5-2021

The Impact of COVID-19 on Young Children's Education - Exploring the Compatibility of Combining Progressive Education with Online Learning

Yini Li

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S EDUCATION—EXPLORING THE
COMPATIBILITY OF COMBINING PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION WITH ONLINE
LEARNING

Yini Li

MAY 2021

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Child Development
Sarah Lawrence College

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak at the end of 2019 forced most schools around the world to move their classrooms online. This research takes the progressive education of young children as the basic educational concept and attempts to explore the compatibility of online education and progressive education of young children through interviews with educators in the United States and China. By understanding how online teaching occurred through interviews with early childhood teachers who implemented it during the COVID-19 outbreak, and the decisions and opinions of school administrators, this study compares the different teaching measures taken by early childhood teachers in the United States and China in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, the study recommends a progressive education model for online education of young children based on a qualitative analysis of progressive educators' and administrators' reported practices and perspectives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table/Figure   Page

INTRODUCTION

Progressive education in early childhood

The progressive education philosophy proposed by John Dewey (1859-1952) and his colleagues has influenced education in the United States and many other countries. In recent years, Dewey's progressive education thinking has gradually changed to meet current needs identified by later researchers, theorists and practitioners. However, it is an education system that runs counter to traditional education. Progressive education pays more attention to the education of "the whole child" rather than traditional teaching which focuses on textbooks and knowledge infusion (Kohn, 2015). Progressive education advocates that teachers design courses and activities suitable for students by tapping into their interests and developmental milestones, encouraging students to be active learners to build their own understanding and insights on knowledge through their own experiences (Kohn, 2015). Therefore, progressive educators try to educate "the whole child" —meaning children as intellectual, social, emotional, and physical beings—and view each child as an individual with unique learning characteristics and unique needs (Kochhar-Bryant, 2010). They promote adaptive teaching methods for each child, rather than forcing each of them to learn under a standardized teaching process. According to the principles of progressive education, every student should receive adaptive education according to their needs, strengths, and weaknesses (Ackerman, 2003).

Diane Ravitch, a historian of education, once pointed out that progressive education is one of the broadest and most difficult to explain concepts in the history of American education (Chen, 2018). It is difficult for us to sum up what progressive education is in one or two sentences, but in general, progressive education is divided into the following educational creeds.

Educating "the whole child": Progressive educators not only helps the child be a good learner, but also a good person (Kohn, 2015). Children's school life should not be dominated only by academics. Every child should be seen as a unique individual.

The child is the center of learning: Dewey challenged the view that education should be seen as a means of preparing the workforce of the future. Instead, he saw the school as the birthplace of a more functional and equal democratic system (Garte, 2017). He believed that learning can only happen when it is related to the learner's goals and interests. Therefore, progressive education focuses on child-centered teaching, that is, the center of learning is no longer based on academics, and children are the center of learning (Nager & Shapiro, 2007). Progressive educators advocate "differential courses" and "individualized teaching" (Chen, 2018), that allow each child to learn differently, according to their characteristics and developmental milestones. In addition, the design of courses and activities can also follow children's personal free will; teachers should understand their interests and characteristics (Chen, 2015). Therefore, the child as the center of learning has two meanings: 1) The design of the curriculum and activity must be centered on the child's development; and 2) Curriculum and activity design must be based on children's interests.

Active learning: When the courses and activities children are interested in match their age and developmental milestones, they are more likely to become self-directed learners (Jones, 2020). In progressive education, children can also become one of the curriculum designers (the other is the teacher). It is very easy for them to become active learners who think about the possibilities in the course design, because they will actively participate in every stage. Therefore, children will become thought builders, and they will continue to construct their own thinking, instead of passively absorbing knowledge or practicing skills (Kohn, 2015).

The Role of Teachers: In progressive education, the responsibilities of teachers are diverse and changeable. Teachers play the role of facilitator and provide a wealth of experience, which will naturally lead to the emergence of specific areas of interest for each child (Garte, 2017). The requirements for teachers in a progressive education system are very high. Teachers, education researchers, and educators not only possess specialized knowledge, but also possess an independent critical spirit and awareness (Chen, 2018). When teachers have these abilities, they can fight for education fairness for disadvantaged students and underrepresented minorities and an effective form of education that stands against the dominant cultural hegemony in the society (Chen, 2018), to create an equal and democratic teaching environment. Traditional education makes children learn how the teacher integrates or uses ideas, and then reconstruct the teacher's ideas (Kohn, 2015). Unlike traditional education, teachers should encourage children to build their own understanding of ideas (Kohn, 2015). Of course, each student's thinking construction is different, and some students' thinking structure will be the opposite of the "correct answer." However, the progressive education teacher must be satisfied with the opposite answer and guide the child to think actively—how to come up with this answer, and whether there are other answers more appropriate—the teacher is here to assist and actively guide the child to think (Kohn, 2015).

Learning by doing: Dewey (1938) mentioned education as life in his book *Experience and Education*. Dewey believed that the best education is "learning from life" and "learning from experience." The teaching process should be the process of doing. In his view, if children do not have the opportunity to "do," it will inevitably hinder their natural development (Dewey, 1934). Children are born with a desire to do things and work, and have a strong interest in activities, which should be given special attention. Dewey believed that "learning by doing" meant learning

from activities and learning from experience. This concept is also called experiential learning. It uses hands-on projects to enable students to learn by actively participating in activities that make use of their knowledge (Kennedy, 2019). Children are seen as independent and special beings. They construct their own knowledge through personal meaning, instead of constructing it through teacher-imposed knowledge and teacher-guided activities (Schiro, 2012). In these classrooms, children solve problems through hands-on methods. When teachers plan to teach, they will consider students' interests, integrate the subjects of the curriculum as the focus, and focus on project study (Williams, 2017). Educational experience includes the entire child's intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth, not just academic growth (Schiro, 2012). In addition, classrooms should be a social entity for children to learn and problem-solve together as a community (Williams, 2017). Therefore, social interaction is another way of learning.

Learning through play: Children are designed, by natural selection, to play (Gray, 2011). Play is very important in early childhood education; it promotes children's emotional, physical, social and cognitive health and development. Play is also an integral part of progressive education. It basically starts from children's points of interest, and they will actively participate in play. Moreover, children can learn through playing, which is learning by doing. Dewey, as the father of progressive education, also attaches great importance to the impact of play on children's development (Franklin, 1998). He believed that play can be related to children's daily activities and personal experiences (Franklin, 1998). For example, a four-year-old girl went with her mother to go shopping in the supermarket. She remembered the process of her mother buying fruit. Later, when she played imaginatively, she imagined herself as an independent adult, pretending to go to the supermarket to buy fruit with her little doll. During this play episode, she

imitated her mother's tone and language, "Buy some apples... now, check out... use coupons... go home!" She combined her daily life with play; just as progressive education emphasizes learning by doing, the girl learned how to go to the supermarket to buy fruit from real life experience and enhanced the skill through play.

When children play with their peers, they create pretend scenes by communicating, negotiating and talking, and use toys or props in a symbolic way (Bodrova & Leong, 2005). Children create specific roles and rules for pretend behavior in pretend scenes, and adopt multiple themes and multiple roles (Bodrova & Leong, 2005). This kind of play is also a process for children to practice and learn. In this process, they communicate with their peers and develop their social skills. In addition, they also learn to consider the opinions and needs of others (Bodrova & Leong, 2005). Children create an experience in play, just like actors, experiencing the thought of the role, and empathizing thinking from the perspective of the role. They are learning while playing; when a girl pretends to be a mother, she will take care of her doll like her mother.

