Emotional intelligence, need for cognition and cognitive reflective ability related to attitudes towards a further training program among preschool staff

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, NEED FOR COGNITION AND COGNITIVE REFLECTIVE ABILITY RELATED TO ATTITUDES TOWARDS A FURTHER TRAINING PROGRAM AMONG PRESCHOOL STAFF

Joakim Lundgren

There are currently scarce research regarding further training programs and employees’ attitudes toward them. This present work examined 95 preschool employees from one municipal community in matters of emotional intelligence, need for cognition, and cognitive reflective ability and how these influenced their attitudes toward a further training program called International Child Development Programme, ICDP (study 1). Six participants were also interviewed in regards to more organizational aspects of the ICDP-training and their experiences of the program’s implementation in the actual work-situation (study 2). The results of study 1 showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and attitudes toward the program. Study 2 revealed lack of follow-ups and sustainability of the program in the real-life work-situation. Suggestions for countering these flaws as well as a more individually focused approach in embracing, applying and maintaining the teachings of a further training program are discussed.

Educational programs are a myriad of different orientations and beliefs of which way to go in order to achieve the ultimate care and education starting from an early age. Sommer, Pramling-Samuelsson and Hundeide (2013) concludes that it is simply not possible to name any one program the best and ultimate, however it is not from lack of trying considering the many discourses available in today’s schools and preschools. The application of pro-social further training programs for children, adolescents and professional caregivers and teachers alike have blossomed over the last decades (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2004) and the reception and effects of such programs vary throughout the years and between as well as within different cultures, (Ferrer-Wreder, 2013). In the present work the aspects of an individual’s emotional intelligence, need for cognition and cognitive reflective ability will be examined in relation to attitudes and perceptions of a further training program conducted among the staff of preschools. A specific program called International Child Development Programme (ICDP) was used as an example of a further training program examined through questionnaires (study 1) and interviews (study 2) with professional caregivers and preschool teachers from one municipal community in the greater region of Stockholm, Sweden. ICDP has been implemented in many municipal communities all over Sweden (http://www.icdp.se/hitta-vagledare/) and applied in different professional branches, predominantly schools and preschools.

ICDP
ICDP is an international foundation spread all over the world, first set out in Norway created by clinicians, teachers and scientists working to improve teachers and similar
occupations in their work with children and the children’s as well as caring adults’ interpersonal relations, (Hundeide, 2009, p. 8). ICDP is largely based on the theoretical frame-work of Attachment Theory (see Cassidy & Shaver, 2008, pp. 3-17) and focuses on the relationships of children and parents as well as the peer relationships between children (in a preschool setting, for example) and also the relationships and interactions between children and teachers/caregivers.

ICDP has developed a program for aiding and training teachers as well as parents in their everyday interaction with children, called “Guided Interaction”, (throughout this report referred to as simply ICDP). ICDP is focused on development of respectful interactions and is relations oriented, (Hundeide, 2009, p. 6). ICDP identify three different types of dialogue an adult performs with children; the emotional dialogue, the comprehension dialogue and the regulative dialogue, (Hundeide, 2009, pp. 32-68). In the initial emotional dialogue adults address and help children put words on their emotions noting that all emotions are natural and allowed. The comprehension dialogue aims at discussions and reflections a child may have with an adult (and other children) regarding hypotheses and meaningfulness in the child’s contemplation and exploration of the world around it. The regulative dialogue speaks of adults’ responsibility to regulate a child’s behavior as in solving conflicts and setting examples of good conduct.

The ICDP foundation has conducted scientific studies mainly targeting parenting programs and the effects of the program in Norwegian parents, (Sherr et al., 2014; Solheim-Skar et al., 2015). One longitudinal study however was conducted in Colombia between 2006 and 2009 (Hundeide & Armstrong, 2011) aimed at local caregivers who were trained in the ICDP program and experienced various positive effects in their everyday routine and contact with the children.

Another important component of the ICDP program is the so called “sensitization process” (2009, pp. 74-85) which is central to the education of parents, teachers and caregivers. The sensitization emphasizes the actual social interaction between an adult and a child and forms the basis of the ICDP training program where the adult is active in the education and shares experiences with other members of the class. The major characteristic of sensitization (and the fact that separates it from many other programs) is that it turns to the individual caregiver, without giving strict instructions or standardized templates and checklists to follow in order to teach the caregiver, (2009, p. 75). The sensitization process is more focused on training the caregiver in attention, compassion and empathetic skills, being able to listen and feel with the child in order to interpret the child’s needs, desires and purposes. The key is to strengthen the caregiver’s already existing experiences and skills and it is up to the supervisor of the ICDP program to encourage and emphasize the positive in what the caregiver knows and does, (2009, p. 76).

STUDY 1

Children of today are predicted to improve academic achievements depending on the social skills training and emotional development in an early, preschool age, (Denham, Bassett, Zinsser & Wyatt, 2014). Catalano et al. (2004) conclude in their review of positive youth development (PYD) and intervention programs of pro-social nature that
the interest and research in positive youth development has joined forces with previ-0.25sion scientist and influenced policy-making as well as practitioners. Lerner (in Lopez & Schneider, 2009) further emphasizes and exemplifies the PYD with the so-called “five C’s”, (i.e. competence, confidence, character, connection and caring). These five C’s are hypothesized to compose a trajectory towards an “idealized adulthood”. The combination of positive perceptions, strengths and talents of the child, the guidance or leadership on the adults’ behalf will add to the child’s development in a healthy manner. The ICDP training program emphasizes in accordance with Catalano et al. (2004) that the pro-social perspective is crucial to prosperous and constructive trajectories for children and individuals in general. Teaching in classrooms is generally considered rational, rhetorical and relational communication (Zhang & Zhang, 2013) but also emotional processes of which the teacher and students interact. Zhang and Zhang (2013) concluded in their study on teacher-student interaction the importance of positive emotions mediated by teachers towards the students, but also the important influence of students’ responses, i.e. a positive and mutual interaction. This is tendencies seen in the teachings of ICDP as well, with the emotional dialogue (shown in figure 1) emphasizing the importance of interaction between teacher/caregiver and student/child. The ICDP manual claims that in the manner which the caregiver views the child is highly influential on the quality of the care given to the child, (Hundeide, 2009, p. 14).

Considering all three dialogues of the ICDP training program, (i.e. the emotional, the comprehensive and the regulating, see figure 1), an adult’s cognitive abilities and emotional awareness are arguably of interest in regards to implementation and application of the program’s teachings in the real life (or work-place) environment. It is after all the adults who undergo further training and are supposed to apply this newly obtained knowledge onto their work with the children. How one then perceives a further training program and are receptive of such are of upmost interest. Also, what could arguably be influencing one’s receptiveness and perception (i.e. attitudes) of a further training program?

Arguably, a further training program (i.e. ICDP for this study) is not completely equivalent to an organizational change (i.e. lay-offs, re-locations and/or re-assignments of staff) however the empirical data on employees’ attitudes towards embracing a further training program specifically is scarce. Nitsche, Dickhäuser, Fasching and Dresel (2013) investigated the phenomenon of teachers’ individual goal orientation and its’ relationship with attitudes toward further training, and found a positive relationship between the two, also identifying perception of occupational strain and number of sick-days as mediators. This speaks in favor of perceptions and also attitudes being arguable influences on the work-environment, work load and possibly a further training program.

