

FOCUS GROUP 3: 28/4/2017

Participants:

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- **Settings team: Sílvia Turmo and Natàlia Turmo (Petita Escola); M.Àngels Domènech, Mireia Miralpeix, M. José Riella (EBM Mas Balmanya); Janette Barber, Rachel Lazarides (Achieving for Children); Anita Riveland, Harrieth Elin Kristiansen Strom (Sandnes Kommune)**

1 CC: Okay, so first of all welcome to Blanquerna. Sorry about the rain, we couldn't fix that. We gave you two sunny days and two rainy days, it's the most we could do. So, as you know because you did this in Kingston, or some of you at least did this in Kingston, what was planned for the end of the week, of the job shadowing week, was to have this meeting, where we could all talk about how this week has been, what has been useful for you, what have you learnt, ah and we will do it following these questions that you already have here, well prepared by the Norwegian team. This is done in each country after the job shadowing week. So what we will do is reading the questions and then you answer, try to answer. It would be interesting for everybody to participate in some point, and to hear the views of both hosts and shadowists, yes? So shall we start? Yes?

2 CF: First of all, those questions were prepared by the three universities.

3 CC: Okay, sorry about that. So, regarding question number one, that what we would like to know is whether it's been something that has particularly astonished you or surprised you during the job shadowing week. Something that you have observed or experienced that maybe was surprising for you. Janette, you are saying yes...

4 J: Yes, yes. Lots, but I would say especially the personal autonomy of the children, which you know is something that is in your curriculum, and that really stands out. The autonomy especially at mealtimes and how the very young toddlers and the older toddlers manage to take the dishes back and put the things well (...) and it's funny because it is a bit like a toddler dance, where they are all trying not to bump into each other and somehow they manage it. And that is, I thought that for nursery content was quite astonishing how the children XXX a lot of teaching has gone into that modelling, I loved it.

5 CC: Anything else that you would like to add?

6 R: For me was the less is more. I expected more fights, I expected the children to get bored more than I saw. There were a reduced number of resources available but that have a positive effect on the children's relationships with each other and on the way that they played, which surprised me. I think the next question from now on for me is how (...) you can, because I will take that as empty rooms, but then how to combine that with making sure that all areas of different learning are covered and renewed, resources, because it probably takes extra planning. If you don't have everything well all the time, which was good, how do you make sure that still, that the children still get to do everything? Because it's not all there all the time.

7 CC: Sorry to interrupt, but may I ask you to speak a bit louder because I'm not sure that if you speak so softly we will hear (...) so maybe we can discuss or you can give your views on Rachel's question, and see how you get this balance between having less resources available and yet covering the contents that need to be covered during the time at the setting. Maybe we can answer that (...) anything else that you would like to add? Regarding something that surprised you?

8 H: Yes, I saw, I very much liked that the well XXX not so many toys in the classrooms and then I also liked that much that you brought, you had rooms specifically for arts and the light room with the light box, and you brought in the plastic session on the earth day, which was this morning. You brought in toys for that session and I could play with it and then I think they XXX with it because they don't see it every day. They are many around being just messy. They were both in and the kids were 'aaah, yes, new toys again!' I liked the concept of not having all the toys all the time, just playing on the floor, nothing to play with, and I liked it very much. And the way they did it, both.

9 CC: Anything else that you would like to add?

10 A: No, it's the same.

11 CC: The same.

12 J: There are some more few things for me from Petita Escola and it was the use of English. In one point I felt like I could have been in England, because my head was done, I can hear English nursery rhymes and I could be in England. And also I can say I felt I can really learn there because they were getting everything done when the practitioner was

reading a story. You read the story and she recasted the story, she was emphasizing key words and I thought like I could learn Spanish or Catalan listening to her, and also because she was using English as well. So I felt like she was supporting me. I thought 'waw, that was awesome'. It was a surprise how much English was used; that was good.

13 CC: So maybe before we move to question number two...

14 A: Can I just talk about XXX Petita Escola, it's not a surprise but the thing that stood out for me is the way that the room sense, Silvia and Natalia try to make a home from home. But that is a real sense that it's the children's space, how is that created. The team work to create this was really evident from the first fifteen minutes of me being there and it's over the different floors, in different rooms but. So I'm not surprised but it was really strong the interactions of the practitioners and the facial expressions, the contact and engagements with the practitioners and the children are pretty much constant. And there are times they are standing back and observing and watching. There was a lot of engagement and interaction that maybe stood out and what it is definitely clear is the children's space.

15 J: And I have one more thing as well for Mas Balmanya. I just thought the garden that they created with parents, I felt that was astonishing because you had photographs of how it was before and then what we were seeing that was all established and with that the parents. We've seen from the photographs the parents, and I thought that was great, to get parents on board like that because XXX those parents did that. And also the contrast between the two spaces, the outside very sandy and running XXX on the outdoor heading equipment and then how everything inside was so beautiful and clean. It was total contrast of the two environments and I just think that it is astonishing how much the parents contribute to the work you have done in the inside XXX high standard. It's absolutely beautiful. And then how you have done with the parents for the outside, they take ownership and obviously they are very proud.

16 CC: So now, Petita Escola and Mas Balmanya would you like to comment on anything that the practitioners have said about your settings? You're pleased; you're pleased (laugh)

17 S: We are happy to be here and emotioned. And about what Rachel said, less is more, we just thought it in this way, sometimes we go, but not long, and doing the same thinking way as you are, so working XXX yes, it is interesting.