In progressive education, teachers must first understand students before they can design courses and activities. They must give students space to explore: "The learner centered curriculum enables children to explore, follow their own curiosity and exercise their personal choice and responsibility" (Ellis, 2004). Teachers should give children the freedom of discovery and choice by creating an environment for development and growth (Riley, 2012). Therefore, progressive educators for young children use a variety of play-based experiences to promote children's learning and development, rather than using structured "curriculum". Play allows children to understand what they are learning and the world around them. And children need to be able to apply what they have learned to their own lives, so that they can connect with what

they are learning and make it more meaningful. Children practice, socialize, learn, and explore in play, which makes play a powerful tool to promote all aspects of children's development, and makes play particularly important in early childhood education.

Progressive education for young children during COVID-19:

COVID-19, a new Coronavirus, broke out in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and quickly swept across China and the whole world. One of the effective transmission routes of the virus is through droplets. Therefore, as the first country to discover the virus, China immediately took emergency measures - everyone must wear a mask, maintain social distancing, and not gather. According to government instructions, teachers and students across the country were quarantined at home until the epidemic was controlled. At the beginning of 2020, schools across China were closed. Similarly, in early March of 2020, the United States was also affected by COVID-19. In order to maintain social distancing and prevent the spread of the virus, schools suspended in-person classes and switched to online education. In this way, the education systems of China, the United States and other countries in the world have been forced to implement a new educational model on a large scale: online synchronous and asynchronous education.

Today, we have the technology to support a variety of synchronous and asynchronous forms of online learning (Harwell, 2003), thus enabling teachers to form virtual learning communities with children from schools all over the country and the world. Modern technology created more possibilities for education during the COVID-19 period. The reconnection of teachers and students relied on the internet, and it had also allowed in-person education to move into an online virtual network globally for the first time. Children and teachers could communicate and learn in various forms through different software. In addition, parents were involved in children's education more, helping and supervising the use of children's electronic

products at home (Koskela et al., 2020). During the period of COVID-19, the vast majority of preschools adopted online synchronous and/or asynchronous learning.

Synchronous learning uses video conferencing and other multimedia technologies so that, even if teachers and students are not in the same place, they can interact at the same time (Chen et al., 2004). It is an interactive, two-way online or distance education model that can be carried out in real time with the teacher. Asynchronous learning is carried out online and through prepared resources without the teacher's real-time interaction. While it is promoted by technology that supports the working relationship between learners and teachers, even if they cannot be online at the same time, it can also enable teachers to combine education with work, family, and other commitments (Kyriaki, et al., 2012). During the COVID-19 pandemic, early childhood education in China and the United States implemented these two online learning models.

Educational models that enable online early childhood education were different from the previous in-person models. When classrooms moved to online, parents were also involved. While children take online classes at home, parents, caregivers, and older siblings urgently become family education assistants, helping and supervising children's use of electronic products at home (Szente, 2020). Distance online learning challenged many parents. They played an unusually large number of roles in the same environment at home (Koskela et al., 2020). Parents are workers, but they are also parents who must raise their children. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic period, parents also assumed many of the responsibilities of teachers. Parental participation in education is related to children's use of technologies; they are also responsible for children's safety in the digital world (Koskela et al., 2020).

When children experience synchronous learning, parents help and guide children to enter online classrooms, and sometimes they are on the sidelines to listen, because parents worry that children cannot get as much experience in online classrooms as in-person classrooms. Parents also scaffold children in completing asynchronous learning tasks and act as a bridge between teachers and children. These expectations of parents have been very common during the COVID-19 distance learning period, but parents have not experiences these expectations before. Some say that it is unrealistic to expect children to complete many online courses on multiple platforms without any help (Jones, 2020).

In a report titled "The Impact of COVID-19 on Young Children, Families, and Teachers," Denisha Jones asked respondents, teachers and parents of young children, about their experience in online learning/distance education, including participation, expectations, ease of adjustment, benefits, challenges and concerns. In their responses, teachers stated that they were very concerned about whether they could establish relationships with children during online learning (Jones, 2020). Preschool teachers found it was difficult to keep children engaged with online school learning, and they also encountered difficulties in encouraging parents to participate in online classrooms (Jones, 2020). In addition, many teachers had financial issues because they were laid off due to their school being closed (Jones, 2020). Some teachers reported that the increase in screen time was problematic and it was hard to keep children engaged online (Jones, 2020). However, online learning also brought many benefits to teachers. For example, they had more time to spend with their families. It also allowed teachers to greatly improve their skills in using technology and made the teaching more creative (Jones, 2020).

Denisha Jones found that online learning also brought challenges and benefits to children and their families. Some parents believed that online learning increased children's time with

family and outdoor play, and their relationship with siblings improved. However, more parents believed that online learning was not beneficial at all and it brought more challenges instead. The number one challenge for parents was how to balance working from home and raising children (Jones, 2020). This challenge was especially common in families with multiple children of different grades or a child under 4 years old (Jones, 2020). Many parents had to give priority to helping their children and work early in the morning and late at night (Jones, 2020). Some parents reported that they thought online learning was not age-appropriate for early childhood education (Jones, 2020). Children lacked self-directed learning skills and rarely completed online learning without any parental help (Jones, 2020). Children were also resistant to repetitive online learning; they were too young to stay engaged in the Zoom classroom for a long period of time (Jones, 2020). The increase in screen time, lack of social interaction, difficulty concentrating, and other factors became parents' concerns about online education for young children (Jones, 2020). From this report, parents and teachers held multiple views on online education for children. Some of these views appreciated online learning, while others questioned it. During the COVID-19 outbreak, every teacher tried to adjust the structure of online learning as much as possible to meet the learning needs of children. Online early childhood education was a new attempt, a product of continuous learning spawned during the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, I am curious whether there is an online early childhood education learning model that can solve all or most of these challenges. I decided to use progressive education as the theoretical framework of early childhood education to conduct in-depth interviews with progressive education teachers and school administrators on online early childhood education.

METHOD

This study explores the possibility of online progressive education approaches for young children and compares similarities and differences between American and Chinese progressive schools under the influence of COVID-19. I conducted semi-structured interviews with progressive teachers of children 3-8 years old and administrators. This study uses a qualitative approach, which aims to solve problems related to the development of understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of human life and the social world (Fossey et al., 2002).

Participants

Participants in this study were progressive educators or administrators over the age of 18. They were invited to complete an online interview for approximately 60-90 minutes. All interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom or other virtual meeting applications. Before scheduling the interview, potential participants received and electronically signed a consent form.

The interview questions revolve around the decisions of preschool and elementary school administrators and the teaching models adopted by teachers since the outbreak of Covid-19. One set of questions is for preschool and elementary school administrators and teachers who did not teach after the COVID-19 outbreak, and the other is for teachers who taught classes for children aged 3-8 after the COVID-19 outbreak.

From January to March 2020, I successfully recruited seven teachers and school administrators who have research or work experience related to early childhood progressive education through emails and phone calls. All seven interviewees were women. Five of them were working in New York State, while the other two were working in Zhejiang Province, China. The schools they worked in were all progressive education based. Of the five

interviewees working in New York State, three were teachers and had online teaching experience during COVID-19. Teacher A taught 2-year-olds; teacher B taught 4- to 5-year-olds and teacher C taught a Kindergarten/first grade class. The other two interviewees were school administrators. Two teachers working in China were teaching 3- to 4-year-olds (Teacher D) and 4- to 5-year-olds (Teacher E) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Measures

Due to the different roles of participants, in order to better understand the compatibility of online education with progressive education for young children, I formulated two different interview questionnaires. The first questionnaire (Questionnaire A) is for teachers who taught early childhood lessons during COVID-19. The second questionnaire (Questionnaire B) is for school administrators, educators, and teachers who did not teach early childhood courses during COVID-19. Both QA and QB are attached in the appendix.