What are attitudes?
Attitudes in general are basically positive or negative reactions towards a stimulus, being a person, a situation, a concept or an object, (Tesser & Shaffer, 1990). Attitudes have been linked to our behavior throughout countless studies conducted and the “theory of planned behavior” with (Ajzen, 1991) putting emphasis on the predictive nature attitudes can have on behavior. While it is concluded that most people strive for consistency in their ideas and actions (i.e. their cognitions, attitudes and subsequent behavior), when this equilibrium is threatened in anyway (i.e. cognitive dissonance),
caused by situational or social cues, one alters cognitions or add new ones to fit the behavior more adequately and counter the dissonance perceived, (Festinger, 1957 in Passer, Smith, Holt, Bremner, Sutherland & Vliek, 2009, pp. 610-611). Piderit (2000) reviewed the literature on employees’ attitudes toward organizational change, and based on the work of Ajzen (1991) and other attitude research argued in favor of a more collected, multidimensional approach on attitudes toward change, called the “tripartite view of attitudes”. This view consisted of a cognitive, an emotional and an intentional dimension to accurately capture an individual’s responses and perceptions (i.e. attitudes) on an organizational change. The cognitive dimension was defined as an individual’s beliefs regarding a change (positive or negative, i.e. whether or not an individual believes in the change). The emotional dimension was the individual’s experiences, moods and feelings regarding an attitude object and also associations towards said object. The intentional dimension defined an individual’s intention of either supporting or opposing an organizational change, (2000, p. 786). With these three dimensions in mind, the focus to appreciate individuals’ emotional intelligence as well as measurements of cognitive ability ought to further explain the connection between attitudes and perceptions of a further training program.

**Emotional intelligence (EI)**

The term “emotional intelligence” (EI) was originally created by Salovey and Mayer (1990, in Schutte et al. 1998) who modeled an individual’s EI as based on four major components; perception, (i.e. appraisal and expression of emotions); using emotions to facilitate thought; understanding and analyzing emotions and finally; reflectively regulate emotions for future growth in emotions. Out of these four components the perception component is considered the most basic and the reflective regulation the most complex. Although emotions are central in this model, it also includes social and cognitive functions related to the expression, regulation and utilization of emotions. The reflective regulation component is also argued by Salovey and Mayer (1990/97 in Schutte et al. 1998) to be a strong potential for intellectual growth, i.e. cognitive abilities.

Several studies have examined the impact of emotions (Hoffman, Hutchinson & Reiss, 2009), affect (Nesterkin, 2013) and emotional intelligence (Vakola, Tsaousis & Nikolau, 2004; Dolev & Leshem, 2017) on organizational change as well as work-climate and what one as an employee can do to improve upon it. These studies concluded that awareness of emotions and a higher emotional intelligence plays a large part in making a change successfully, whether it is coping with organizational change or altering one’s attitudes and approach to the work at hand – this of course with the help from intervention programs, further training and/or managerial support. Also, the matters of educational level showed positive significant relationship with the attitudes towards change, i.e. the lower the education the less favorable towards change. However no significant relationships between tenure (i.e. how long one had been working at the organization) and attitude toward change were obtained, (Vakola et al. 2004). Claiborne, Auerbach, Lawrence and Schudrich (2013) elaborated on this hypothesis and investigated the perceived readiness for organizational change on child welfare workers. They found that job satisfaction, divided into subcategories; “supervisor’s goal emphasis”, “satisfaction with communication” and “number of years in current position”, was significant prediction on employees’ perceived readiness. Furthermore, years in current position was negatively related to perceived readiness of
organizational change, (i.e. the longer you had worked in the same place, the more skeptical or resistant to change).

Need for cognition
The Need for Cognition Scale was originally designed by Cacioppo and Petty (1984, in Sadowski, 1992) to investigate the individual differences of cognition in relationship with the stability of attitudes and also capture individuals’ self-proclaimed preferences for abstract thinking. Cárdenas, Briñol, Horcajo and Petty (2013) investigated the relationship between people’s need for cognition and prejudiced attitudes towards immigrants, finding that participants scoring higher on the NCS had a more persistent attitude towards immigrants than low-scorers. Previous studies have also concluded the strong connection between cognition and attitudes (Smith, Haugtvedt & Petty, 1994), where individuals with higher NCS-scores had greater accessibility to their attitudes and also the polarization of said attitudes, (i.e. their discriminatory perceptions of attitudes).

Cognitive reflective ability
Cognitive reflective ability is based on the theory of a cognitive system 1, e.g. instinctive, automated, quick cognition without much or any reflection, and a cognitive system 2, e.g. slower, more elaborating, contemplating reflection, (Stanovich and West, 2000). Princeton University has developed a short test to measure individual’s cognitive reflective ability called the CRT (Cognitive Reflective test) which is formulated as problem-solving to stimulate both of the individual’s cognitive systems. Whereas the NCS measures individual’s preference to abstract thinking, the CRT is argued to measure an individual’s proneness towards either quick, automated and prejudiced thinking or more contemplating and reserved thinking, (Frederick, 2005).

Purpose and hypothesis
The aspects of attitudes toward change as well as emotional intelligence and cognitive ability for successfully implementing an organizational intervention are central components in the ICDP training program, targeting one’s awareness and appreciation of emotions within the self and others as well as one’s thoughts and ideas, i.e. attitudes, (Hundeide, 2009, pp. 37-44).

In accordance with the ICDP program’s teachings of emotional dialogue (i.e. awareness and control of emotions), comprehension (i.e. intellectual and cognitive ability) and regulation (i.e. setting limits and rules of conducts in a constructive manor), this study examined whether or not the preschool staff’s emotional intelligence, need for cognition and cognitive reflective ability affected their attitudes towards the ICDP-training program and its’ perceived application, implementation and sustainability on the workplace. The study hypothesized a positive relationship between emotional intelligence, need for cognition, cognitive reflective ability and the perceptions regarding the ICDP training program and its’ teachings, i.e. the higher emotional intelligence, need for cognition and cognitive reflective ability, in higher regard the participants will hold the training program. Presumable differences between education level among the participants (i.e. preschool teacher or caregiver) as well as difference because of age and tenure (i.e. years of experience in the business) were also controlled for.
Method

Participants
Participants for the study were preschool staff who had underwent (or not underwent) the ICDP training program, all of which employed by the same municipal community that had implemented the ICDP training program as a mandatory employees’ further training, which produced a sample of 134 teachers/caregivers, of which 95 had undergone the ICDP training and was subsequently used in this present work.

Materials and measurements
Tools of measurements for the study were that of self-reporting questionnaires measuring the participants’ emotional intelligence, their need for cognition and cognitive reflective ability as well as their self-reported view and experience of the ICDP-training program and its’ implementation and presumable effects on their work-environment. The questionnaires also controlled for the participants’ age, position (i.e. caregiver or teacher) and years of experience.

