

Review of: "“A totally new situation that put us into uncharted waters”: Preschool teachers negotiate their professional identity in respect to online learning during the Covid-19 lockdowns in Greece."

Paola Trimarco¹

¹ Open University

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

As much of the research on learning and teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic has been on students' perspectives and the changes to teaching methods, in particular at secondary and higher levels of education, this article is a welcomed addition to the literature on online learning. Its consideration preschool teaching rightly brings early years education into the fold of technology enhanced learning. More importantly, this research is focused on professional identities of preschool teachers working at such a challenging time. As noted by the authors, research on professional identities of preschool teachers is limited and this is in part due to these teachers not seeing themselves as belonging to a professional group, coming from different backgrounds on the care-education continuum.

Overall, this article does a good job of framing the impacts of the shift from in-person learning to virtual classes has had on preschool teachers' everyday professional practices and identities.

The qualitative methodology taken by the researchers is well-justified given that the issues under investigation social, psychological and often subjective in nature. However, the study would benefit from an additional triangulating method of gathering data beyond the semi-structured interviewed employed. Having developed themes through the thematic analysis undertaken, another qualitative method involving for instance focus groups could have been used. Some of the questions for the interviews could also have been rephrased for a questionnaire, allowing participants to express themselves along a relative scale of perceptions and attitudes. On a smaller point, I was surprised that given the technology available and the teachers use of technology the interviews were only conducted over the phone, instead of through teleconferencing, where body language could have aided communication and could have been included in the analysis. The analysis of the data appears thorough and mindful of possible biases and pitfalls, for example, due to working with translating texts from Greek to English.

The Greek school context in which this study took place is necessary to note in a case study such as this, however the discussion of the findings is easily applicable to other preschools using online learning environments during the pandemic in other parts of the world. What I found particularly interesting, as it does not apply to secondary or higher education, was the issue of the loss of duality in interactions. The presence of a parent or guardian in the online classroom posed challenges for negotiating the learning space and the developing interpersonal relationship between student and teacher. I



see this as an area for further research.