



# Research pre-primary education in Mauritius

---

Cerunne Bouts & Irene Timmermans



# Introduction & Overview

---

- Introduction
- Follow up: Advice and Thesis
- Part 1: Quality of pre-primary education
- Part 2: Learner centered teaching in pre-primary schools
- Discussion & Questions

# Part 1: Quality of pre-primary education

---

- Theoretical background
- Research methods
- Important findings & Advice

# Theoretical background

---

- Importance of early childhood education

## What is quality?

- Structural quality
- Process quality

## Who is involved?

- Policy makers
- Teachers

# Research method

---

- 10 schools (public and private)
- Stakeholders: ECCEA, MIE, teachers and assistant coordinators

Quality of the NCF	Document analysis, interviews
Use of the NCF	Observations, interviews
Quality of the daily practices	Observations, interviews

Sub-scale	Item	Ranking 1 to 3			Comments
<b>Space &amp; Furnishings</b>	Indoor spacing				
	Furnishings for routine care, play & learning				
	Furnishings for relaxation & comfort				
	Room arrangement for play				
	Space for privacy				
	Child-related display				
	Space for gross motor play				
	Gross motor equipment				
<b>Personal care routines</b>	Greeting/ departing				
	Meals/ snacks				
	Nap/ rest				
	Toileting/ diapering				
	Health practices				
	Safety practices				
<b>Language-Reasoning</b>	Books and pictures				
	Encouraging children to communicate				
	Using language to develop reasoning skills				
	Informal use of language				

<b>Activities</b>	Fine motor			
	Arts			
	Music/ movement			
	Blocks			
	Sand/ water			
	Dramatic play			
	Nature/ science			
	Math/ number			
	Use of TV, video and/ or computers			
	Promoting acceptance of diversity			
<b>Interaction</b>	Supervision of gross motor activities			
	General supervision of children			
	Discipline			
	Staff-child interactions			
	Interactions among children			
<b>Program structure</b>	Schedule			
	Free play			
	Group time			
	Provisions for children with disabilities			
<b>Parents and Staff</b>	Provisions for parents			
	Provisions for personal needs of staff			
	Provisions for professional needs of staff			
	Staff interaction and cooperation			
	Supervision and evaluation of staff			
	Opportunities for personal growth			

# Research instruments (3)

Fragment	Sensitive responsiveness	Fragment	Talking and explaining
1	High – middle – low	1	High – middle – low
2	High – middle – low	2	High – middle – low
3	High – middle - low	3	High – middle - low
	<b>respecting the child's autonomy</b>		<b>stimulating development</b>
1	High – middle – low	1	High – middle – low
2	High – middle – low	2	High – middle – low
3	High – middle - low	3	High – middle - low
	<b>giving structure and setting boundaries</b>		<b>guiding child-child interactions</b>
1	High – middle – low	1	High – middle – low
2	High – middle – low	2	High – middle – low
3	High – middle - low	3	High – middle - low

Notes:

# Important findings & Advice (1)

---

What is the quality of the National Curriculum Framework for pre-primary education?

- + In line with recent theories
- + Freedom in using the NCF
- + Description of the relationship between teacher and child
- Description of play
- Assessment

More importantly: How is it seen in pre-primary schools?

# Important findings & Advice (2)

---

How is the National Curriculum Framework used in the daily practices of pre-primary schools?

- + Use it for guidance (“Bible”)
- + Planning of activities
- Holistic development in planning (integrated approach)
- How to assess your daily practices?

# Important findings & Advice (3)

---

What is the quality of pre-primary education?

- + Space, furnishings, facilities
- + Safety and Health practices
- Physical education
- Free play
- Individual needs of the child (autonomy, relation and competence)

# Part 2: Learner centered teaching in pre-primary schools

---

- Theoretical background
- Research methods
- Findings
- Recommendations

# Theoretical background

---

- Learner centered teaching
- Ecological system



\*Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental psychology*, 22(6), 723.

\*Weimer, M. (2012). Five characteristics of learner-centered teaching. *Faculty Focus*.

