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What younger children really think and understand about internet safety: The value of stories and role play as research methods

PRESENTED AT THE BERA 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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Aims of the presentation

- To provide an overview of the context of the proposed research
- To examine the proposed research aims
- To discuss the proposed methodological approach and how this impacts on younger children’s autonomy within the research environment
Research context (1)

What are the issues?

What does the literature say?

- Children are accessing the internet at younger ages and for longer periods of time (Sharkins, Newton, Albaiz & Ernest, 2015, p.437)

- Much of the research focuses on the engagement of older children over the age of nine (Chaudron, 2015, p.11)

- Widening gap, demonstrating a lack of understanding in how best to support younger children’s digital engagement (Holloway, Green & Livingstone, 2013, p.4; Ólfasson, Livingstone and Haddon, 2013, p.32)
• Chaudron (2015) suggests younger children show limited understanding of what the internet is, or the associated benefits and risks

• More research is needed to help shape online safety for this age group

• Socio-emotional abilities

• The current lack of research surrounding younger children’s online engagement may reflect difficulties in research involving the perceptions of younger children (Olfasson et al., 2013, p.20)

• Are there more creative ways to genuinely attempt to include children in the production of knowledge? (Lomax, 2012)
Research context (3)

Different perspectives: Home and school environments

- Children’s, parents and teachers perceptions of the potential risks and benefits of online engagement are an important aspect of understanding child online safety (Kanthawongs & Kanthawongs, 2013)

- Sharkins et al. (2015) suggest that there is a lack of research that includes the perspectives of caregivers, such as parents and teachers regarding younger children’s use of digital technologies

- The British Government recognises the influential position of parents and encourages them to take responsibility for child internet safety through ideals surrounding effective parenting (Byron, 2008, 2010; Lewis, 2014).
Different stakeholders

Different perspectives: Home and school environments cont...

- Shipton (2011) suggests teachers and parents’ views of online safety often differ, potentially causing barriers.

- Parents of younger children recognise the importance of taking responsibility for child online safety and are willing to share this with teachers (Chaudron, 2015)

- Holloway et al. (2013) suggest that sharing responsibility for online safety with teachers may lead to some parents of younger children having less support through a lack of communication.
Proposed research aims

- Critically interrogate how the home and school environments work together to tackle the issues of child online safety

- Apply a phenomenological approach to examine the possible differences between younger children’s and adult’s perspectives, gaining insights into how best to support younger children with online safety

- Critically analyse the effectiveness of storytelling and role play in eliciting the views of younger children in the research environment
Ecological Systems Theory

- To encourage further understanding of younger children’s perspectives surrounding online safety, multiple environments need to be analysed (Chaudron, 2015)

- Opportunities to examine how individual’s views and perceptions are potentially influenced through interactions between different environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

- Interactions between different perspectives to further examine and understand younger children’s digital autonomy, digital literacy and possibly leading to a safer digital environment (Chaudron, 2015)
Proposed methodological approach (1) Storytelling

- As a pedagogical strategy, storytelling capitalises on children’s desire to interact and talk to others.

- Engaging in storytelling is a way of motivating young children to engage within an activity.

- Storytelling has a potential ability to motivate children and to connect with the content.

(Miller & Pennycuff, 2008).


- Audio recording.

- Age appropriate storytelling five children (reception and year one).
Proposed methodological approach (2) Role play

• Role play enables children to communally explore and assign meaning to their worlds and themselves in it (Papadopoulou, 2012, p. 575)

• A pretend world that is reality grounded, where children are able to recreate aspects of their everyday world (Papadopoulou, 2012, p. 576)

• A medium of expression to demonstrate their current levels of understanding, anxieties and fears (Papadopoulou, 2012, p. 582)
Proposed methodological approach (3) Role play

Revisiting roleplay data with children

• Research with children continues to examine how their perspectives can help add to the body of knowledge about various issues in their lives (Einarsdottir & Harcourt 2011; Lansdown 2005).
• Increased use of video recording has also contributed to a paradigm shift within early childhood educational research, where the child is viewed as a competent research participant (Rayna & Laevers, 2011)
• A clear rationale for video recording, ethical considerations, confidentiality, anonymity, data storage

Data analysis

• Thematic Phenomenological Analysis
Conclusion

• Provided an overview of the context of the proposed research

• Examined the proposed research aims

• Discussed the proposed methodological approach and how this impacts on younger children’s autonomy within the research environment
References


References


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