The questionnaires used in study 1 was preceded by an initial pilot study aimed at evaluating the items in the questionnaires and possibly alter or adjust the items’ phrasings, or exclude certain items altogether. The questionnaires were originally in English but translated into Swedish. This translation was also subsequently re-translated back to English by an independent party in order to evaluate the accuracy of the translation. This held good internal consistency with little to no anomalies from the original terminology, save for synonyms of everyday English compared to use of academic psychological terminology and technical terms common in Swedish preschools. Based on the data received during the pilot (participants, N = 36) the statistical data for a factor analysis was inadequate, however an internal consistency analysis using SPSS was performed and displayed satisfactory results across all three questionnaires.

The Cognitive Reflection test or “CRT” used by Frederick (2005) was included in study 1 questionnaire, but not in the initial pilot, given that participants filling out the questionnaire in the pilot would also participate in the main study and hence be better prepared for the CRT-questions leaving the results unreliable to its’ intended measurement purpose. The CRT consisted of three questions (Frederick, 2005) translated into Swedish, and followed by the two questionnaires regarding “need for cognition” (Sadwoski, 1992) and “emotional intelligence” (Schutte et al. 1998). The CRT with its’ three items design has proven equal or even exceeding other cognitive reflections tests with considerably larger item pools in terms of validity, (Frederick, 2005)

The three questions of the CRT, (Frederick, 2005, p. 27):
1. “A baseball bat and a ball cost $1.10 in total. The bat costs $1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?”
   _____ cents

2. “If it takes 5 machines 5 minutes to make 5 widgets, how long would it take 100 machines to make 100 widgets?”
   _____ minutes
3. “In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. Every day, the patch doubles in size. If it takes 48 days for the patch to cover the entire lake, how long would it take for the patch to cover half of the lake? _____days”

The EI test consisted of a 33-item one-factor model, with three subcategories (i.e. appraisal/expression of emotion in oneself and others, regulation of emotion in oneself and others, and also the utilization of emotion for problem solving) all in coherence with Schutte’s theoretical model regarding EI and with empirically evident validity, (1998, pp. 168-169).

The NCS (originally by Cacioppo et al. 1984, in Sadowski, 1992) and its’ shortened 18-items version was also concluded to be consisting of a one-factor model covering the phenomenon of cognition and the participants’ self-reported attitudes and preference towards complex thinking, i.e. their need for cognition, (Sadowski, 1992, p. 453).

Following the use of the CRT, NCS and EI tests, was also a 12-item questionnaire original, designed specifically for this study and aimed at measuring the participants’ perceived experiences and attitudes towards the ICDP training program, divided into three subcategories (i.e. factors); individual behavior, professional cooperation and evaluation/implementation of the actual program. See Appendix A for a full depiction of the ICDP-questionnaire.

All questionnaires (EI, NCS, CRT and ICDP) were all on a five-point Likert-styled scale, where 1 = totally disagree to 5 = completely agree. Moreover, all questionnaires (EI, NCS and ICDP) proved to hold adequate internal consistency, based on the pilot-study data where alpha-values were .63, .92 and .88 respectively for EI, NCS and ICDP. This internal consistency analysis was complemented with a “thinking-aloud protocol” of which 3 participants were recruited to qualitatively reflect and evaluate the items of the emotional intelligence scale questionnaire and the questionnaire regarding the ICDP training program respectively and see whether or not they were in coherence with the intended subcategories, (as described above). Between the three participants in Schutte’s EI questionnaire (1998) there was a 36.4% match on the items all three sorted into the same subcategory, and a 54.5% were two of the three participants were in agreement on item and subcategory. In the items regarding the ICDP training program and its’ intended subcategories there was a 58.3% match between the three participants in agreement. None of the items in either Schutte’s Emotional Intelligence Test or the ICDP training program were considered by the participants to stand out into a subcategory of its’ own.

Procedure
Contact with head-masters of a number of public preschools in a certain municipal community in northern Stockholm was already made and a pilot-study commenced using the standardized questionnaires which were distributed digitally to the head-masters of the different preschools. The head-masters were informed of the research ethics of the study, i.e. confidentially, voluntariness and usage and was to inform their employees of such when distributing the pilot study questionnaires among the staff of their respective preschools.
The main study (study 1) consisted of field-trips to the preschools when they were having their monthly staff-meetings where the questionnaire was distributed in paper-form. Here also the participants where directly informed of the study’s anonymity, confidentiality, usage and that participation was completely voluntary. The participants’ were instructed to fill out the questionnaire in 15 minutes. Regarding the three CRT-questions, the participants were instructed to spend at most 5 of the 15 minutes in order to fill out the entirety of the questionnaire in time. Items with negative connotations phrased in the questionnaires (EI and NCS) were subsequently reversed during coding in order for consistency in direction of the data collected. The ICDP questionnaire contained no negatively phrased items.

Factor analysis
Following the data collection an initial exploratory factor analysis on the questionnaire data regarding ICDP (items, N =12) was performed, using SPSS. This identified two factors passing the criteria of Eigenvalues > 1, with KMO = 0.85 and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity significant (p < .0001). Items 1-9 and item 12 loaded in common adequately on one factor, and item 10 and 11 loaded on the other factor. This led to the decision of splitting the second factor into two single item variables, (item 10 and 11), which were named “Content of ICDP training” and “Design of ICDP training” respectively, in regard of the items’ actual phrasings in the questionnaire. The other 10 items showed high internal consistency (alpha = 0.91) and subsequently was formed into one dependent variable titled “ICDP in action” targeting the participants’ attitudes and perceptions of ICDP teachings and training in the real life work setting. The main analysis of the study consisted of a regression analysis where age and years of experience, as well as scores on the EI, NCS and CRT questionnaires acted as predictors, and the variables “ICDP in action”, “Content of ICDP training” and “Design of ICDP training” acted as dependent.

Results
With the attitudes and perceptions on the ICDP training in the real life work situation, a total of N = 95 participants had undergone the training and subsequently were eligible to rate the program in the questionnaire. Out of these 95 participants, 53 were caregivers and 42 were preschool teachers (i.e. low-educated and high-educated, respectively). Out of all 95 participants only 3 were male leading to an excluded gender perspective from further analyses. Mean age of the participants was 48.48 years and experience among the participants averaged at 22.12 years.

The CRT-scores, aimed at measuring the participants’ cognitive reflective ability, were coded as “0” for no correct answers given and “1” for any correct answer (e.g. one, two or all correct answers) in order to weigh the results more evenly. This however proved fruitless with an evidently skewed distribution of 71.6% no correct answers and 28.4% of the participants who gave one or more correct answers. A multiple regression analysis was performed, where participants’ age and years of experience, as well as scores on the EI, NCS and CRT questionnaires acted as predictors, and the variables “ICDP in action”, “Content of ICDP training” and “Design of ICDP training” acted as dependent, respectively.
A significant regression was found $F_{5,89} = 2.49$ (p < 0.04), however with an adjusted $R^2$ of only 0.07 explaining very little of the observed variance of the data at hand. The only coefficient found to hold significant prediction over attitudes and perceptions of the ICDP training was the Emotional intelligence variable, $\beta = 0.13$ (p < 0.01), showing a positive relationship. There was also a significant relationship between the Need for Cognition score and the self-reported appreciation of the design of the ICDP training, $\beta = 0.03$ (p = 0.02), showing a small yet positive relationship. This linear regression obtained an explained variance, adjusted $R^2 = 0.06$. There were no significant relationships for any predictors on the perceptions of content of the ICDP training program.