18 M: Is not easy to be lost in here about give to the childs everything that they need, changing things, continue changing things because not many materials but we have to be careful to they have everything that they need, and it's difficult, you know? But you have seen the book of the classrooms and this is a good tool for us to help us, to see if everything is okay. And we are in the way, not everything is perfect but I think we are in the way.

19 A: In many nurseries back home they have the way of working where you have areas: construction, creative (...) and they have thought 'we have everything now' and there were too much toys, so they then go to 'let's still have those areas but replenish the results is having a limited amount but change that regularly'. So after eight weeks of the term, so the conversation generally with a lot of those nurseries is how often do we change it and do the children know amongst that? And if you could have doubts approach with the E source that you have is your space, so that the children can then say: 'can we have out the rainbow blocks that we had a few weeks ago' If not they can go alongside so the children choices taking precedent but also having new things regularly. I think that's the aim....

20 S: We are trying to do it now, the setting's some areas, and the teacher puts some materials in those areas, not much but maybe too much know. I don't know, we are working on it, but there is some material on the floor or very low for them. And then we tried to clean the shelves and put very little resources on the shelves, like very visual, so they can access them or ask for them, so they have exposed material and then material ready to play with. And we are also working with time, so shall we keep the same material in the tray for one month, two months, two weeks? And we are just...

21 A: You can see if they are still interested in them.

22 S: Yes, and normally it's better. We thought that if we change very regularly, they will be happier, they will play more. And we've seen that if they have it for long, the way of playing with it is better, they imagine new ways of using it (...) the first day that they have something it's like lots of children go there and it's not comfortable to play, so it's better for them to get used to a material...

23 N: And find different ways of using it...

24 A: It's so easy, especially if it's new to think: 'oh, it's purple, sand. I know the purple sand is there and get to go there tomorrow and play with it' you know? Because I used to being there and it is what you said. Is how you observe what they do with it to see if it is still a good thing to have around. Are getting something from it?

25 CF: And for prediction, for imagination, I don't know, to try and try again (...) I think that you need more time.

26 A: Just on that the chickpeas that were in the tough tray today...

27 S: Els cigrons.

28 A: How long may be there? Because there was a little boy today, he played for half an hour, twenty five minutes...

29 S: But when they start, normally the tray (...) at the beginning, in September, was two weeks. Now it's more than a month. We thought it was too quick to change just every fifteen days the tray. Also for the teachers and thinking about new materials, and children started to play calmly with it and getting new ideas and then we change, so now it's a month, we are more flexible.

30 A: It was really well used today, very good.

31 CC: Alright, shall we move on to question number two then? So here the question was specially addressed to shadowists, asking you how the job shadowing has influenced your experience and knowledge. And if you can give any specific example. Something that you think you have observed or experienced that has changed your knowledge as a practitioner. Have you got any (...) yes, go on.

32 H: The volume of the voice, your voices was very soft and then the tone of voice, prudent, warm, always with a smile. And the body language this may be because also I don't know a word about Spanish, so I had to observe those things that I could observe. Because I couldn't hear or understand what you were saying, and for me could be this change that I would do for myself when I get there. I'm helping the children all the time; sitting down on a chair and correcting their legs and then pushing the chair for them. And you wait. You let the

children do the things by themselves. You say, I suppose was that, you told them what to happen and wait for the child. The child got the time to do for themselves and to succeed. Sometimes I haven't given my children in my setting the time to succeed and you did that and I saw that and I saw how effective it is, thank you for this. So that is something that I will take home with me and share with the ones I work with. In both settings I saw this.

33 S: As I told you because you said that when you were at Petita Escola, you told us and I answered that it is not a natural way of acting, it was (...) now it's a natural way of acting but we talk with the team about it and it's one of our goals. So that we don't act too quickly and wait for the children to do the things, and have patience and just don't act on them, do actions on them; cleaning the nose, moving the chair without asking or saying or waiting for them to do it first. So that's something we want to happen. Because I think that tendency for adults with children is to do it quickly, and they need time.

34 A: We have to wait and let them...

35 H: Yes, because we can see in their faces that when they succeed the sense of self achievement that is what we want to see. And they have to be allowed to get that sense of achievement. It's lovely to see that.

36 R: I have a connected response at this. I agree with you that the time for children to succeed which is a phrase that I will take back, is giving them time to succeed. I think that there are cultural differences and attitudes towards risk and there were several occasions where I felt 'waw' and but it was fine, it was okay, and I think part of the autonomy that children were gaining includes risk assessment during both settings. I would call it 'soft play', because it was what we called it this morning with Victoria. And at the outside space in your huge garden, partly because of the ratios, but you meant the children to be independent so they had to make risk assessments that often our children do not get the opportunity to. And both in terms of the environment, and here there is something in my head on, but also in terms of their relationships. So watching one small boy pull a big tube out from underneath another small child who was sitting on the top of some (...) and I was watching and said 'Ooh, any second!'. But he was fine, one of them indicated to the other and with some of the occasional is that is going to be an argument, is not going to be an argument. So often, the children would be at the point where I would go in or expect my staff to go in, but staff can't and actually what happened was that children solved it. So I think to back off is maybe

