**Network:** School development

**Barriers and facilitators expressed by teachers implementing theme-based and cooperative learning in a Swedish kindergarten**

In Sweden, the decentralisation of the educational system has led to a difference in educational quality among schools. The curriculum for early childhood education (ECE) in Sweden states that education should build on relevant research. In order to implement research-based practices in the ECE setting, it is relevant to take account of teachers’ impressions on the implementation of such processes. Their experiences may affect their willingness to use the practices.

The overall aim of the wider study is to identify facilitators and barriers in the implementation of innovative pedagogical methods in ECE. In particular, the aim of the study presented here is to identify facilitators and barriers expressed by kindergarten teachers before, during and after the implementation process of a pedagogical program, based on the framework of cooperative learning. The aim is also to investigate whether the implementation had an influence on the educational practice, according to the teachers. The study is an independent evaluation of a program implementation introduced in a school during spring 2019.

The project uses the Theoretical domains framework (TDF) as a theoretical framework in the data analysis (Atkins et al., 2017) and the conceptual framework from Domitrovich et al. (2008) to describe the impact of facilitators and barriers in the implementation.

The teacher team (N=6) working in two kindergarten classes adopted a school development program that introduced theme-based pedagogy and cooperative learning. The aim of the program was to increase the general well-being of the children and to create a more democratic and multifaceted social environment in the classrooms. The teachers received training and feedback consisting of six sessions over six months.

Three group interviews with the teachers were conducted by the first author, who was not involved in the training. The interviews occurred at start, in the middle, and at the end of the implementation process. The preliminary analysis found barriers and facilitators for successful implementation and ongoing work with the programs, for example resources, support, motivation and knowledge. There seemed to be an increase in the number of facilitators over time and an increase of positive emotions and opinions about the use of the pedagogical program over time. The teachers reported some changes in the pedagogical practice.

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**References:**

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