The different variables also appeared to correlate expectedly with each other, i.e. where age and experience had high correlations but the different questionnaires (i.e. EI, NCS, CRT and ICDP) had low correlations, see Table 1.

**Table 1.** Correlations matrix of variables including average scores of the participants (N = 95) with standard deviations in parenthesis and also alpha values for the questionnaire items used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ICDP</th>
<th>Cont.</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Exp.</th>
<th>EMO</th>
<th>CRT</th>
<th>NCS</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICDP  $^a$</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.99 (6.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.50 (0.71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.32 (0.87)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>48.48 (11.34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp.</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.12 (13.25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMO $^b$</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.72 (0.41)</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.30 (0.45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCS $^c$</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.16 (0.36)</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Items, N = 10  $^b$Items, N = 33  $^c$Items, N = 18

Performing a MANOVA with position at work (i.e. teacher or caregiver) as independent variable and the three tests (i.e. EI, NCS and CRT) as well as the ICDP-questionnaire didn’t show any significant differences between the two occupational groups either. The scores on the three tests and the ICDP-ratings questionnaire were quite similar between teachers and caregivers, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Mean scores between position of the participants (i.e. teacher/caregiver) on EI, NCS, CRT and “ICDP in action” and (standard deviations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Caregivers (n = 53)</th>
<th>Teachers (n = 42)</th>
<th>Total (N = 95)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence test</td>
<td>2.40 (0.28)</td>
<td>2.90 (0.28)</td>
<td>1.29 (0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Cognition scale</td>
<td>1.00 (0.12)</td>
<td>1.40 (0.15)</td>
<td>0.58 (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Reflection test</td>
<td>0.25 (0.43)</td>
<td>0.33 (0.48)</td>
<td>0.28 (0.45)$^a$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ICDP in action”</td>
<td>3.00 (0.66)</td>
<td>2.90 (0.54)</td>
<td>2.90 (0.61)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Note that the CRT-scores were coded as 0 or 1 meaning that these average scores speak in favor of teachers having a smaller tendency towards answering at least one of the CRT-questions correctly, however this difference was not statistically significant, (p = 0.35).
Discussion

In this study the relationship between emotional intelligence, need for cognition and cognitive ability as predictors of attitudes towards a further training program were examined. More specifically ICDP training on preschool staff in one municipal community of Stockholm, Sweden was used as practical real-world example.

The results showed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the perceived application of ICDP-training in action, as well as a significant positive relationship between the need for cognition scale and the participants’ perception of the training program’s design. These results are in line with previous research regarding attitudes in general and the four branches that makes up an actual attitude (according to Salovey & Mayers 1990, in Schutte, 1998), which in turn are the basis for the EI-test (Schutte, 1998). The fact that it was emotional intelligence that showed significant positive relations with the perception of the ICDP training was also anticipated considering the actual content of the program, i.e. the sensitization process of which an individual (adult or professional) are to introspect his or her perceptions of a child, including one’s mood and associated emotions towards a child, (or another human being in general, for that matter). The point of sensitization is to stimulate and develop an eye and ear for people’s emotional expressions and be empathetic towards the diversity of different people’s needs, thoughts and feelings, (Hundeide, 2009).

That the need for cognition showed a positive relationship with the perception of training design is also in line with previous research (Piderit, 2000) speaking in favor of letting the thoughts of individuals contemplate, discus and reflect in order to gain new knowledge, which is the whole point of the seminar-based setup of ICDP-training. Following the findings of Piderit (2000) the idea of “tripartite view of attitude” (i.e. cognitive, emotional and intentional) is to cover an individual (or employee’s) ideas, thoughts, feelings, moods and subsequent intentions towards for instance an organizational change, or in this case a further training program. As previously argued, a further training program is appropriately considered a minor organizational change, but nonetheless an intervening change of competence, approach and/or administration. These findings led to the conclusion of this study that the hypothesis of relationships between said independent variables’ (EI, NCS, CRT) predictability on the dependent variable (perceptions of ICDP training) were partially confirmed. Based on the skewed distribution of participants’ answers on the CRT, the results were considered inadequate for further analysis and subsequently not eligible for interpretation.

Looking at differences between the two occupational groups (i.e. position; teachers and caregivers, respectively) the scores were similar in regards to EI, NCS, CRT and the perceptions of ICDP in action with no statistical significance. This, in somewhat contrast to Vakola et al. (2004) and their results of educational level having a negative relationship with readiness towards change, more specifically organizational change. The present results showed a modest but indeed higher positive attitude and perception regarding the further training program by the low-educated participants above the high-educated. Moreover, in line with Claiborne et al (2013) the relationship between tenure among participants (i.e. years of experience in the business) showed a negative relationship with perceptions of the further training program. However these results were not significant and therefore more of a curiosity than substantiated find.
The lack of significant effects on the attitudes and perceptions of the ICDP training could be explained by the fact that the ICDP training program claims to target individuals on an intra-subjective level, meaning that one must always look at oneself in terms of ideas, feelings and attitudes towards others in order to evolve or improve, (Hundeide, 2009, p. 76). The ICDP training puts major emphasis on the interpersonal and relational aspects of human interactions. This in turn could be the reason why neither age, years of experience or occupational position showed any significant influence on the attitudes and perceptions on the training – it is simply up to every individual to embrace and elaborate on the teachings, introspect and reflect upon his/her own behavior and also attitudes. Furthermore, these arguments could explain the lack of significant relationships between the predictive independent variables and the dependent variable of “Content of ICPD-training” – simply because the content is easy to embrace and use in the real life work environment.

Study 1 is to be considered a quasi-experimental design since there was no way of controlling or randomizing the selected sample of participants. They were in fact a natural selection by accessibility, i.e. the people who worked at the preschools in the targeted municipal community at the time of the study. Based on this design the external and ecological validity is to be considered relatively good, over the internal validity. However, in terms of time and availability of participants the reach of study 1 became somewhat limited. With a larger span of time to collect data from more participants stronger correlations might appear between the selected independent variables (i.e. age, years of experience, education, EI, NCS, CRT) and the targeted dependent variables (i.e. attitudes toward ICDP). Moreover, one cannot express any evidence of causality in the presented relationships between the examined variables, based on the fact that a pretest and posttest wasn’t possible to perform, since the participants had all undergone the ICDP training at different times, ranging from within last 12 months to over 10 years ago. This in turn could also be an influence on the perception of the further training as well as the examined perception of embrace, application and sustainability of ICDP’s teachings in the work-setting. The temporal aspect of when a participant underwent the training was not included in this study and is admittedly a flaw in the data collection, in need of further investigation for future studies.