something that I would take under XXX other things. Being more aware of the distinction between **child led** and **child focused** because I think there were activities that I saw where there was very child focused, very receptive to the children but the activity was led by the adult and I just thought 'that is very easy to put the two together'. So when I go back to try to keep that. Just because we are being child focused doesn't mean moving child led, that was something to think about. The importance of maximizing the child's voice, and the two settings have very different ways of doing that, so the photos on the activities that celebrated the children as well as instructing them but also allowing them 'I did that, that was me, look...' because I asked you who were those photos for, are they for parents or are they for the children? And they are for the children. And the ability of the staff to notice and respond and so the children would give a reaction and the voice would be a physical voice but the staff would see it and respond to it. So, for me as a practitioner, am I maximizing all the different ways in the environment, in our interactions? In how many ways can I think of having the child's voice? Because I saw so many different ways, some of them unconscious and then I will stop, I promise (laughs). But there is a leader as well as a manager thinking about. You made a comment about the loneliness of a member of the staff who is part of the larger group of children all day and it tricked me to think if I meant to manage a team who promote the wellbeing of the toddlers that they are caring for, I must be mindful of the wellbeing of the staff. Because if you go in and there were very staff who we observed, who when we informally fed back, you could tell us that at home or even they were nervous that we were there or something was happening for them and that affects you, so I need to nurture my staff and then to have a coherent view of what we are trying to do and make sure that all the staff not only know it but understand it and can see for themselves what that means in everything. And that's really hard. And I come back 'how did you do that?' Because that's (...) but seeing the importance of that, the question is how will it affect your practice, and seeing the importance of it doesn't mean you have the answers but it means you have the motivation to try to find the answers.

37 A: I think we talked between all of us about how you create the E source. We can have the knowledge and the ideas, and you can say 'now we are working on this, we set an action plan' but that real understanding like Rachel said, creating an E source that takes time is not something that you can just change instantly. So you need to say 'we are looking for interactions'. Is what you said about the observations from Norway XXX your staff responded to that because you have people with anxieties about being observed or people that say 'Ok, it's for the TOWE project, we'll take it off approach' so the whole creation of E sources is

massive, isn't it? Around here. So when I've been asked, you know, how is the project, affecting the practitioners to date, XXX we were in the middle of the working process but the main purpose of this is to reflect on what we are doing. So the point of view is definitely having the impact that we wanted. I think that sometimes we wanted to get the answers and have all resolved, but we haven't. But we focused on what we needed to get to, I think. And that's was really good about the job shadowing experience, having the meetings, the theory that we want but really feeling it in the settings is an opportunity beneficial for everybody.

38 J: What I liked in terms of toddler's well being, I thought how the environments were presented in both settings, so it was very predictable for a toddler if you knew from one room to the other room. Each room had a cosy area where they could retreat too and each room had something sensory. So I like that it was predictable and also I think in terms of supporting toddlers transitions from one room to another is easily supported by a predictable environment. And also what we're seeing in Mas Balmanya was the child who didn't wanted to be with his group, he wanted to come in into the other room with the younger children and that was okay. Practitioners said it was okay, so I thought 'is special because today there are these different people', and you said 'no, they often want to go back to the practitioner that they were familiar with'. And I thought it was a lovely thing. In terms of transition is not just the lead up to the transition but how you carried on afterwards and is still alive and more time to (...) I thought it was a lovely thing. And also the predictability of the environment. It's not a new environment but there's a lot that's already familiar. And also one other thing was how children were supporting each other languages. And I've seen that giving attention in Petita Escola where there was a child singing and playing and then another child who had the back to that child also started to joining and singing the same song. So they weren't playing in the same game but it was that lovely chorus of singing when they were joining. And that's one thing I saw in your setting and I thought how they were supporting each other's voices and development of language. So even if the practitioner wasn't interacting with each other maybe not directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, but there was a lot of that going on as well, which is lovely.

39 A: Is that sense of home that I was talking about before XXX

40 J: XXX because you taught those songs and then you listen to these songs and then they are reinforcing the songs with each other...

41 CC: Any other example you would like to (...) no? So we move on to question number three, which is very much related, ah, has it been any critical incident affecting your knowledge?

42 J: Rain, the weather. (laughs)

43 CC: That affects your life not your knowledge. (laughs)

44 S: It affected in the job shadowing in Petita Escola, I must say. We are not happy with the rain and that was not too normal days in Petita Escola. Without playground. They are one hour and a half outside every day, no outside children were really (...) we didn't notice much, it could have been worse but as teachers, when we wake up, every teacher in Catalunya wakes up and says if it's rain 'oh, no, a bad day at school'.

45 J: 'Ay, ay, ay' (laughs)

46 S: So, we haven't been happy with the weather but...

47 R: But that has for me, I became aware that I was pushing 'why we don't go out in the rain, why we aren't going in the rain' and then I had a step back and is when you said that the parents complain...

48 S: Once we went to the swimming pool and it was raining. We go to the swimming pool, it's raining, let's put our coats on and we will get wet in the swimming pool, so let's go. And we had many complains, like 60% of the families going to the swimming pool were very angry because we got there with the rain. If it's raining we don't go to the playground. And there are no children in the parks in the afternoon if it's raining, it's cultural. It rains very little, so it's strange.