QA asked about class formats in spring 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021. It also asked how children felt about online classrooms, and the problems and challenges they faced in online classrooms. Questions asked included: 1) In your classes last spring (2020), I know there must be many differences compared with your previous in-person meetings. Can you briefly talk about the difficulties and challenges you and your children faced? 2) Were there any asynchronous and/or in person activities that children were most interested in? 3) Last spring semester (2020), did you have any collaboration with children's parents? What did that collaboration look like? How did the collaboration work? Were there any challenges? Any opportunities?

QB focused on inquiring about any decisions the school had made in response to COVID-19, as well as their concerns and suggestions regarding online teaching as school administrators. Questions asked included: 1) What is the format(s) for the fall semester (Sept-

Dec, 2020) of any schools you are responsible for and/or work with? Did the school choose not to open for certain ages? 2) What challenges and difficulties do you think teachers faced in the online classroom? 3) Did the school choose not to open for certain ages? Why?

Procedures

This study was reviewed and approved by a university Institutional Review Board. All potential participants were sent a written informed consent form, and they decided whether to participate in this study based on a review of the consent form and any questions they chose to ask. Once the informed consent document was signed, an interview was scheduled.

Mandarin-speaking participants received a Mandarin version of the informed consent form with consistent language to the English consent form. All interview questions and informed consent forms were available in English and Mandarin.

All interviews were conducted one-on-one in an online virtual meeting room, in English or Mandarin. Depending on the answers of the participants, follow-up questions may have been asked. For each question, each interviewee had sufficient time to state their point of view. Three main questions were addressed. 1) Class formats during COVID-19 (March-June 2020, September-December 2020, January-May 2020). 2) The challenges of online teaching during COVID-19, from the teacher's perspective. 3) The compatibility of online learning and progressive education.

FINDINGS

1.Class Format during COVID-19

1.1 China

From the interviews, I found that the class formats adopted in the United States and China were quite different. At the end of 2019, COVID-19 broke out in Wuhan, China. The virus swept across China and all over the world in a short period of time. Before the 2020 spring semester, China had been affected by the epidemic and announced a nationwide postponement of the start date of the spring semester to February, but the epidemic did not improve quickly. Therefore, schoolteachers had to start remote teaching in March of 2020. The area where the two Chinese teachers I interviewed taught was also affected by COVID-19 and decided to start their teaching online. Teacher D taught 3- to 4-year-olds in the 2020 spring semester, while Teacher E taught 4- to 5-year-olds.

Teacher D's classroom content was basically all asynchronous activities. She gave me an example of the most common activity her children did in the spring semester of 2020:

In March 2020, I received a notice from the school that we need to reconnect with the children…but the children are too young to do any online synchronization learning. However, instead, we sent audio stories to parents every day, and asked the parents to play the stories to their children, and children recorded the story of what they heard. After that, parents took pictures of the record and sent it back to the parent-teacher chat group.

Teacher E was in the same school as Teacher D; Teacher E also did asynchronous teaching.

We have some science courses in school, and I want my children to continue such courses while they are out of school, so I assigned a task to the children in our class to

observe the daily changes of a plant or tadpoles. Every day the children recorded the changes they had observed, and the parents took photos of the record and sent it to the parent-teacher chat group.

When the start of school was postponed due to COVID-19, the school held multiple meetings for teachers to discuss how to deal with the situation that children could not return to school. For a school based on play-based learning as a program value, teachers hoped that children could do as many activities as possible at home that were similar to what they do in school. This would increase the children's continuity of an activity and achieve home-school co-education; parents and children would not feel unfamiliar or unable to start without sufficient teacher guidance. The above two activities were done frequently in school before the pandemic.

In the spring semester of 2020, the teachers of this preschool program would hold a morning meeting every day to discuss picture book stories, music, sports, and other activities sent to parents that day. Each task was not mandatory, but teachers hoped that children could record their feelings and gains through drawing. After the parents sent these to the group, they would also show the records of other children to their children, so that they had a sense of connection with their peers. In addition, both teachers said that this recording method could also help parents learn about the progress of their child, so the relationship between the teacher and the parents in the spring semester of 2020 was maintained very well.

The class format depended entirely on changes in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the area where the school is located. China had basically controlled the domestic spread of COVID-19 in the summer of 2020. Therefore, schools in China resumed normal classes in the fall of 2020; they were back to the in-person classroom in the fall of 2020.

1.2 The United States

The class format of the American early childhood programs I studied was different from the Chinese early childhood program. I interviewed teachers at two progressive schools, both of which are in New York State. These two schools both launched online synchronous teaching in the spring of 2020. When one of the teachers talked about online teaching in 2020, she pointed out that she was very confused and didn't know what to do. A school administrator also said that some teachers with many years of experience teaching in-person may find it difficult to teach on Zoom, and they had to learn from scratch. Another teacher also pointed out that Zoom school is a sudden new experience for teachers, children, and parents. Teachers needed to do more preparation before class, and even would do a rehearsal to make sure class content could work on Zoom. The children were curious and excited when they saw their peers in the small squares on the screen, while the parents were always worried that their children were not learning enough online.

Both early childhood programs in New York State adopted online synchronous teaching in the spring, and also arranged corresponding asynchronous activities according to the characteristics of each student. In the fall semester of 2020, one of the preschools decided to stop online teaching and changed to in-person teaching, and only opened a combined kindergarten and first grade class. COVID-19, the high mobility of people, the protocol of maintaining social distancing and other policies caused them to give up the rest of the age group.

The administrator from that school said, "This is not a decisive decision, it is a gradual decision. Our two-year-old course requires the company of parents, but the building has to limit the flow of people, so we gave up the two-year-old group. Then, we found that we cannot offer in-person courses at the age of three, because a big tenant of our program is the separation piece and building trust and allowing parents to be part of that separation process with children...And

without being able to have adult parents come in the building, this doesn't make sense. Later we discovered that we couldn't carry out courses for 4-year-old children..."

Another early childhood program in New York was taught fully online in the spring and fall of 2020. The teacher found it difficult to build a rapport with the children in the fall, especially to build relationships with newly enrolled children. At the same time, she also believed that children should not be on screens this long, and it was difficult for newly enrolled students to establish their own social networks online. She believed that the reason for the school's decision not to open the campus in the spring and fall of 2020 and only offer online courses was due to funding issues. The school could hardly afford the cost of disinfection and protection, and there is not much room for everyone to maintain a safe social distance physically, so they chose the online class format. By the spring of 2021, New York had good control of the pandemic, thus the school began to implement a hybrid curriculum.

2. The challenges of online teaching during COVID-19, from the teacher's perspective

Several main themes emerged in terms of the challenges faced. The challenges were different for American and Chinese teachers, due to differences in class format, with American teachers largely teaching synchronously and Chinese teachers teaching asynchronously. Table 1 shows key challenges faced by American teachers in remote/online teaching. Table 2 shows the challenges faced by two Chinese teachers in asynchronous teaching.

2.1 New York, U.S.

Table 1

Challenges	Quotes
Technical problems: equipment, internet speed	"They have music class, which again, over Zoom is very difficult to do. Because the teacher can sing, but the children can't all sing together on Zoom, you know, just the delay, it doesn't work."

——Teacher B

Children don't like the Zoom classroom	"...Sometimes kids who didn't want to come on to the full group Zoom, and teachers would meet with them separately."

—— Administrator A |
| Difficult to understand the personal characteristics of each child | "I think it was very difficult to really know the strengths and weaknesses of a child (through online meetings). For example, I have a child, and she would answer questions, we thought she was really strong in the fall. And now that she's back in person, we realized it was her mother who was telling her all of the things to say."

—— Teacher B |
| Difficult to design online activities suitable for children | "The challenge, starting a new class, in the spring, in the fall, with very young four-year-olds, was trying to build relationships, build community, be able to explore materials together. Some children didn't have all the materials at home. Not everybody has blocks and all of the things for dramatic play and painting. And so really fully learning by doing was very hard, especially when we couldn't be there with them, to see what they're doing and to talk to them about what they're doing."