The questionnaire originally designed for this study which targeted the attitudes and perceptions of ICDP training in the real life work setting proves to be a moderately accurate tool in terms of its’ purpose. Initial ideas for the questionnaire were for it to work on three factors, i.e. individual attitudes and behavior, perceptions of cooperation and evaluating the actual training program in terms of content and design. This proved to deviate from the data obtained when the factor analysis linked the items of two intended factors into one, i.e., the dependent variable subsequently named “ICDP in action”. The questionnaire also placed participants in a possible uncertainty of retrospectively reflect upon previous work-related situations while simultaneously appreciate current situations and climates between colleagues, children, parents and management, respectively. In matters of response biases the ICDP-questionnaire contained no reversed items which has been argued both for and against in previous research, (Berntson, Bernhard-Oettel, Hellgren, Näs­vall & Sverke, 2016). This could in turn complicate the ratings done by the participants and in turn distort the data collected. Further analyses and elaborations of the questionnaire-items and their phrasings and intended latent variables (i.e. factors) of interest are strongly recommended.
When examining further training programs and their effectiveness, one cannot ignore the matter of “implementation” (Fraser, Richman, Galinsky & Day, 2009, pp. 109-112), i.e. how the training was distributed and how a training program is perceived by the staff taking it. The ICDP program’s own recommendations regarding crucial principles of implementation are support from local government and authorities, as well as the recommendation of a framework regarding time, organization, economics, and motivation, (Hundeide, 2009, p. 95) in order for the program to be successfully implemented. In the municipal community of interest for this study the ICDP-program was implemented in forms of seminars and lectures, approximately 96 hours of study-time divided over full or half-days, two consecutive days at a time, where the staff is away from their place of employment – also in accordance with the instruction from Hundeide, (2009, p. 96).

Durlak and DuPre (2008) found through their meta-analysis of more than 500 quantitative studies that implementation is highly dependent on various factors, most dominantly communal settings, organizational distribution as well as providers and innovation in the actual training program’s output and the technical assistance given during training. In the matter of implementation Durlak and DuPre (2008) list eight aspects; fidelity (i.e. how true to the source material the program is being implemented), dosage (how much of the original program is being implemented), quality of deliverance (the way the program is being distributed and implemented by educators or similar), participants’ responsiveness (the way the program is being received by the participants), monitoring/comparison of control conditions (using a control group working “business as usual” or alternative program to determine effects and so on), program’s reach (how many participants of the organization partook in the program) and adaptation (whether or not the program’s content is altered to fit the organization at hand more efficiently). Furthermore, Durlak and DuPre (2008) conclude a significant relationship between implementation of an intervention and the actual outcome of said intervention, (pp. 331-334). Also, Cullen, Edwards, Camron Casper and Gue (2013) examined the organizational perspective of employees’ adaptability, experience of uncertainty facing organizational change and their job satisfaction and performance. The study concluded that the managerial support acted as a mediator when it came to the relationship between employees’ adaptability, experienced uncertainty, job satisfaction and performance, i.e. the more support from management or organization the better the change was received, implemented and adapted by the employees. This indicates that the role of the organization is equally important for a successful change as the individual perspective.

Karl Weick (1995) summarized a lot of his research findings into an organizational-psychological phenomenon called “sense making”, i.e. how one makes sense of an organization’s policies, actions, decisions etc. Weick (1995) claims that the sense making process is highly subjective and influenced by the agent (i.e. individual) doing the sense making as well as the people working close to the individual in a socio-structural setting. Weick (1995) also identified seven main properties of which the sense making process consists and of which it can be identified. These seven properties holds the characteristics of a sense making process and are not exclusively targeted at safety issues at organizations, but rather organizational structures, climates, cultures and decision making on a whole. Where “grounded in identity construction” takes its’ onset
in identity as a cultural-contextual phenomenon, e.g. “who I am” is defined by the interactions I make with the people, environment and events surrounding me. Weick (1995) claims that just like you can shift interactions between people and situations one also shifts who you are in some way and that is why he claims identity is a property of sense making, i.e. you (or I myself) defines and interprets situations, people and so on and therefore are the core of making sense of an event, (p. 20). “Retrospective”, Weick explains as decisions, actions and reactions are in a way always an afterthought and exemplifies with the classical stimulus-response principal – the stimulus is only defined with the response (i.e. after it has occurred), hence an organization is based on past experience and what sense you made of those previous experiences. Weick further explains that an experience is defined by the attention directed towards it in hindsight and attributed with a meaning, (1995, p. 26). “Enactive of sensible environments” is Weick’s way of explaining that the environment is closely tied with the agents (i.e. people) who act within it (1995, p. 31), he rejects notions of organizational employees who blames the environment as something independent of themselves and instead claims the point of view that “the world is what you make of it” (editor’s note). The sense making is a product of your actions and influence on your own surroundings, so to speak. The fourth property of sense making, “social”, is explained by Weick as a blind spot often overlooked where one may take an individual perspective of sense making and leaving out the influence the individual have on others and others have on the individual, both interactively and implied and even imaginary influence. Overlooking the social foundations of sense making is negatively affecting the understanding of sense making, (1995, p. 39). The “ongoing” property of sense making speaks for itself meaning simply that making sense of things never truly strops, but are moments of processing which occurs constantly in our everyday lives, (1995, p. 44). The property of “focus on and by extracting cues” is explained by Weick as the references one have and how they influence one’s sense making when presented with new information and/or situations. It is in another word our baseline and it directs our sense making in a certain trajectory because of previous experience and is also a product of our sense making, (1995, p. 50) – it is in a way a circular view of sense making that Weick presents. Finally, the property called “driven by plausibility rather than accuracy” claims that we as people look for an answer to a question and/or problem and are prone to quickly dismiss other explanations or even look for them when an initial, sufficient answer is presented to us, (1995, p. 56), simply put that the first solution is not necessarily the right solution, but we as humans tend to believe that regardless.

There have been relatively few empirical studies conducted on the ICDP-program’s impacts and effects throughout the different organizations of which it has been implemented. Most of these studies are thesis reports from different universities and research institutes (Sundelin, 2009; Lindgren, 2014). In these articles the authors have examined perceived effects and possible changes in professional caregivers’ attitudes, behavior and ideas regarding the work at hand and the children/students they’re working with. The results they obtained spoke of the need for self-examination, reflection and open dialogue between colleagues, and also the fact that most (if not all) professional partaking in the training program holds ICDP in the highest regard. The ICDP-program has been successfully implemented and received by professionals working in preschools and schools, praising the simplicity and “easy-to-use” approach and aiding the professionals to more efficiently reflect and evaluate their own performances and thereof improve the quality of their work, (Lindgren, 2014).
Purpose
The study aimed at examining the aspect of implementing an intervention (in this present work a further training program, i.e. ICDP), based on the criteria for diffusion (Rogers 1995, in Fraser et al., 2009), the five stages of implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005) and a sense making perspective, (Weick, 1995), as well as examining the evaluative aspects of the program once it’s been implemented.

Method

Participants
The second study consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted with volunteering participants from different preschools within the selected sample of study one, (N = 6). All participants had undergone the ICDP training. The interviews aimed to further examine the perceptions and implementation as well as sustainability and evaluation in regards to the ICDP program and its’ presumable effects on the work at hand. All participants were informed of the study’s confidentiality, the participant’s anonymity and also that participation was completely voluntary. The interviews were conducted in the weeks following the distribution and collection of data from the questionnaires. One participant of this study was recently retired head master, one was in charge of the actual education of community-employees in the ICDP training working directly for the municipal community, and the four remaining participants were preschool staff who had undergone ICDP training and were currently working in different preschool of the targeted municipal community. The years of experience in the profession among the participants ranged between 25 and 45 years.