49 R: In that moment there was something bigger than just why don't Spanish go under the rain, Catalunya, sorry. And that's another learning. There is something about bringing your own idea about what is right and having to (...) we have talked a lot about having the passion to make changes because it's for the benefit of the children. And the challenge if we feel there is something that need to be changing but that has to be offset with the respect for other cultures, other ways of being right. And the rain really reminded me of that, because

what I was saying, in you playground you could put a big thing and cover that, 'but it's slippery', 'so then change the floor, I'm coming with the rain everyday ahead and you are coming with the rain once a month ahead'.

50 S: Actually it's not worth changing the floor.

51 R: It's not worth it. Yes, so that key question of **'Why'** would you do this? And how much does it matter and then picking up the things that really matter and are being done with good, why? Not just because I'm British and I like the rain.

52 A: If we go back ten years, we got in many of our settings where children weren't getting outside to play and it rains so much over there XXX what could you do here XXX and looking for ways to solve the problem because they needed to be outside. We got that physical development issue, we knew nationally that children were becoming obese of not going outside, breathing issues, all kind of issues, because it's an issue that so many children at home with their families are too busy that they don't have time to go out. So it became our responsibility to the setting to really ensure that they had that physical development. So that's why we think that here like we say is the culture of the country, the climate is different, it might, we don't need to say it. Sorry, you don't need to do that.

53 S: XXX it wouldn't be an issue. We change floor, rain today again. If it rained twice a week we would...

54 CF: I think that you made a point here and I'm not sure if I can speak, yes? A little bit. It's just a comment. What is cultural and what is worth it. Cultural (...) okay, but we really need to give reasons and I think that it's quite easy for us to say 'it's cultural', so I know, I know, but maybe we should think about the opportunity that we bring our children, the fact of being there in the playground and raining. Why? Maybe it could offer a lot of possibilities for play, for enjoyment. And because we are not used, specially because we are not used, so taking it as an opportunity instead of a (...) yes, we have the parents, but this is sometimes culture changes because of the little things that we make and we try to (...) I just wanted to say that. I completely agree with you, I would be maybe the one getting angry because of you know, a complaining, as a mother, but I think that we should think about that. In many moments in here we have talked about the idea of culture: it's cultural and maybe less is more (...) but

then we think about 'okay, but what is worth it and what is better for our children' so the balance here.

55 A: And the opportunities for sharing, to sometimes just taking an idea. The ideas that we take we can use them as a starting point.

56 CF: Yes, it makes me think.

57 H: If you change the way of thinking of the rain from the 'Ay, ay, ay' (laughs) it's an opportunity for the children to experience something that they don't know they do. You are very good at letting children experience different things but when it comes to the rain that's not an experience day in your settings, you know? And maybe if you think of it as an experience and an activity almost, or getting on the rain, what can we do in the rain? How does it feel? Is it cold? Is it warm? Why do we get wet? What do we have to wear to...

58 S: I completely agree. I think that priorities come and then so many things are there and maybe I think it's a great idea. I'm sure I would love children having and put some coats at school, but then there are so many things on the list and rain (...) I think we have culture, we have what's worth it and then we have priorities, but we write down.

59 M: And we have the reality that's not your reality. You have twenty childs and we have to change twenty childs before the families are coming and maybe it's better don't have this moment, a stress moment for the child that have been playing for five minutes, get wet and have cold because I can't change twenty childs in the same time. And you have to be very careful with these decisions, because it's not only 'go outside and play with the rain'. We all like very much playing with the rain but I can change myself, but they don't. And I have to change one by one and we just have two hands and we don't want to change them like 'okay, go, go, go' no. Yes, we don't want this. We try it, we were wrong and not more, you know? That's the priorities. Something you have to think about.

60 H: We also have days that we don't go outside, so I don't think we had few days that we don't go outside like you because it's obviously that it's not very often that it rains. It's hard to believe (laughs) but I don't think it's a huge problem; it's just almost the differences.

61 J: Well, the only critical incident XXX which you said is again the stuff in ratios, adults and children. So definitely in comparison to England and Norway that would be a critical incident, something affecting because it does have a huge impact if you have more staff and because then, I was just thinking about that yesterday in the rain when I was sitting in Petita Escola, how much in England are children have to 'coats on, coats of, boots on, boots of' during the day, because XXX the practitioners to be able to modelling and to support the children who need the extra support. So again, in terms of a critical incident, which comes down to staff ratios, I thought that was quite hard the number of children that one adult is responsible for, because I think we have the best intentions and the best will in the world and no matter how effective you are getting with the jobs done. There is no so much time and you know, in terms of communication and interactions which you could have right because in Petita Escola they've got extra practitioners in the room and then again the way you manage it. One practitioner does the tasks, one practitioner is with the children...

62 S: That helps but even being two, ratios are huge here in Spain.

63 M: And I think, as I said, it's not just about ratios, because it's an attitude that you have to learn and you have to reflect about how I can use my time better with the childs. And it's not just for how many childs I have, what is my attitude and what is the important, to change everything and clean everything or to be with them in this moment? We have to put the (...) and find the middle, because we were talking that it's so difficult to don't spend all the time with them or spend all the time observing. We have to find the middle point; it's not just for how many childs we have. It helps, it's a fact, but we have to think about our attitude.

64 S: And sometimes having more children means in some moment that as a teacher you can think 'there are so many children in this classroom, I have to run, I have to do all this, lots of tasks, lots of bibs, lots of nappies' and the attitude that Mireia says, you have to change, but even if you change it, you must change several things to change them, so...