——Teacher B |
| Parental worries: their children speak less online and have not learned enough | "I started getting emails from parents 2-3 weeks after teaching the online class, like, no, this is not long enough time. Are you going to do anything more engaging? At first, I am so stressed out, and trying to figure out the whole new format of teaching."

—— Teacher C |

Difficult for children to socialize online	"... Early childhood education should not be missing out on the very important social experience that is like your early childhood education, it's 80% social, at such a young age, learn how to be part of a community and socialize and speak with one another and cooperate…All those things are very difficult to happen in the online classroom."
	——Teacher A

Technical problems: Hardware problems, such as slow internet speed, stalling of electronic devices, and audio and video delays were very common in online classrooms. Hardware problems also directly affected children's experience in class, and their online interaction with teachers and peers.

Some children don't like the Zoom classroom: Teachers interviewed said that many children do not like Zoom online classes, and some children even resisted online classes. The children showed great curiosity in the first few sessions of the Zoom class, because everyone was in a small little box. But gradually this kind of excitement disappeared; when children could only sit and face the screen, they felt very bored and uncomfortable. Therefore, teachers would not force their children to stay in front of the screen at all times. Teachers knew that even if children went outside the screen, they were listening to what was happening in the classroom.
In order to reduce children's resistance to online Zoom classrooms, each teacher's Zoom meeting lasted up to 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, children need to take a break. Teachers assigned some tasks for the children, as part of asynchronous learning, such as scavenger hunts or outdoor activities.

Difficult to understand the personal characteristics of each child：The length of online classes was definitely shorter than that of in-person classes, so teachers didn't have much time to learn about every child. However, all the interviewees said that good teachers will try their best to pay attention to the personal characteristics of each child. Teacher C said that she set up an appointment with each child and parent in her class every two weeks to learn about the child's recent situation. Teacher B said that sometimes it was not always accurate to learn about a child through online classrooms. One child in her class spoke very actively in online classrooms. However, after returning to the in-person class, the teacher discovered that the child was actually very taciturn. The child was completely guided by the parent to speak up during online sessions. Therefore, it was difficult for them to know what a child really was like through the internet.

Difficult to design online activities suitable for children: After the classroom was moved online, what teachers worried about most was how to design content suitable for online instruction. Before this, basically no one had tried online preschool, so what the teachers did was to move the content from the school to the online classroom as much as possible, although the format had some changes. For example, a teacher mentioned that they took the children to visit the city zoo every year, which was an important activity in the preschool program. However, due to social distancing this year, this activity became a teacher going to the zoo alone, showing animals to the children in real time on Zoom; children could ask questions, and the teacher answered them on Zoom; this was a bit like a TV program.

Teacher C said that there was no way to teach online, but she was trying to get familiar with the functions of Zoom and found that some functions were very helpful for online classrooms. In her online class, she preferred to use the breakout room function; the teacher would give the children some options for activities, just like at school they could choose their

favorite activities. Generally, teachers set up several breakout rooms for listening to music, dancing, storytelling, and more. Children could choose their favorite breakout room, and each breakout room was hosted by an assistant teacher. In addition, after the teachers came into contact with online teaching, and because not every child has the right materials to work on at home, the teachers had to design something that everyone could participate in. For example, two children introduced their home every day, and everyone had the opportunity to show their home to their peers online. Teachers also told some stories online, let the children draw the story they heard, and showed it to other children on Zoom to share their own paintings. This activity was also very similar to the story record assigned by the previous Chinese teacher.

Parental worries: Every teacher interviewed mentioned the worries of parents. The general worries of parents were that their children did not get enough opportunities to speak in class, and each day of class was very short, far less than the previous ones in school, and they felt their children had not learned enough. As a result, parents questioned teachers and schools. Administrator A believed that the teachers in the school were working very hard to find ways to make the children experience more in the online classroom, but compared to the past, this was indeed limited. Administrator B believed that an effective way of communication was necessary between parents and teachers, especially during the pandemic. Teachers and parents need to set up a common goal for their children and work together with this goal.

Difficult for children to socialize online: The teachers interviewed all mentioned a feature of teaching: connection. They believed that it was very important that they at least reconnect with the children. Teachers didn't want children to lose the connection with their peers and teachers without knowing it. This seemed cruel to children, because they didn't know what happened or could not understand what happened.

However, the online classroom time was very short, which greatly reduced the social interaction between children, and most of the time children would not stay in front of the screen. Both Teacher A and Teacher B said that children need to actively socialize with peers during the preschool stage and they should give them room to socialize. This was difficult online.

2.2. China

The challenges faced by Chinese teachers were relatively less because they had not implemented online synchronous classes. Teachers assigned tasks through parents, and parents were required to participate in most tasks. When parents are involved in completing tasks, it actually means that parents and teachers have achieved the same goal for their children—allowing children to learn from tasks—so the communication between parents and teachers was very good. In addition, before the epidemic, every class had a parent-teacher group chat, and both parents and teachers were very active in it. After the COVID-19 outbreak, the contact between parents and teachers was never interrupted, so there was a very effective communication bridge between teachers and parents in China. Nevertheless, Chinese teachers also faced some challenges, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Challenges	Quotes
Parents violated the educational philosophy of the preschool	"In March 2020, parents were very worried that it would be a waste of time for their children to stay at home, so they would teach their children some Chinese characters and simple mathematics." —Teacher D
Parents completed tasks for children	"Some parents think that the tasks that children completed are not good enough, so they will modify it… and the nature of the task has changed…" —Teacher E

Difficult for children to socialize	"In March 2020, the children stayed in their own homes and followed strict home quarantine regulations. So they didn't have social interactions, they were not allowed to master any electronic products, and they didn't know how to use electronic products to socialize."
	—Teacher D

Parents violated the educational philosophy of the preschool: When preschool children were unable to understand certain complicated math and Chinese characters, their parents forced the children to learn these. This contradicted the school's educational philosophy of play-based learning**.** The two teachers from China mentioned that children were required by their parents to accept academic knowledge beyond their age range at home. Parents would prematurely ask their children to learn how to write Chinese characters and to complete some elementary school mathematics at home. However, this content was not advocated for by the preschool. Teachers also believed that parents' constant demands on their children to increase their academics and practice would reduce children's playing time.

> We do not recommend, encourage parents teaching their children knowledge beyond the scope of preschool. If we find that parents have such behaviors, we will promptly advise, ask them to cooperate with the school's educational philosophy.
>
> —Teacher D

The advice given by the teacher was generally based on theories of child development. In addition, preschool advocates play-based learning, and parents who choose this kindergarten also agreed with this educational philosophy before making their choice. Therefore, when the teacher appropriately discouraged, most parents stopped teaching their children content beyond the preschool teaching.

Parents completed tasks for children: When the teacher assigned tasks, they wanted children to complete, the two teachers from China found that sometimes parents completed the tasks for their children.

> There is definitely a difference between what children and parents do. As a kindergarten teacher for many years, I can tell at a glance... Some parents think that the tasks that children completed are not good enough, so they will modify it… and the nature of the task has changed… so we have been emphasizing that anything made by the child is good. Don't use an adult's perspective to distinguish whether the child's completion is good or bad.
>
> —Teacher E

Both teachers believed that every task that a child completed was precious because it was based on the child's own ideas. Children always look at the same thing from a different perspective from adults. From the observation of small tadpoles, some children would observe the shape and size of the tadpoles, and some children would observe the changes in water temperature or the color of the tadpoles. Each child's observations were different, and they used their own expressions to record their observations. These different observations and expressions originated from the children themselves, and adults could not imitate them.

Difficult for children to socialize: During the COVID-19 quarantine period, it was a very common difficulty for children to be unable to socialize. Since the Chinese teachers didn't perform any online synchronous learning, children could only obtain messages about their peers from their parents' mobile phones. Thus, children had no direct opportunity to socialize with their peers.