Materials
Fixsen, Naom, Blasé, Friedman and Wallace (2005) present five stages of implementation. In short, these five stages of implementation describes an initial need or perception of need for change in an organization, followed by scanning for appropriate and adequate means of intervention to satisfy this need, actual training and implementation and finally incorporation into the organization as business as usual with established means of evaluation and development, i.e. sustainability of the intervention within the organization, (2005, pp. 15-21). Rogers (1995, in Fraser et al. 2009) describes an intervention programs’ five criteria of diffusion which further exemplify and illustrate the complexity and sensitivity of implementing an intervention onto an organization. Where superiority means that the intervention is required to appear better than the organization’s previous policies, the intervention (i.e. further training) also needs to be applicable and agreeable with existing policies of the organization. The intervention is also more likely to be implemented if it is perceived as easy to try and even reject if failing to be properly implemented without considerable loss of investment (e.g. time, money, effort etc.) from the organization and its’ staff. Finally, an intervention also needs to appear to produce results that the management will consider important, (Rogers, 1995 in Fraser et al., 2009, pp. 115-118).

The questions used to structure the interviews were based on the five stages of implementation (Fixsen, et al. 2005) as well as an intervention programs’ five criteria of diffusion (Rogers 1995, in Fraser et al. 2009, pp. 115-118). The interviews all started off with the participants describing how they perceived the ICDP-training and its’ main messages. The following questions examined matters of superiority in the training
program, the presumable evaluation work of the program’s impact and also whether or not the participants perceived differences in approach between colleagues who underwent the training and hadn’t yet underwent the training. Questions regarding whether ICDP had become business as usual on the work-places was also posed to the participants. The particular participant who worked with training other staff members of the community in ICDP was also asked how the program came about and gave a lot of background information regarding the initial contact between the municipal community and the ICDP training.

**Data collection**

Following the distribution of the questionnaires the head-masters were again contacted in order to achieve volunteering participants for the semi-structured interviews further examining the implementation of the ICDP-training. The interviews were booked individually with each participant, either through initial contact with head master of preschool or directly between participant and the author of the present work. The interviews took place at the behest of the participants (work place or in home environment were the interviews could be performed without distraction). The interviews lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, respectively.

**Analyses**

The interviews were transcribed in accordance with Kvale (1997) and then analyzed using the principals of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis or IPA, (as described by Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) aiming to capture the participants’ own experiences and reflections regarding the ICDP training, its’ implementation and application in the real work setting. The seven properties of sense-making (Weick, 1995) were also used as analytical tools and discussed further. The transcripts from the interview narratives used in the analysis were decoded (anonymous and confidential) and translated from its’ original Swedish into English. In order to secure greater accuracy in the translation the English version were then back-translated by an independent party into Swedish. This procedure deemed the translations adequate with only minor anomalies in regards to technical terms specific to the world of preschools and psychological research. In this report quotes from the English versions of the narratives will be used in order to maintain consistency. The narratives of the interviews were analyzed one at the time and various key-words, metaphorical terms and vivid descriptions were noted in the margin of each narrative. These notes later combined into different cluster themes as new key-words and similar notes were being extracted from following interview narratives. The quotes and passages from the collected narratives are coded as following 1:3:14-17; 20, i.e. where “1” is the interview, “3” is the page number and “14-17” and “20” are the entry-lines.

**Results**

Reviewing all the interview narratives two major findings was apparent. When asking whether the participants considered the ICDP training to be superior to previous approaches all the participants answered with very positive remarks holding the ICDP in the highest of regards, and when asking whether or not there had been any considerable evaluation of the training program the consensual answer from all participants was “no”. In matters of the participants’ description of what ICDP is to them the narratives gave rich and vivid information with both similarities and diversities, as was also
evident in the participants’ narration on whether or not ICDP had become an everyday routine on the work-place.

During the analysis of the collected narratives from the interviews, key-words and metaphorical terms and phrases were noted and highlighted, and in turn joined in different cluster themes. Words like “respect” (2:1:4; 7), “role” (1:2:18; 20) and “treatment” (5:1:3) were evident, both literally and described with other words throughout the different participants’ narratives. Combined these descriptions formed one master theme titled “View on Mankind”, since they were all used to describe one’s perception of another human being and how to suggestively act towards, view and treat other people. This master theme was in turn divided into one subtheme called “responsibility” emphasizing who you actually deem responsible for what transpires, (e.g. yourself, the children, the parents, co-workers or the management). The second master theme to emerge were the combination of practical approaches described in matters of what materials and activities one as a professional caregiver or preschool teacher may choose. Phrases such as “has it in the soul” (6:2:10) and “we’ve gotten far in how to view the children and the interaction” (1:2:21) were used in the narratives to describe the actual application and embrace of the ICDP training in the real work setting. This master theme was named “ICDP at work” and highlighted two subthemes of its’ own, namely “challenges” and “including the children”, where the participants referred to organizational aspects as well as between colleagues communications, in which to implement and apply the ICDP to their work and also how to incorporate the children into the teachings and messages of the program.

Master theme 1: View on mankind
Throughout all narratives the very interaction and awareness of the self and others was evident upon posing the initial question, asking the participants to describe their view of the main message of ICDP;

“Listen to where the children are, in their mind and their ideas, how they want… Well, how they think about different theories, and also how I can offer them a continuation.” (1:1:8)

“For me it’s a lot about respect, I think. I mean, it was a while since I worked with this. And that’s because… I mean, the respect from adults but also the other way around.” (2:1:4)

“The treatment of people and children… Not necessarily parents, but caregivers, all adults and children… How you treat people.” (5:1:3)

These three quotes illustrate the beginning of narratives focusing on the importance of being self-aware in terms of language use and tone-setting, the realization of other people’s needs, thoughts and feelings. It is in short descriptions of having social competence and an appreciation of differences among experiences, opinions and situations. Although further described in different terms and examples all participants more or less emphasized the adults’ responsibility of teaching the children, it is the adults who are responsible of taking control of a situation, it’s the adults’ who should know better and show patience and sympathy.
**Sub-theme 1:1 Responsibility**

Examples given to illustrate these ideas consisted of scenarios where co-workers had told the participant that the children were “loud” but where the participant figured it was the adults’ job to take control of the situation and make it work properly (1:1:10). Other examples were when a child is allowed to act out during a ceremony of some sort (e.g. wedding, christening or school recital), of which also the adults’ are considered responsible for letting the child know that sort of behavior is not acceptable and that they’ll have to leave if the child keeps it up, (2:2:7). One participant also exemplified the ICDP-teachings in a real work situation as giving the child clear and easy options in order for the child to make decisions:

> “Instead of an approach where you yourself are so to say “in charge of what’s happening”, that; “Bring me that book you got”, instead you might say: “Please bring me that book yourself or I’ll come and get it”. You gave two options, and most often the child chose to bring you the book.” (6:2:10)

This also illustrates the perspective of encouragement and trust which was mentioned throughout the narratives of several participants, stating that one should very clearly show that you think the child is good and competent, you believe in the child’s ability and also lets it be a part of the decision making or problem solving process;

> “I think it’s about... all of this... the view I have on another human being, or an activity or whatever, influences the results or the group dynamics or whatever. I, myself hold such an enormous amount of power over how others will behave, act or feel even.” (1:2:16);

> “.../In a conflict, for example between two children, then you could interview both children /.../ and try to let them solve the conflict themselves simply by guiding them in different ways. That’s how I perceive it.” (3:1:10).