65 M: Yes, it's something that we can work with but always will be one adult for twenty childs and it's the reality and we have to work with it.

66 CC: Anything else?

67 S: No, and I learnt something from Rachel, and she is always trying to get the positive from the negative. We have been talking, and maybe having this big ratios makes us learn many things as a practitioner too. And it happened to us for example in Christmas, the school is open but you maybe have less children in a classroom and sometimes you can be a better teacher when there's a whole group there, you know? This point of (...) you can't completely relax because you've got that big group of children makes you stimulate you and gives you the energy, and I think if you learn from the situation that can be very positive for the teacher too...

68 CF: That's wonderful.

69 H: That's actually one of the things I've been thinking a lot. We are more adults in my class, in our classes but sometimes we could be more...

70 J: Focused?

71 H: Focused, yes. Much more focused as you have to be, because you can't manage without being focused on time. We can, as you say, relax sometimes and then we, in my classroom is more of a run to reach everything on time. XXX because more organic XXX and while you struggle with having for sure too little people in your classrooms we struggle with having not too much but more people for how could be efficient and being with the children. Someone has been being with the children, other people are changing diapers, someone is playing, and someone is making the food, so that's very good to see how much focus you put on the children.

72 S: That's good to hear Harrieth, thank you.

73 H: So we can learn how to be more focused on time, it's been sometimes...

74 S: And she said being two is helpful but I don't know how but I've experienced being three in a classroom, when was that? I have the experience and being three is not that helpful. So there can be many children, if you want you feel alone, but two is the perfect number of teachers, I think. I feel you can have a look at your other adult and you help each other and you can do different tasks, but being three gives this point of...

75 CF: Relaxing too much.

76 S: Yes, or chatting or whatever.

77 H: We still want to be three (laughs). I want to explain to the ones that I work with how focused you were and I want to see that more practitioners in our classes had the focus. And we may, we have the opportunity to divide the group more so we get fewer in a group.

78 A: XXX with the families but I kind of think that the message to a mum, a busy mum who's got the house XXX jobs to do and you could be the busy mama at home, that is getting everything done and preparing everything but you know, not having that interaction with the child and that's why I think we were aiming to do is make the practitioner understand the main results to the child in that setting. So whether you have another adult in the room that's really good, they can do the other tasks. It was really natural yesterday how mommas of the children were doing their jobs. This morning Laura was with the children in the carpet and the other adult was welcoming children as they arrived, so I think that two works well, if you have three and do extra jobs that's great, but any time the key thing in the quality session. However long that it is, is the interaction between the children and that adult, the key adult. So, I think that both settings were everything beautifully laid out, you know? Lovely activities for children to choose from, which we want them to have, we want them to go and explore and the other adult would be the one observing that and then maybe intervening in their play, if the child wants that. But the other main adults are there to support learning in whatever way that is. And getting that mindset it's what we are aiming to do with children in our setting particularly but then to help parents understand that the time they got playing, the importance of playing that is key. Not busying oneself too much because we can see nurseries like the XXX sometimes people say 'no, it's a normal day and how am I going to manage this?' but focus too much on the management and organization rather than the children. So it's bringing everybody back to 'why are you here?' and the wellbeing of the staff, as you say but mainly the children initially.

79 CC: We move on question four? No more critical incidents? So here the question is about how being this active observer, observing actively during the job shadowing week has helped you enhance your skills.

80 J: I think that for the first time I had to do something like this and it's difficult because it is a responsibility and you want to be a critical friend and get that across the friend. We are a team and we are doing this for the wellbeing. It has been brilliant as well in terms of what the positive that we could draw at and what we could (...) I think it's a skill and it's a new skill. We have never done this before as well, so it's like finding that balance but you know, remember what the focus of the task is, what the focus of the objectives of the observation is. I really enjoyed it and as we've said it is something we would like to do more when we go back to our settings with our peers. Because we don't get enough opportunities to figure out if TOWE, we've able to get some captures, some moments that we've observed a colleague and we were able to say 'really good, you've done this strategies' and it's genuine and we can show that it links to TOWE. But we want to do more of this and practice being better, because that critical friend part, we want to build relationships and that's being an important thing we learnt to do that right.

81 S: I completely agree. You explained it perfectly. I think it's a perfect method for learning but you need skills and someone could think that being an observer is really easy, but I remember when we came, it's not easy, it's really tiring. Your mind goes really quick and there's a lots of things and you don't know where exactly you have to stand, what exactly we can say or not say or how to say, so it's not easy. But I think it's something we have to work on and it's a very good way of learning, ones from others.

82 M: And I think it's not just the learn, who is learning, is not just the person who is coming to observe when you are being observed, the learning that you have is...

83 S: Greater.

84 M: Yes, because I was talking with my team yesterday because we have the meeting, the pedagogic meeting and they are really amazed that just looking to you observing, they learn a lot of how you interact with the childs, how you are observing, what are you focus in. They feel they have learned a lot of things this week, in two days, and I think it's the positive of learning through this, the observation but it's an active observation, and I think you can learn one from the other one. And I think it's the best (...) they told me yesterday that 'please, say this in the meeting because we are really happy to have them here and we would like to have them more days'.