Teachers expressed the concern that children would not be able to socialize during the quarantine period, but fortunately, by May 2020, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in China had gradually decreased. The school had changed from remote learning to hybrid, and most of the children had returned to campus. And by the spring semester of 2021, all children returned to campus to continue their in-person learning.

3. The compatibility of online learning and progressive education

3.1 Concerns

All interviewees expressed their views on children participating in online learning at home during the quarantine period. Most interviewees questioned the compatibility of online learning and progressive education. Several themes emerged across both American and Chinese teachers. Table 3 shows key concerns expressed by all or most of them.

Table 3

Concerns	Quotes
Difficult for children to 'learn by doing' online	"Progressive education is about being hands on… it's about being in it physically, being able to work with and negotiate with other kids." — Teacher A
Online classes may make teachers miss out on something about children	"You are missing something in the online session. When I'm in-person with somebody, I can have a sense of where they (children) are. And on the computer screen, it's different. In the in-person classroom, you can look at kids along the way…I can only speak for our tiny little class, in the in-person classroom, I see one little guy who was having a hard time there, and I can help him directly…" —Administrator A
Lack of social development	"…If a child won't share a toy who pushed you, who said something mean, you don't

	have those opportunities to express, because they don't happen online."
	—Teacher B
Too much screen time	"Children should not have too much time in front of the screen. This is not the play-based learning that we advocate. Too much screen time will deprive children of playing time."
	—Teacher D

Difficult for children to 'learn by doing' online: Teachers agreed that learning by doing was an important part of progressive education. However, online teaching does not give children too many opportunities to practice. In addition, online, children will lose their interaction with peers, because many things can't happen online.

Online classes may make teachers miss out on something about children: For progressive education, a serious concern of online learning is that teachers may miss something. Children are too young to stay in front of the screen all the time. Children are very resistant to the online classroom; they may walk away and cry away from the screen, but the teacher may not know. This is something that the teacher cannot notice while teaching online, so there is no way to help the child in time.

Many respondents mentioned that teachers should pay attention to the status, characteristics, and learning style of each child in time. However, when children can only stay in front of the screen and listen to the teacher telling stories, drawing, or dancing, it is difficult for teachers to observe the characteristics of children. What's more, children don't stay in front of the screen all the time.

Lack of social development: Online learning does not give children the opportunity to play with peers, but also can make children lack language expression. Some basic play forms,

such as pretend play or parallel play can't happen online. As a teacher mentioned, if one child is rude to another child, they will communicate in the physical world. This kind of communication is also a way of learning and can promote their own language expression and social skills. But this kind of interaction between children cannot happen online.

      Too much screen time: Teachers who pay attention to play-based learning are worried that too much screen time will deprive children of play time. At the same time, teachers from China also pointed out that they are very worried about children's eye health. Too much time looking at electronic screens will affect children's vision.

      In the modern world of science and technology, there are many games that attract children, and too many children are addicted to electronic products. When too much time is spent in front of the screen, children will miss what play brings to them.

3.2 The possibility and strategy of the combination of online learning and progressive education

      Among the seven interviewees, one teacher made it clear that she did not think that online learning and progressive education were compatible. The other respondents were neutral. One of the respondents from New York said that online progressive learning needs to make some changes different from in person. Completely copying the curriculum arrangement and time of an in-person classroom cannot become online progressive learning. Teachers need to remember the components of progressive learning before designing online courses. For example, administrator B notes, "People have to remember what makes progressive and bring that into a virtual space. What a lot of people were trying to do in March 2020, was to just do what they were doing in the classroom remotely. So, if I taught you six hours a day in the classroom, then I'm going to teach you six hours online, that's not progressive."

Many teachers described to me how to best incorporate play into online sessions. The teacher mentioned that this requires joint effort between teachers and parents. Sometimes the teacher will tell the children, "You can go to free play." Most parents choose to keep the camera on, so that the teacher can easily watch each child play in order to understand and observe the children. In addition, the teacher will also start her own free play, and children can also see what the teacher is doing through the screen. After a period of free play, the teacher and children will return to the screen to share. Another teacher mentioned that for synchronous learning, virtual progressive classrooms can also invite children to play, watch children play and comment on their play, just like children video chat with their grandparents. This is a way to keep play happening in an online space.

One interviewee emphasized that if you want to do online progressive learning, you must prepare children to be self-learners. She described what she thought the ideal progressive online learning strategy would look like:

> My ideal progressive online work would look like this: on Monday you meet with your teacher and hold group discussion-- what are your intentions for the week? What are you working on? What are your activities? Every child knows what they need to be working on, whether it's a project or something like that. And then maybe some children need to check in every day for 20 minutes. Other children, they might need to check in once on Wednesday. And then everybody comes together on Friday and they talk about what they did. And the children on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and Thursdays, they know what they're doing, and they only reach out to the teacher if they need help. That's the kind of independent learning that I think we need if we're going to do virtual progressive education. (Administrator B)

It is very important for children to learn independently. The above teacher believed that we need to change how we define learning. The traditional idea is that learning only happens when children communicate with teachers, but this is only one form of learning. However, when the teacher cannot be with the children, the children need to know what projects each of them is working on and what they are doing. When children encounter problems, they can also reach out to teachers. Teachers can scaffold the work, and really think about how to enhance it and how to take it to the next level.

Most teachers very much agreed with the ideal online progressive plan proposed here. Most teachers interviewed believed that providing as many asynchronous learning activities as possible for children is what online progressive education needs to do. In addition, it is also necessary to learn about every child as much as possible, so that asynchronous learning activities can be arranged according to the characteristics of each child. Then, everyone can gather together like a community to discuss what they did that week. Nevertheless, children can complete the corresponding activities and meetings by themselves, but they cannot cooperate with other peers, which is a challenge of this program.

CONCLUSION

Findings

The primary goal of this study was to understand the compatibility of progressive education and online education for young children through interviews with progressive educators and administrators. Every interviewee had experience and thoughts about online progressive education for young children during COVID-19. The results indicate that online progressive education for young children is feasible, but not the most ideal.

In this study, six of the seven respondents believed that online progressive education for children can be implemented, but the online teaching model needs to be adjusted frequently on the basis of understanding the principles of progressive education. The remaining respondent believed that online education is completely unsuitable for progressive education for young children, and it is difficult to achieve an acceptable fit between the two.

The challenges faced by all teachers interviewed were different, mainly due to the characteristics of their educational formats. The American teachers adopted two educational formats: online synchronous learning and asynchronous learning. They identified challenges such as communicating with parents, children not enjoying Zoom classrooms, and difficulty understanding the characteristics of children from the internet. On the contrary, the educational format adopted by Chinese teachers was asynchronous learning, and they maintained good communication with children's parents. Teachers communicated with parents almost every day for children's asynchronous learning projects. By helping children receive or send tasks to teachers, parents also learned about children's recent learning. Good communication with parents enabled teachers to learn about children's current situation from parents on a regular basis. However, some parents completed tasks for children and violated the educational

philosophy of the preschool, which was a challenge faced by Chinese teachers. Both American teachers and Chinese teachers held the same view that difficulty in social interaction for children, and difficulty in designing appropriate online course content, were challenges posed by COVID-19 to early childhood education.