**Master theme 2: ICDP at work**

All the participants touched upon examples of when the ICDP training had been successfully implemented at the work-place and also when it was evidently absent within other co-workers. The clearest example of how to keep the ICDP training “alive” so to speak was to have discussion regarding the different themes and key-words from the program. Another important issue raised by several participants was the courage to actually confront co-workers (or other adults in general) whenever one felt they didn’t seem to act accordingly to ICDP training or its’ teachings at all. Mostly the ICDP training was discussed in close proximity to the actual courses the participants and their co-workers underwent. All participants stated that they were working together at the work-place to include the teachings of ICDP into already existing policies, but in time several co-workers fell back into their old ways.

**Sub-theme 2:1 Challenges**

Three of the participants also described several reasons for resistance leading to challenges for implementing ICDP properly at the preschools. The fact that several managers in general and head-masters at the preschools in particular did not undergo the ICDP training led to a gap in the embrace, application and sustainability of the training. Opposition between colleagues was taken as example by all participants, however all
focused on differences in approach and attitude between those who had underwent ICDP training and those who had not. These discrepancies were often conceptualized as blaming the children or the management in larger extent, then to actually assume a more solution-oriented perspective and look at one’s own performance and influence on the work-situation. However, the matter of age, experience and training were also covered by participants as causes for resisting the ICDP training and also for implementing and sustaining it in the everyday work-routine.

“/…/ professionals who claims; “I’ll carry on a little while longer, I’m retiring soon”. It makes me wonder; “How many years is that?” Are you only supposed to occupy a position in order to receive your pay-check on the 27th every month? These poor children who exists in this environment – that’s not right!” (4:2:7)

“/…/ I mean, it’s really about how you work. The Pedagogistas often worked solely with the learning/teaching part; “Now we’re doing this and now we include some physics or chemistry”, and so on. While, at least back in the day, the special ed. teachers worked more on the approach and so on… They (Pedagogistas and special ed.) ought to work more closely together really, in my opinion.” (2:4:26)

Note that Pedagogistas are specially trained preschool teachers working to supervise and inspire preschool staff with focus on the learning processes of the children and their shown interests, as well as the implementation of the curriculum and a project-based way of working. The Pedagogista training comes from the Reggio Emilia pedagogical philosophy which is an outspoken source of inspiration throughout all preschools in the particular municipal community of which this present work was performed. Reggio Emilia’s main focus lies on the children themselves and their competences and abilities, and how the professionals are to make the most of these qualities without interference from the staff’s own personal and possibly more prejudiced ideas and opinions, (http://www.reggioemilia.se/utbildningar/utbildningar/pedagogista-ateljerista-och-pedagogutbildning/utbildningar/pedagogista/).

Sub-theme 2:2 Include the children
The most prominent example of how to include the children in the teachings of ICDP where evident from one participant in particular; “I don’t just read but put my heart and soul into it in order for the children to feel; ‘There are other people who have it just like me’.”, (5:2:13). This is very illustrative of how the participant worked practically in order to raise awareness among the children regarding matters of other people’s feelings, thoughts and experiences. Another participant talked about story-telling in order to activate the children’s ideas of values and interpersonal relations, calling it a so called “ICDP for children”, (6:3:16).

Discussion
Following the analysis of the narratives and bearing in mind the five criteria for diffusion of implementing interventions (Rogers, 1995 in Fraser et al. 2009, pp. 115-118) and also the five stages of implementation (Fixsen et al. 2005, pp. 15-21) which served as the interview-guide, some conclusions to be drawn are; a) there was a unanimous “yes” among the participants in terms of the ICDP training was considered superior to previous approaches, and b) there was also a unanimous “no” to the question
of evaluating the ICDP training. More specifically the training had been under
discussion and active implementation with existing routines and directives to begin with
(i.e. during the first year or so), when the first staff members of the work-place had
underwent training. This had in time however been watered out by hiring of new co-
workers not trained in ICDP and the lack of actual discussions targeting the ICDP
training and its’ teachings (i.e. flaws in sustainability and follow-ups).

The themes identified suggest concordance in the participants’ views on ICDP and what
it represents and advocates. To assume the perspective of highlighting and emphasizing
an individual’s strength and talents instead of focusing on the negatives is very much
like the teachings of PYD (i.e. positive youth development, as described by (Catalano et
al, 2004). The participants gave several examples of this point of view, claiming that all
children are good and able, that the adults (i.e. the professionals in this case) are
responsible for giving the children the opportunities and possibilities to learn, thrive and
develop, as well as to be taught respect and empathy towards others as they grow up.
The fact that one must not blame the child personally but rather its’ actions which may
be undesirable or inappropriate, e.g., one participant explaining how not to be mad at
the child but at what the child does is arguably a practical example of how to maintain
the perspective that all children are good. The PYD perspective contains the so called “5
C’s”, i.e. competence, confidence, character, connection and caring (Lerner in Lopez &
Schneider, 2009) which works as a framework of measuring the thriving process of
children and adolescents in their development towards adulthood. In general, the 5 C’s
are prominently used by practitioners, adolescents involved in youth development
programs and the parents of said adolescents, to describe the characteristics of a
“thriving youth”. The 5 C’s are arguably apparent in the narratives of the participants,
i.e. the emphasis that children are competent and that professionals are to encourage,
guide and challenge their interests to further knowledge (i.e. to build confidence within
the children) and also let the children be part of the design (i.e. connection to, and
influence over the educational milieu and its’ contents) in a pro-social and cooperative
interaction between the children and the adults. Also the empathic and social
competence is included in the narratives (i.e. caring for others and the environment
surrounding the children) when the participants speak of how to aid the children in
resolving conflicts and also be a good example of conduct (i.e. character). The
narratives consist of the participants attributing these components onto their training in
ICDP, which in turn arguably links the ICDP teachings with established PYD research
findings.

Applying the seven properties of sense making (Weick, 1995) onto the interviews one
can easily see the different aspects within all the participants’ narratives. Where
“grounded in identity construction”, “enactive of sensible environments” and “focused
on and by extracted cues” are the most prominent. With the participants emphasizing
the importance and influence of one’s own actions and the attitudes and perceptions one
attributes to people surrounding oneself (i.e. children, parents and co-workers) the
introspective approach of sense making is evident in the participants’ descriptions of the
role and purpose as preschool staff. The properties of “social” and “ongoing” are also
covered with the examples of possible challenges in implementing and embracing the
ICDP-training practically at work. The participants mention several live examples of
discrepancies in the everyday dialogues and communication between co-workers and
children as well as between co-workers. “Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy” is
the property up most for interpretation, as in whether or not a co-worker actually acts more impulsively or more reserved and reflectively. This is however mentioned by several of the participants referring to co-worker not embracing the ICDP-training, attributing difficulties and problems to others (i.e. the children or parents) and maybe in need of a reminder in the teaching of ICDP to improve their attitudes towards their work. The property of “retrospective” is most evident throughout the narratives when participants reminisce of the training, their attitudes before and after training and also their perceived differences in attitudes, perceptions and general approach of the work at hand between trained and untrained members of staff.