85 R: I just was going to say almost the same, that I feel like I'm a mirror, looking at the mirror and it's that exchange. But then they process a feedback as well, insist that you think about what you have seen, because to share information you must articulate it and so as you watch and you consider and then inform, but it also tricks you to think about what you do and then you share and confirm and consolidate and then you can take. And I think that reciprocal but disciplined process is really beneficial and then there's the next set of challenges of how you communicate that to anyone who wasn't there, but that's a different question.

86 S: And looking at that sentence there now (pointing at the wall), it says 'In dialogue who recognizes truth is not beaten but he learns'. I think job shadowing is like a dialogue and you just have to get an attitude of wanting to learn, wanting to listen to the truth and just feeling we are the same and we can dialogue and learn from each other. It's not just wanting to show that what we do best and listen to good things but just having an open attitude and wanting to learn from people who are like you and that may have similar mistakes or points to get better, so it's a brave attitude to learn.

87 J: I think **bravery** is a good word to use in terms of giving and receiving feedback, because you have to be brave to give and you have to be brave to accept. And we are not used to; this is not what we are used to do. And also, there isn't a snapshot; we don't have all the information neither. You are giving feedback but you need to have all the details.

88 S: Yes, but the one who receives has all the details.

89 CC: You can contextualize.

90 H: It's a very good reflection and we can be able to reflect. And I think that's observation for me I need to reflect for myself and with my pairs and more than 'I'm telling you what I saw' we can reflect together of what did we see, why was like that when we saw it and it that was a good idea and it's more a reflection....

91 CC: I think that following your trend of thought now we could move on to question number six and then we would go back to number five because here the question is about 'is there something that you experienced here that you would like to take home?'. And you've already mentioned many many things but then there's a second question which is 'how can you

transmit this experience to your own setting?' which is related to the challenge that Rachel was talking about now. Now that you go back to your settings the idea is that you get to share everything that you've learnt here, so how are you going to do this, how do you think it should be done? How difficult or easy could it be?

92 J: We've taken copies of Mireia's book which we just thought it was a beautiful way of documenting what they do in the room, which we don't do very well. So we document individual child and I thought that was just 'waw' I love this, this is a 'waw' moment. A lovely document and how each practitioner in the room documents how they started the planning, how they changed the planning, adapted the planning in response to the children's needs and interests or. But it's ever constant also isn't constant too. You've done a great job of capturing that and that's what we need to do, like studying how to be better. We are not doing very well at all, so I love this.

93 M: It is coming from Angels. Angels had the idea to start observing like this.

94 CC: How about this? How are you going to take your knowledge back to your settings and share it with the other practitioners?

95 H: I would very much like to have your 'pillars'?

96 S: Yes, we call it 'pillars'.

97 H: Yes, your intentions are very much (...) they are very...

98 S: Clear?

99 H: Precise and clear, and I thought why not do that for my class that we together, the four of us agree on what pillars will be important for us and using the TOWE varies to implement them for the children and also for ourselves. But as you say, it's not about attitudes or it's not on the night, it will take time. But then we can go back and see at that pillars, these are the important things for us and then we can write them down with a pencil and it's easier to get back and (...) okay we will have to go back to our intentions and may have a look at the wall to see and point that or remember. So I would like with me the pillars.

100 A: We've talked about identifying priorities and making it clear to everybody from your team meetings what TOWE means, shall we write that down? But really keeping the progress with the evident, not that we must XXX and put it as a display but that is evolving XXX with the filming of the children for example, we need to say 'what are the children showing us?' About how do you think our setting works. Is it working as we thought? So making sure that we are all sharing our plans, because people in different settings XXX

101 J: There was one other thing. I loved the cosy spaces, the mattresses with the pillows in both your settings and that's something I don't do very well. And walking into your setting and just seeing that there is a whole area where children can just sit and relax, so that's definitely something that I would focus more on. And then the other thing was also how you make a sensitization of a written story with the candle, making almost like a secret. I saw that and I thought it was such a lovely idea that we somehow can incorporate to hold children's attention; it was beautiful. That's definitely...

102 M: And not dangerous.

103 H: Yes, it's very risky; there are lots of candles... (laughs)

104 A: We were saying we are rather focused a lot on risk assessment at home. I think it's going a little bit round what the parents say, what the parents complain, all of those things, we are a little bit more like that we should be. So and everybody does risk assessments and things but yes we've done during ages risk management, what is a proper risk assessment, so I think maybe it is not being done as well as it should be or there is a misunderstanding.

105 R: But how you complete the risk assessment is affected by your cultural norms of what is dangerous, so it's also that doublethink. Really? I think that what you XXX categories for me. I have a list of actual things which I can't tell you because I think is not appropriate for now, because it's a list including books and resources and lots of things. But in some ways there is an easy thing to take, they will cost money, they will cost time, they will take organisation, but you can put them on a list, you can all forget and you can take it or regret. It's fine. But how to take this development, I wrote down practitioner voice because there is something about hearing the value of peer observation and creating opportunities for that. I've been very aware this week of craving space.

106 S: What's craving?

107 R: Craving, wanting, being hungry for, to come away and let it just feel. The kind of ideas that you have in the shower or where you are just over your cycling or walking and your body is busy, so your mind can process and we don't have that in our daily working. So can I put that in place for staff? And then, can I engineer the mind is busy in those times when it relates to this. That's a practitioner voices, how do I achieve to gain this experience? I don't know (laughs). I haven't had that shower yet.

