Unveiling Children's Personal Epistemologies: Exploring Elementary Children's Epistemic Beliefs in England and Spain

Rocio Garcia Carrion, University of Cambridge, England, rgc31@cam.ac.uk; Linda Hargreaves, University of Cambridge, England, lh258@cam.ac.uk; Ruth Kershner, University of Cambridge, England, rsk21@cam.ac.uk

Keywords: epistemic beliefs, knowledge, inclusive classrooms

Abstract

Exploring children's beliefs about knowledge and knowing becomes essential for developing inclusive, innovative and reflective societies worldwide. Those beliefs that we held affecting the way in we think, learn, act and reflect. Presumably, our beliefs are socially constructed and culturally embedded with others. Although research has been focused mainly on undergraduate and high school students, children's epistemic beliefs has remained under researched. The ChiPE project (2013-2015) funded by the European Commission (Marie Curie Actions, EU-FP7) analyses children's epistemic beliefs in 8 longitudinal case studies in elementary classrooms in England and Spain. In this paper from dialogic-group interviews with children 9-11 years (n=40) attending diverse schools located in rural and urban areas, middle and low SES areas and serving ethnic minority populations is presented. The dialogic group interviews were video recorded and analyzed using Nvivo10. Preliminary analysis of the dialogic-group interviews indicate that (a) children recognise and value multiple sources of knowledge (i.e. peers, home, family, community, volunteers) crossing boundaries between school-home-community, (b) absolutist, multiplist, evaluativist positions emerge while children discuss general-domain beliefs about knowledge, (c) children's beliefs about knowledge contextualized in a dialogic learning environment tend to align with more sophisticated beliefs and refer to uncertain, complex and changing knowledge. It seems crucial to understand what they beliefs about knowledge and knowing are, how they situate those in proximal and distal contexts and why some learning environments may be more conducive to elicit, develop and, eventually, capitalize on those beliefs to improve children's learning.

References