# Teacher centered classroom

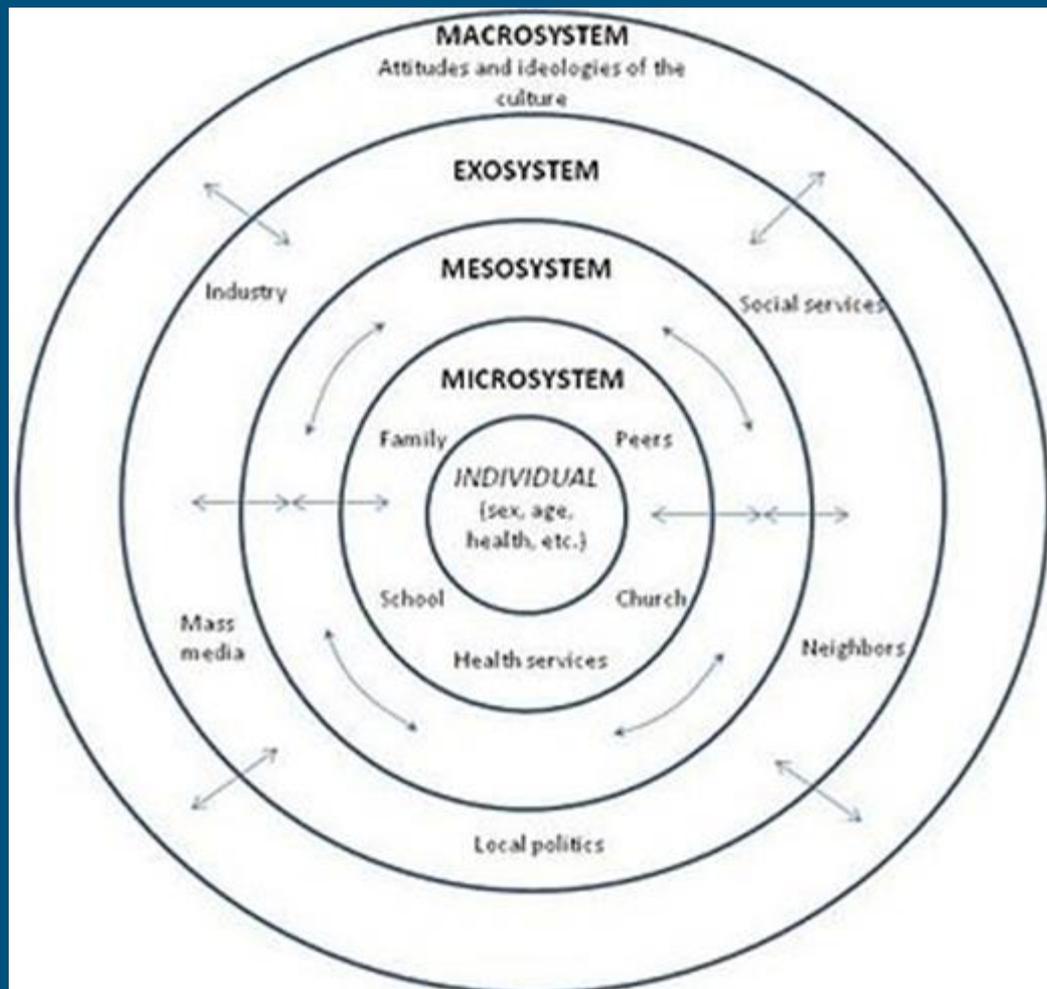
---



# Learner centered classroom

---





# Research questions

---

- Do the classes provide a learner centred teaching style?
- What are the teachers' views on learner centered teaching?
- What are the parents' views on learner centered teaching?
- Are the parents' views, teachers' views and daily practices regarding learner centred teaching in line with each other?

# Method

---

- Observations (10 schools)
- Questionnaires (41 participants)
- Interviews (7 teachers)
- Focus groups (25 parents)

Teaching style	Item
Teacher centered teaching	Teacher talks far more than children during group activity
	Most teacher questions are very specific/close ended and call for reciting factual information (instead of looking for different opinions on the topics)
	Instruction mostly occurs with the whole group rather than in small groups or individuals
	Use of class time is determined by the teacher
	Children sit in fixed groups with little ability to shift
	During the day, each child is supposed to perform the same tasks (individual interests are not being adressed)
	The teacher determines which playing materials the children play with

Learner centered teaching	Children ask questions as much as, if not more than, the teacher
	Most instruction occurs either individually, in small (two to six children) or moderate-sized (seven to twelve) groups, rather than the whole class
	Children help choose and organize the class time
	Varied play materials are available in the classroom so that children can use them independently or in small groups
	Children are given the opportunity to play with these materials and are allowed to make their own choices in what playing activities to engage in
	The tasks are adjusted to the children's daily experiences
	Children are getting the possibility to learn from each other (children of different ages work together during the day)

# Results observation

---

- Mixed methods
- Difference private schools and public schools

# Results observation

---

- Happy children
- Instruction in small groups
- Several playing materials in the classroom
- Themes

# Results observation: public schools

---

- Use of class time determined by the teacher
- Activities were teacher led
- No/not much free play
- Not much moving around
- Factual questions
- Separated per age group

# Results observation: Private schools

---

- Learner centered
- Teacher centered

# With teachers parents

---

- Learner centered view  
centered view
- Use of the curriculum  
area
- Pressure of primary school
- Pressure from parents

High emphasis on manners/respect/discipline

# With

- Learner
- Differences per

# Recommendations

---

- Guidance on how to specifically apply the learner centered teaching style
- Primary schools
- Include parents in the process
- Look at the teaching style in private schools

# Recommendations

---

- Include more free play and learning through play in the classroom
- Give children the possibility to be creative
- Ask different kind of questions during the day
- Include the children in the determination of the class time
- Let the children work together

# Discussion & Questions

---