108 A: We are all building it job shadowing into a new way of working, so as well as bringing people together for training but also discussion, once a month, it's a new way of working, that people do and go and visit each other because I think practitioners can only grow from observing and then discussing even if there is not a formal recording. It's just for them, I think they will grow from that. I think that is hard to capture and to take back. Is what I was saying before about the practitioners in that real engagement, in a sensitive engagement and it is used for expression, tone of voice, everything and good effect XXX go back and share to have something like that. So, you know, we can observe sessions where practitioners are really engaging but the way you engage, the skill engagement is something that I like us to capture in some way. We have meetings, we have plans, but is only through seeing it by yourself that you really think that's really engaging, that child coming to the practitioner because they really know the child wants to be with them. How you capture that is a challenge.

109 C: I think this is one of the things that job-shadowing brings into practitioners' experience. Nothing else can be told, can be explained. Or you can teach it, but you never get as far as you...

110 H: Official we can be modelling those XXX or something and it's not just saying it. You can learn something by hearing things but you can learn much more by seeing it or experiencing it. So at least we can go home and try to...

111 A: We have spoken about what we like to have from one year old to two years old, because we have from one to three years old so we are having a dream. So maybe when we could work a little bit together with the one year old, two year old, and three year old and seeing the staff together, so we have something to go through when we go home.

112 H: Because we saw in both of your settings, you had divided the XXX and we don't do that because under the tree there is one class, and we saw how much easier it could be if you, because they all have different needs, so both the one years old and the two years old could benefit from us working together and saying 'okay, you can have the one years old and I can have'. So, there is a thing that we are going to take home and hopefully we will get across how important it could be to our XXX and then finding the right arguments (...) so when you come (...) because we have to make it now when we are engaged and have it in our minds. If we wait for after you've been there I think...

113 CC: You will forget it.

114 H: Not forget but there would be other things taking our focus on.

115 CC: Anything else you (...) no? So shall we go back to question number five, which is about the different intellectual outputs and just for you to see and to share some similarities or differences that you have observed as regards how they have been implemented in Petita Escola, in Mas Balmanya when you compare it to your own settings.

116 J: I think what was different, I mean, because we've got the Early Years foundation stage and is such in the document a lot of the differences between what we already do in our curriculum compared to what you do in your curriculum, so it is not like one was right and one was wrong or one is being left out. It is just a difference in the curriculum so, but also like in terms of toddler's wellbeing and TOWE, and again there is a conflict between TOWE and the curriculum, probably more XXX in Spain than in the UK. So for instance, children with special education needs and small group interventions and how in England through the areas foundation stage we would plan and also like this small group intervention, small group we are more focused on children with special education needs enjoying other services. So that's part of TOWE and it's part of the areas foundation stage. So it's very natural to support each other, they complement each other, they reflect it in each other, so that's the difference as well I could see between your curriculum and TOWE. The two totally, not the two totally different. There is a lot in TOWE, but then there is a lot that is TOWE that's not part of your everyday practice. But that's not you, it's just the way the system, the education system is in Spain. So that differences for me because I work with children with special education needs and they've always been our focus and it's like 'oh', you know? Whereas I would have done a lot of small group work with children with special education needs in small group helping

them to interact with another child or how they interact with an adult. So but again, that's just I think that's the difference. Our curriculum and TOWE go together, no reflected in each other, so it's not like I am doing anything different. But I think in terms of special education needs there is a difference, as you were explaining children under three, there isn't any resource for them to go to until they are over three. That was the difference. That was the difference for me.

117 CC: Have you noticed any other difference or similarity that you would like to mention?

118 R: There are lots of similarities with the mealtimes. Lots of similarities between the two (...) and the idea of replicating the home and a lot of the systems that TOWE implies are very similar and that's different to what we have previously, although it has changed with the project and it has adapted to be more promoting children's autonomy, that was interesting. And my understanding from you is that there was not as much guidance on recording things as we have but actually there is a lot of consistency between you in terms of what you do. The way it's recorded is very different but you both have overviews of plans, you both have individual children's learning recorded, you both have the whole class book and reflections. So having understood perhaps incorrectly that your context is less framed than ours, it was interesting to see a lot of similarity in practice.

119 CF: Is that maybe because of TOWE?

120 M: I'm sure about this. (laughs)

121 H: I was thinking about the mealtime as well, and it's harder for us to get the culture, it's harder for us to get to the mealtime, the new mealtime that you embrace and to be a part of our culture. It's very easy that next year from next turn XXX new children and XXX because we are so many grownups to have to. It takes very much of my time and your time to explain and to integrate or making sure that everyone is on the same page because it has been more part of your culture the mealtimes. I asked at your setting and she said that all started last year, one of your settings, I can't remember, and she said it's part of our XXX that's how we do it. Any adults beginning behind of you will learn anyway because that's the way you do it and we haven't accomplished that, you know? In our setting yet. It hasn't become a part. I'll do it, but it's very dependent on us, but we will...

122 S: It's a slow process and I think that if there was the possibility to get all the practitioners from the whole school to do all the TOWE travelling, learning, job-shadowing, there wouldn't be things lost on the way. And I think we try not to but there are things that get lost in the way, so the ones who live the experience, listen, have more than the ones who receive our information at school or our motivation. And well, that's a difficult task but we must make it and we are sure that we will have all the team on the same point and on the same way, but I understand that's a difficult task.