Progressive education focuses on learning being supported by practical experiences (Kohn, 2015). The practical experiences of young children are mainly obtained through play. The data that I obtained suggests that children's play in online education is limited for the following three reasons. First, the types of play are restricted. Some teachers mentioned that for some children, it is not possible to have a lot of play materials at home; children didn't have as many play materials to choose from at home as in school. Second, during online learning, the interaction between children and peers decreased a lot, and the opportunities to play with peers was lost. Third, children's play time could not be guaranteed. As mentioned by Chinese teachers, compared to seeing children playing at home, parents were willing to teach children some basic academic courses. When parents forced children to accept and practice knowledge beyond their age range, children's play time was compressed. Therefore, although online education has re-established connections between children, teachers and communities, this is only part of the concept of progressive education. In practice, learning by doing, active learning, and understanding children's interests and abilities are all more difficult to demonstrate in both online synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Nevertheless, many interviewees believed that through adjustments, the above progressive education principles can all be demonstrated in the online classroom. According to my data, a model that combines synchronous learning and asynchronous learning, as well as

ongoing communication between the teacher and parents, can more comprehensively conform to the educational philosophy of progressive education, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

- Online synchronous learning
- Communication between teacher and parents
- Asynchronous learning
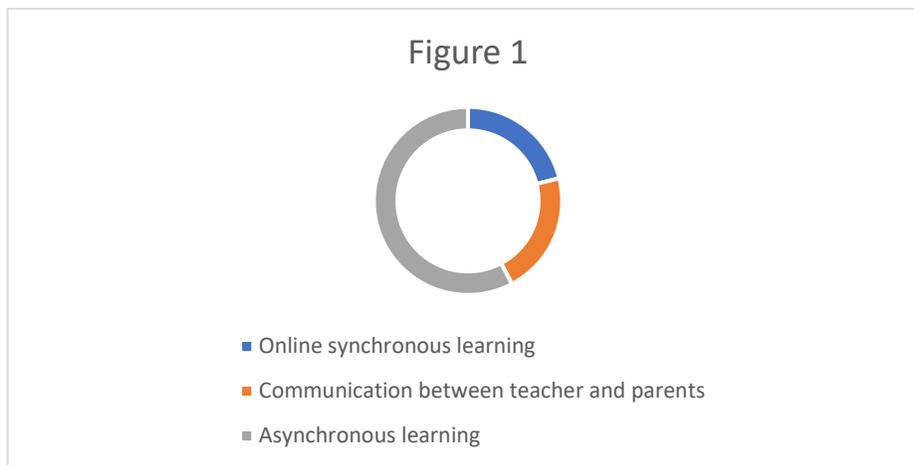
The figure above is a model of online progressive education for young children developed based on my data. It is composed of three parts: online synchronous learning, communication between teachers and parents/caregivers, and asynchronous learning. Online synchronous learning is mainly to help teachers establish contact with children and help teachers understand the current situation of children through online face-to-face communication. At the same time, children will also establish contact and keep in touch with peers, schools, or the entire community through synchronous learning. In online classrooms, interaction is very important. It can make children more engaged in virtual classrooms. The teacher can invite the children to play in front of the screen and observe the children's play choices and play styles. Teachers can also try to help children socialize more with each other in online synchronous learning. For example, as mentioned by Teacher B, every child has the opportunity to show their room to other peers in a virtual meeting classroom; peers will also comment and ask questions of the child who is sharing that day. This is an effective social interaction. When children promote language development in each other's questions and answers, they may also build a network of

interpersonal relationships. Therefore, online synchronous learning plays a role in helping children build social interaction, develop language expression, and connect with the community during online sessions. It also helps teachers understand children intuitively and makes preliminary preparations for the latter two processes of the model.

In addition, communication between teachers and parents is essential during online learning. Parents and teachers need each other at this stage (Jones, 2020). Teachers and parents must stay committed to maintaining a healthy partnership between the two most important aspects of a young child's life, home and school (Jones, 2020). They must work together to help children adapt to this new teaching environment. Therefore, establishing communication between teachers and parents can clarify the goals of joint efforts. Through conversations with a number of teachers who have taught online preschool courses during COVID-19, I think teachers and parents need to establish continuous communication during preschool online education. Due to the particularity of online education, parents need to supervise children's use of electronic products, so parents often observe the situation in the classroom. They can provide timely information about their children to the teacher at any time, including but not limited to emotions, development, hobbies, weaknesses, and other recent performances of children. It is also important for parents to provide feedback to the teacher about the children's performance before or after the online class. Some children don't like the Zoom class, but their parents may urge them to sit in front of the screen, and the teacher may not know this. However, if parents pass this information to the teacher in a timely manner, then the teacher can adjust in time. Parents need to be the eyes of the teacher. Teachers have more opportunities to understand the current situation of children by talking to parents. Although this will increase the workload of teachers and parents, I think it is necessary. Teachers can verify their observations of children in online

synchronized learning through dialogue with parents, and they can also have a more comprehensive understanding of children, including their cultural background, religious beliefs, family background and living environment. This will be very helpful for teachers to design learning content according to the characteristics of children, putting children as the center of learning. This will be in line with understanding children's learning and development in the context of family, community, and culture, which is needed for progressive teaching (Nager & Shapiro, 2007).

Asynchronous learning is the third link in the teaching model. It mainly embodies 'learning by doing' in progressive education, and it gives children the opportunity to practice. Through the previous two processes, the teacher directly and indirectly gains an initial understanding of children, and now the teacher can start designing the content of asynchronous learning. Asynchronous learning can be different projects designed according to the characteristics of each child. Usually, it completely follows the children's interests, and the teacher will convert the interests into a project and assign it, allowing children to benefit from it. For example, if a child likes cars, then his asynchronous learning project can be making a car model. The child will put the car he imagined into practice. He will choose materials that can be used to make car models and make them by hand. This will greatly advance his hands-on ability, observation ability, and more. The child will not only get a model of his favorite car, but he will also learn the appearance and structure of the car through making it. Moreover, teachers can also design a topic in asynchronous learning that enables children to work on the same subject. Two Chinese teachers showed us an example of one of these topics. They had children observe tadpoles. Observing tadpoles was the theme, but this was an open-ended topic; children could observe from multiple angles and dimensions. Every child's observation log was different, and

this could give teachers an understanding of children's development. Some children seemed to be more sensitive to numbers, and some were more sensitive to color and size. If a child's observation log continued to be related to numbers, the teacher might encourage and guide the child to observe from another angle. Teachers could communicate with children on observation logs through online synchronous learning, or they could guide parents to understand children's observations and encourage parents to scaffold children's observations from another view. In the process of asynchronous learning, children must become self-directed learners, who can engage in activities for a period of time with little assistance (Jones, 2020). When the project given by the teacher is perfectly integrated with children's points of interest, children will be more likely to become self-directed learners (Jones, 2020). They will obtain the opportunity to learn in practice, and the teacher will also give appropriate guidance based on the child's practice feedback, so that the practice can be improved and enhanced.

The three links of the model are complementary; teachers need to have a comprehensive and sufficient understanding of children initially before they can assign asynchronous learning content to children. In addition, asynchronous learning can help teachers understand children through the completion of their own projects. The three links should be carried out one after another in a short period of time. In the first stage, online synchronous learning can be carried out every day, but it will be more like the style of office hours, a prearranged time that the students can meet with the teacher and receive assistance from the teacher without the requirement for an appointment. Children can choose to participate or not, and when they have questions about their asynchronous learning tasks, they can directly meet with the teacher in the virtual classroom at a specific time each day. The asynchronous learning tasks may need parents' assistance and guidance for young children. Teachers can communicate with parents on how to

guide or help children complete the tasks in the second link. Parents are undoubtedly replacing part of the teacher's work, and teachers should also actively communicate with parents and give them correct guidance. Both parties will spend more time cooperating. Parents need to learn more about progressive educational practices, and teachers need to learn how to communicate with parents. Moreover, the interviewed teachers in both the United States and China mentioned that many tasks of asynchronous learning require the participation of parents. Parents and children completing tasks together can promote emotional communication. The child will lead the asynchronous learning task and assign the task to the parent, which will trigger the child's thinking and mobilize the child to actively complete the task.

