doers in the world (Osgood, 2012; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2016).

In the wake of recent global political developments and the rise of populism (e.g. Brexit in England, the election of President Trump in USA, the marriage equality plebiscite in Australia) all of which have re-ignited debates about racial intolerance, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, gender fluidity and sexism, it is important to investigate how children make sense of this as it unfolds in their daily lives and local contexts. Whilst there are long traditions within early childhood education globally (e.g. the Anti-bias movement) and localised practices within early childhood settings, that seek to advance children's understandings of diversity and difference, adults generally continue to feel uncomfortable addressing such issues. A notable exception though is children's media where real-world issues are deftly addressed. For example, according to Matthews (2009) *Newsround* in the UK effectively shapes the production of news to offer a selective and simplified news agenda for children that respects their cultural rights as active citizens. The editor of the Australian children's newspaper *Crinkling News*, Saffron Howden says, 'We cover all the news –

without the boring or scary bits’, pointing out that this newspaper is ‘one where they [children] get to be involved in current affairs in an age-appropriate way’ (<https://www.crinklingnews.com.au/about/>).

The proposed SI will create a space to consider the constitution of children’s knowledge through the avenue of children’s news media. The SI will explore the political machinations at play in terms of how media intended for children is produced; how events are selected, framed and presented; with a particular concern to explore what gets silenced and/or framed in particularly narrow ways. The SI welcomes submissions that attend the significance of children’s media in addressing, tackling or diluting real world issues, that directly impact upon children’s lives and the sense they make of the world, and their place within the world.

Papers of 4000 – 6000 words are invited according to the following timeline:

- Abstract submissions 300 words, 5 keywords, and a short 200 word author biography: 4th May 2018
- Authors notified of abstract acceptance: 1st June 2018
- Draft papers due: 7th December 2018
- Revised papers due: 31st May 2019
- Published in the third issue of CIEC (September 2019)

Please send your abstract submission to Professor Jayne Osgood at j.osgood@mdx.ac.uk

References

- Matthews, J. (2009) “Making It Our Own” BBC Newsround Professionals and Their Efforts to Build a News Agenda for the Young. *Television & News Media*, 10 (6): 546-563.
- Osgood, J. (2012). *Narratives from the Nursery: Negotiating Professional Identities in Early Childhood Education*. London: Routledge.
- Osgood, J. Scarlet, R.R., Longstocking, A. de Clisson, J., & O’Malley, G. (2016). Reimagining anti-bias education as worldly-entanglement in Scarlet, R.R. (Ed) *The Anti-bias Approach in Early Childhood*. Multiverse: Australia. Pp183-202.
- Robinson, K.H. (2013) *Innocence, Knowledge and the Construction of Childhood: The contradictory nature of sexuality and censorship in children’s contemporary lives*. London: Routledge.
- Robinson, K.H. & Jones-Diaz, C. (2016). *Diversity and Difference in Childhood: Issues for Theory and Practice*. 2nd Edition. Maidenhead: Open University Press.