One could arguably question the fact that only caregivers/teachers who had undergone the ICDP training were interviewed for this study, but since it was their views and experiences of the actual training and its’ usage in the real life work-place, this was a conscious choice. The participants could also freely and easily discuss terms of approach before and after the training and compare difference between then and now, as well as perceptions between co-worker who had underwent the training and co-workers who had not.

The reported lack of follow-ups and evaluation is in itself not that surprising considering it is deemed the one part of intervention science least examined and also conducted by researchers, (Catalano et al, 2004; Ferrer-Wreder, 2013). The participants even gave their own suggestions to both “how” the follow-ups could be improved and “why” sustainability may falter in time. Main reasons being new employees not trained or even informed of the ICDP approach and discussions at staff meetings regarding values and interpersonal relations not being outspokenly connected to ICDP, although they are arguably closely related. Another aspect of the challenges for ICDP to be upheld at the preschools was the presumed conflict of interest between education and caring, more specifically between the special ed. teachers who had been trained in ICDP and maintained an interpersonal-relational perspective, and the Pedagogistas (i.e. preschool teachers with special training in working according to inspiration from the Reggio Emilia pedagogical philosophy) who focused more on the actual educational aspects of the work at hand. This could of course be confusing for the staff that are meant to work with both perspectives in mind, and could arguably create a dichotomy between the two. With some members of the staff identifying more with the educational aspects and others with the interpersonal aspects, could be a cause of misunderstandings, arguments and uncertainties even regarding the work at hand, what to do, how to do it and why.

There are approximately a handful of published scientific research papers (i.e. empirical post-graduate reports) surrounding preschool staff or other social professions and the implementation, adaptation and presumable effects of ICDP in schools, preschools and similar organizations of westernized countries. When performing a simple search with the Google search-engine on any commercial browser the results were a dozen or so scientific reports mainly targeting parents and of course links to the ICDP’s home web-page, containing a handful of evaluations and investigations regarding the program which were partially master theses and doctoral theses from different universities, (http://www.icdp.se/forskning-och-teori/).
General discussion

The present work have found arguments which indicate a need for maintaining discussion and reflection regarding employees’ attitudes and perceptions and linking these to the directives of the work-place at hand. Putting emphasis on the employees’ actual experiences of the work-situation while at the same time applying the teachings of a further training program (i.e. ICDP) in order to more effectively obtain and sustain a constructive dialogue are of upmost importance. Remembering one participant from the interviews speaking of the importance of consensus within a team in order to cooperate most optimally, where everyone might just assume they’re in agreement without ever really discussing it, a false consensus could be evident and in turn affect the work-performance negatively.

What other presumable psychological aspects could be influencing the attitudes and perceptions of a further training program, you might ask? Vakola et al. (2004) included the “Big 5 Personality traits” in their study which showed a positive relationship between attitudes towards change and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness, while showing a negative relationship with neuroticism. This in combination with a significant positive relationship between the EI-component of utilizing emotions for problem solving (Schutte, 1998, p. 168-169) and attitudes toward change, and also the additional explanation of variance within attitudes toward change by EI, speak in favor of adding personality measurements when examining attitudes toward change, or as in this study – a further training program.

Considering the many intervention programs in the world today there is still a need for a more unified, global intervention and the meta-analyses conducted recently (Catalano et al. 2004; Ferrer-Wreder, 2013) indicates the importance of definition regarding efficacy and effectiveness measurements as well as follow-up and sustainability in these intervention programs when it comes to evaluate the actual impact and effects they may have.

Following the conclusions by Sommer, Pramling-Samuelsson and Hundeide (2013, pp. 473-473) that the socio-pedagogical approach (and not academic education per se) better predicts the constructive prospects for young children this present results adhere to those findings. This also applies to the people working with the children from an early age (i.e. the preschool staff) and the attitudes and perception of said staff regarding the purpose of the work at hand (i.e. goals of the preschool), what role one takes as a professional (i.e. leading or guiding, teaching or exploring) and also what attitudes one has towards the people you work with and for, (i.e. attitudes and perceptions of the children, co-workers, parents and management).

Appreciating the complex diversity of individual attitudes, based on cognitions and especially emotions are influencing the actual work-climate, perception of cooperation and general disposition of the people working in an organization together. The relationships between colleagues, as well as between the children and staff and also the management are the key to a more prosperous and healthy work-environment in general, and on preschools in particular.
References


Appendix A

Original questionnaire (made for this present work) regarding the ICDP further training
Distributed in Swedish, but also in English for those participants who preferred, here
presented in its’ English version.

The following questions are regarding the further-training program “Vägledande Samspel” by ICDP
and its’ possible impact on your work-place.

Have you partaken in this further training? Yes___ No___
If yes, which level have you completed? Level 1___ Level 2___

If you haven’t partaken in this program you can finish the questionnaire here, and I thank you for
your participation

__________________________________________________________________________________

Please circle the number on the scale which best fits with your work-situation, where 1 = “ Completely disagree” and 5 = “Completely agree”.

**After completing the ICDP-training program I experience that...**

1. Everyone in my work-team have a more positive communication with the children
   Completely disagree Completely agree
   1--------------------------2--------------------------3--------------------------4--------------------------5

2. The staff act more positively and constructively overall
   Completely disagree Completely agree
   1--------------------------2--------------------------3--------------------------4--------------------------5

3. The staff have minimized their unexplained reprimands towards the children
   Completely disagree Completely agree
   1--------------------------2--------------------------3--------------------------4--------------------------5

4. The staff is more attentive to the children’s thoughts, ideas and questions
   Completely disagree Completely agree
   1--------------------------2--------------------------3--------------------------4--------------------------5

5. The staff uses “re-definition” of children previously considered troublesome or demanding
   Completely disagree Completely agree
   1--------------------------2--------------------------3--------------------------4--------------------------5

6. The class/classes of children I work with have become more harmonious
   Completely disagree Completely agree
   1--------------------------2--------------------------3--------------------------4--------------------------5
7. The cooperation within my work-team has improved

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8. The cooperation throughout my entire work-place has improved

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9. The organization has improved overall

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The following questions regard the actual training program of ICDP. Please circle the number on the scale which best fits with your work-situation, where 1 = “Completely disagree” and 5 = “Completely agree”.

10. The training program contained interesting, meaningful and relevant information for me as a professional educator (i.e. caregiver/preschool-teacher)

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11. The structure of the training program (i.e. 2 days of introductory seminars, approximately 1 months hiatus with home-work to video oneself in interaction with children, and finally 2 days conclusive seminars) was a good setup

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12. The knowledge received from the ICDP-training program has been well implemented and is actively applied at my work-place

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOU PARTICIPATION!