When children make progress on asynchronous learning tasks, sharing their progress will become an activity in the online classroom. In this kind of sharing, it is often hoped that all children will come to participate, once or twice a week. The teacher will invite children to share their experience in the tasks, give guidance, encourage sharing and communication between peers, and assign new tasks. In the second stage, the communication between teachers and parents can be conducted once every two weeks. This kind of communication is best in the form of online meetings, both of which help teachers and parents understand the situation of the children in the classroom and at home. Teachers can also learn from parents the challenges children face in synchronous and asynchronous learning. In the third stage, which is not the last stage, children will complete some projects that are similar to their interests in practice. Of course, families, communities and friends can also be invited to participate in these projects; they can complete the projects together with the children. Then, a new cycle will begin, back to the first stage. The teacher will gather the children to share their projects and current status online in real time, do some group activities, and assign new tasks. The duration, frequency, and content

of all stages will be determined by the teacher based on the child's development, age and other factors. The combination of these three stages will to a large extent show the characteristics of progressive education for young children in online education.

Limitations

The generalizability of the results is limited by the scope of the sample in the present study. In this study, I only interviewed seven progressive educators and administrators teaching in three progressive schools in two countries (the U.S. and China). In addition, my sample size was limited to teachers and school administrators; I did not interview parents and children.

Future Study

This research developed a compatible model of online education and progressive education for young children by interviewing preschool teachers and administrators about their experiences and opinions of COVID-19 online education. This model incorporates other researchers' research on COVID-19 online early childhood education. The concept of early childhood progressive education can be demonstrated online in the form of this model, but further implementation is needed to prove that it is feasible.

The compatibility of online learning and progressive education for young children needs further research. In the future, with the advancement of technology, more possibilities for the combination of progressive education and online learning may be found. I think that with more investigation, progressive schools can try to adopt part of online education for practice.

This study also suggests some recommendations for future studies. These include: 1) studying children and parents' attitudes and perceptions toward online progressive education; and 2) expanding the sample group and conducting reflective surveys of teachers and parents

who have participated in online learning experiences. This will better prepare teachers for

cooperation with children and families in the future digital environment.

References

Ackerman, D. B. (2003). Taproots for a new century: Tapping the best of traditional and progressive education. Phi Delta Kappan, 84(5), 344-349.

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2005, September). (Pdf) the importance of play: Why children need to play. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234633527_The_Importance_of_Play_Why_Children_Need_to_Play

Chen, L. (2018). 美国进步主义教育的基本逻辑及其变迁[The Basic Logic and Changes of American Progressive Education].Beijing, China, Educational Science Research .doi: 09—718X(2018)07-0087-05

Chen, N., Kinshuk, Ko, H., & Lin, T. (2004). Synchronous learning model over the internet. IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies, 2004. Proceedings. doi:10.1109/icalt.2004.1357466

Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. New York, NY: Touchstone.

Edwards, S., Mantilla, A., Henderson, M., Nolan, A., Skouteris, H., & Plowman, L. (2018). Teacher Practices For Building Young Children's Concepts of the Internet Through Play-Based Learning. Educational Practice and Theory, 40(1), 29-50. doi:10.7459/ept/40.1.03

Ellis, A. (2004). Exemplars of Curriculum Theory. New York: Eye on Education, Inc.

Emmanouilidou, K., Derri, V., Antoniou, P., & Kyrgiridis, P. (2012, September 30). Comparison between synchronous and asynchronous instructional delivery method of training programme on in-service physical educators' knowledge. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1000422

Fossey, E., Davidson, L., Mcdermott, F., & Harvey, C. (2002, December 1). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1046/j.1440-1614.2002.01100.x

Franklin, M.B., 1998. Meanings of Play in the Developmental Interaction Tradition. Occasional Paper No. 1. ERIC. Available at: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED438919

Garte, R. (2017). American progressive education and the schooling of poor Children: A Brief history of a philosophy in practice. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1145585

Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds. Pediatrics, 119(1), 182-191. doi:10.1542/peds.2006-2697

Gray P. The decline of play and the rise of psychopathology in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Play.* 2011;3(4):443-463.

Harwell, S. H. (n.d.). Teacher professional development: It's not an event, it's a process. Retrieved from https://www.scribd.com/document/380725407/TEACHER-PROFESSIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-IT-S-NOT-AN-EVENT-IT-S-A-PROCESS

Irvin, M. (2017, Fall). The importance of play in early childhood education. Retrieved from https://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/education_masters/62/

Jones, D. (n.d.). The Impact of Covid-19 on Young Children, Families, and Teacher. Retrieved September 26, 2020, from https://dey.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Young-Children-Families-and-Teachers-A-DEY-Report-9-8-20-FINAL.pdf

Kelleher, R., & Leonall, H. (2011). Progressivism in the 21st century; is John Dewey relevant today? International Journal of Arts & Sciences, 283–295. https://search.proquest.com/openview/dac40e425e2207fde2efbc28f3835266/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=626342

Khalil, R., Mansour, A. E., Fadda, W. A., Almisnid, K., Aldamegh, M., Al-Nafeesah, A., . . . Al-Wutayd, O. (2020). The sudden transition to Synchronized online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia: A qualitative study exploring medical STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES. BMC Medical Education, 20(1). doi:10.1186/s12909-020-02208-z

Kochhar-Bryant, C. (2010). What does it mean to educate the whole child? Effective Collaboration for Educating the Whole Child, 1-34. doi:10.4135/9781452219295.n1

Kohn, A. (2015). Progressive Education: Why it's Hard to Beat, But Also Hard to Find. Bank Street College of Education. Retrieved from https://educate.bankstreet.edu/progressive/2

Koskela, T., Pihlainen, K., Piispa-Hakala, S., Vornanen, R., & Hämäläinen, J. (2020). Parents' Views on Family Resiliency in Sustainable Remote Schooling during the COVID-19 Outbreak in Finland. Sustainability, 12(21), 8844. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12218844

Nager, N., & Shapiro, E. K. (2007, January). A Progressive Approach to the Education of Teachers. Retrieved October, 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234712489_A_Progressive_Approach_to_the_Education_of_Teachers_Some_Principles_from_Bank_Street_College_of_Education_Occasional_Paper_Series_18

Riley, S., Surbeck, E., Ganesh, T., Christie, J., Stahlman, R., & (Publisher), A. (1970, January 01). The Evolution of Play in Public School Kindergarten Classrooms. Retrieved from https://repository.asu.edu/items/15051

Schiro, M. S. (2012). Curriculum theory: Conflicting visions and enduring concerns. (2nd Ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Szente, J. (2020). Live Virtual Sessions with Toddlers and Preschoolers Amid COVID-19: Implications for Early Childhood Teacher Education. Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 28(2), 373-380.

Williams, M. (2017). John Dewey in the 21st century. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1158258
Appendix A Questionnaire A

Appendix A Questionnaire A

Interview Structure

Participants in this study will participate in an online semi-structured interview hosted by the researcher, Yini Li, which takes approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be guided by the following questions, as well as by what participants are willing to talk about. Based on the participants' answers, follow-up questions may be asked.

- About The Consent Form.

■ Do you have any questions about the consent form you completed？

■ I know that talking about some of your experiences teaching during the pandemic might be stressful or distressing. During the interview, you have the right to choose not to answer any of the questions, and you can also withdraw from the interview at any time. In addition, if you need some additional support following our interview, I'm going to put just one helpline in the chat.

■ Put the mental health helpline in the chat box

- Interview Recording Confirmation

■ Can I record our interview? I have not started the recording yet, and you have the right to ask me to stop the recording at any time during the interview.

■ Please rest assured that the recording will be transcribed to an audio recording, and will be stored in my computer in a password-protected file. Only the researchers (my research supervisor, Kim Ferguson and I) can access it.

■ （Start recording, if the participant has consented）

All of the following questions will be related to progressive education and the education of children aged 3-8 during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. What age children did you teach in Spring 2020? [What age children did you teach in Fall 2020?] What age children are you teaching now? For both, please describe your class make up, class size, type of preschool and preschool program, number of times class meets a week and length of each class period, and anything else relevant you would like to tell us about your class and your preschool.

2. From your perspective, how would you describe progressive education? What do you think the key elements of progressive education are for children aged 3-8?

3. After the outbreak of COVID-19, did you teach children aged 3-8 in the last spring semester (March-June 2020) and/or the fall semester (September-December 2020), [and/or the spring semester, Jan-June 2021]?

4. For the last spring semester (2020), what was your class format after the outbreak of COVID-19? Did you continue to meet with your students online? Did you meet with them in person? Did you meet with them in some sort of hybrid format?

5.   If you didn't meet with your students online at all in spring 2020, please explain why. Please explain what you decided to do instead, and why you made this decision.

6.   If you did meet with your students online in spring 2020, whether fully online or in a hybrid format:

a)   Can you describe your teaching last spring (2020) after you had to change the format of your teaching as a result of the pandemic? What are some of the key changes you made? What didn't change?

i.   Children's age, class size, duration of class meetings, how many classes a week, how many classes online/in person, any asynchronous work?

b)   In your classes last spring (2020), I know there must be many differences compared with your previous in-person meetings. Can you briefly talk about the difficulties and challenges you and your children faced?

c)   Were there aspects of the program which you thought were successful? If so, what aspects, and why?

d)   What are the activities that children were most interested in during online synchronous meetings?

e)   Were there any asynchronous and/or in person activities that children were most interested in?

f)   Did you use any online resource?

g)   Last spring semester (2020), did you have any collaboration with children's parents? What did that collaboration look like? How did the collaboration work? Were there any challenges? Any opportunities?

h)   Last spring semester (2020), after you had to make changes to your teaching as a result of the pandemic, were you able to pay attention to the differences in learning styles, strengths, challenges, interests, etc. of each child?

i.   If not, why not?

ii.   If so, how did you do it?

1.   For example, by establishing one-on-one virtual meetings between teachers and children, strengthening contacts with parents, etc.

7.   Are you teaching/did you teach this fall (Sept-Dec 2020)? If not, why not?

8.   [if interview in Spring 2021: Are you teaching this spring (Jan-June 2021)? If not, why not?

9.   If you are teaching/taught this Fall (Sept-Dec 2020), what is/was your class format?

i.   Online/remote? In-person? Hybrid? Or others?

1.   If online/remote, synchronous, asynchronous, or both?

ii.　　Will/did your class format change after Thanksgiving?

b)　　If it changed from the spring 2020, why did the fall 2020 semester change?

c)　　What differences are/were there between your Fall 2020 classroom format and your spring 2020 format?

d)　　Do you think your fall 2020 semester classroom is/was more appropriate for your children than last spring 2020? Why or why not?

e)　　In the fall 2020 semester, what activities are most interesting to children?

f)　　Compared with the spring 2020 semester, has/did the participation of children's parents changed? How? What do you think of these changes?

i.　　 Do you want parents to participate more? Less? In different ways?

g)　　In the fall 2020 semester, can/could you pay attention to the differences in learning styles, strengths, challenges, interests, etc. of each child?

i.　　If not, why not?

ii.　　If so, how did you do it?

1.　　For example, by establishing one-on-one virtual meetings between teachers and children, strengthening contacts with parents, etc.

10.　　[For interviews in Spring 2021] If you are teaching this Spring 2021), what is your class format?

i.　　Online/remote? In-person? Hybrid? Or others?

1.　　If online/remote, synchronous, asynchronous, or both?

ii.　　Will your class format change at any point this semester?

b)　　If it changed from the spring 2020 and/or fall 2020, why did the spring 2021 semester change?

c)　　What differences are/were there between your spring 2021 classroom format and your spring 2020 and/or fall 2020 format?

d)　　Do you think your spring 2021 semester classroom is/was more appropriate for your children than spring 2020 and/or fall 2020? Why or why not?

e)　　In the spring 2021 semester, what activities are most interesting to children?

f)　　Compared with the spring 2020 and/or fall 2020 semester, has the participation of children's parents changed? How? What do you think of these changes?

i.　　 Do you want parents to participate more? Less? In different ways?

g)　　In the spring 2021 semester, can you pay attention to the differences in learning styles, strengths, challenges, interests, etc. of each child?

i.   If not, why not?

ii.   If so, how are you doing it?

1.   For example, by establishing one-on-one virtual meetings between teachers and children, strengthening contacts with parents, etc.

11.   From your point of view, how compatible are online education and progressive education? What are some potential synergies? What are some serious concerns?

At the end

1.   Is there anything you want to add?

2.   Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the interview, and/or if you think of anything you'd like to add at a later point, please contact me.

Appendix B Questionnaire B

Interview Structure

Participants in this study will participate in an online semi-structured interview hosted by the researcher, Yini Li, which takes approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be guided by the following questions, as well as by what participants are willing to talk about. Based on the participants' answers, follow-up questions may be asked.

- About The Consent Form.

■ Do you have any questions about the consent form you completed？

■ I know that talking about some of your experiences during the pandemic might be stressful or distressing. During the interview, you have the right to choose not to answer any of the questions, and you can also withdraw from the interview at any time. In addition, if you need some additional support following our interview, I'm going to put just one helpline in the chat.

■ （Put the helpline in the chat box）

- Interview Recording Confirmation

■ Can I record our interview? I have not started the recording yet, and you have the right to ask me to stop the recording at any time during the interview.

■ Please rest assured that the recording will be transcribed to an audio recording, and will be stored in my computer in a password-protected file. Only the researchers (my research supervisor—Kim Ferguson and I) can access it.

■ （Start recording, if the participant has consented）

All of the following questions will be related to progressive education and the education of children aged 3-8 during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. What age children were you responsible for in Spring 2020? [What age children were you responsible for in Fall 2020?] What age children are you responsible for now? For both, please describe class make up, class size, type of preschool and preschool program, number of times class meets a week and length of each class period, and anything else relevant you would like to tell us about your class(es) and your preschool.

2. From your perspective, how would you describe progressive education? What do you think the key elements of progressive education are for children aged 3-8?

3. What challenges and difficulties do you think teachers faced in the online classroom?

4. During the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think there are any online resources teachers can use? What kind of resources?

5. In the last spring semester (March to June 2020), after schools had to make changes to teaching as a result of the pandemic, do you think teachers were able to pay attention to the differences in learning styles, strengths, challenges, interests, etc. of each child?

6.   What is the format(s) for the fall semester (Sept-Dec, 2020) of any schools you are responsible for and/or work with? Did the school choose not to open for certain ages?

a)   If they opened, what is the format(s)?

b)   If they choose not to open for certain ages, why?

c)   In the fall 2020 semester, do you think teachers can/could pay attention to the differences in learning styles, strengths, challenges, interests, etc. of each child?

7.   In the fall semester (Sept-Dec, 2020), many preschools have changed from online teaching to in-person teaching or hybrid or others. Why?

a)   Compared with online teaching, do you think the current in-person, hybrid teaching is more appropriate for children? Why?

b)   Some schools are now adopting in-person teaching. What do you think is the difference between in-person teaching under the influence of COVID-19 and typical in-person teaching?

8.   [For interviews in Spring 2021] What will be/is the format of your school for Spring 2021? Will there be/were there any changes from fall? What do you think the format of other preschool or elementary schools is, and why?

9.   From your point of view, how compatible are online education and progressive education? What are some potential synergies? What are some serious concerns?

a)   How can play be incorporated into class time for online sessions with young children?

10.   After the outbreak, children have a lot of time to stay at home. How do you think we can promote children's play? How can we help children play and explore the world?

11.   Whether it is online, hybrid or in-person, do you think the cooperation between parents and teachers is essential under COVID-19?

a)   What kind of cooperation is needed between parents and teachers?

At the end

1.   Is there anything you want to add?

2.   Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the interview, please contact me.