123 M: And you are a lot of people. How much you are, more difficult is it.

124 A: Yes, because at our kindergarten, we are two, three classes that are working with the mealtime, the other is not working at the same page. Sometimes someone stops working and we got a new person in and she is not used with it and we have to start over again, so (...) but we will get there.

125 H: Related to TOWE wellbeing, we were four practitioners who started with TOWE in my setting, in our setting, and it's only me left, because the three others they are pregnant, that's wellbeing. (laughs)

126 R: You use similar strategies for language development, so you both have a puppet at the singing time.

127 M: We haven't talked about this.

128 S: We have to talk with Mireia.

129 R: And your circle time is very similar and a lot of the good practices that I know would be similar to the good practices I saw here and again, it's that sense that actually it's similar because it's good, so people that you said for the words 'la la la, pause, emphasise, pause' as a consistent very supportive of language development. Lots of use of real objects to represent things, when people talking, to support the understanding, which is something I would like to have more in our setting. I think organizing that is sometimes tough but your staff is very well and have an actual thing to sing about or talk about, so there are lots of similarities in the language development. A lot of the differences were about the very very different buildings.

130 S: We have talked with Rachel about this very much.

131 R: Yes, but then managing that and so transitions over your building supports and supports the fluidity and the children being able to move in and out of rooms. And I love that also allows children only to transition when they are ready, so the wall in the garden, so you get to play in this big space which has different equipment where you can physically get over the wall without help and then you only go to the self-service mealtime where you can work. But to have that idea that is based on the child's development not the child's chronological age which in England is very prevalent and has to contribute to the well being. It has to. But then what your building gives real challenges and could provide points of significant stress with an impact on the wellbeing it's managed so well that becomes an advantage. So even if you've got two rooms and you have to get all the children in that room to reset that room for the next activity and they are all here waiting, and I watched the teacher making the waiting a point of excitement and anticipation and group all together. And then because it took longer than she had expected of listening which it gained for speech development and how often do we achieve to ask the children to be listen. And we are in the room listening to the other room being set off and it was really interesting and I felt quite excited. But that was a challenge that got flipped and then when you having to move it up and downstairs and I've been thinking 'why not outside, it's only rain, go outside'. No English, go outside, but then watching all the children up and down the stairs and again up and down the stairs, 'oh, hang on, that's really good', because that could have been a problem because again they did it slowly, they did it carefully, those who needed help had help, they learnt, and actually it became a learning experience in itself when it could have been (...) and all of that using what you have in a way where you are clearly keeping this, that in your head, was a real strength that you both had but in different ways.

132 S: And as I told Rachel when we were talking about the building, it's not an easy building to have nursery, stairs, spaces, having lunch and sleeping in the same room where we play, toilet, everything. But most of our meetings, teacher or group meetings with the team, there is always talking about, there is a difficult moment when we have to move, there is a difficult moment when we have to go to sleep and we finish lunch and I have to clean. And we always spend lots of time thinking about how to make that moment better for the children, not giving them or the teachers stress and living daily routines with calm. But it is difficult and it

needs effort and talking and reflecting so that stress doesn't happen. And we are very conscious that our building has all these difficulties but that's also (...) un repe...

133 C: A challenge.

134 S: A challenge.

135 R: And it has become an opportunity.

136 S: Yes, and I also said that we don't try to change teachers much from their classroom because once you know how to work in that space now to keep children calm and happy in that space is better to keep that practitioner there, because she knows how to manage it. And also the building is so magic and beautiful that it makes balance with the difficulties. Something extra they see with the colours and beautiful stairs so (...) but it is difficult, sometimes, yes.

137 M: And I think this is the most nice of TOWE, that it can help us in our special school it can help them in their special school. We are so different and TOWE helps every one of us and that's the good thing that has TOWE.

138 CC: Okay, we are near the end now, there is a question here, number seven, which I think you have already partly answered but maybe you want to add something to it and this is how this job shadowing influenced the practitioners that were being observed. You already mentioned something regarding this before, not only shadowist learn but also those hosts also learn. How is that in your experience, do you think that you also learn? And do you feel you also impacted on their skills somehow?

139 J: I hope that what you remember is all the positive feedback because we have been just overwhelmed because of how beautiful your settings are, the effort that you have put into making them really beautiful and celebrate children's photographs and celebrate children's work and overcoming any obstacles, you know? I came and said 'yes, challenges' but new opportunities because I didn't even feel that your building was an awkward building with challenges because it was so smoothly. So I just hope you passed the nerves of being observed and look into your environment and say 'waw, we really have a good place here', because you do, both of you beautiful and I loved it because I can see all of you, all the

practitioners we met this week just wonderful people to us and wonderful people for children to be around, so much to give.

140 M: Thank you.

141 S: I think that being observed makes you your own observer. So if you are conscious you are being looked at, you're looking at you and that's the important thing. The important is what you feel about what you are doing and then they can give an external vision. And sometimes they can see things you are not conscious about. But being out of observing you get this, so the job shadowing starts days, weeks, months before they come and you are already being observed and that's a big learning for us.

142 M: And for my team this is true. But a part of this, the chance of being observed and share with the professionals, everything that happened this week is a very nice opportunity because they feel proud of show what we are doing with TOWE. This is what, all this we are working so hard to have everything like this and they are so happy to see that you come from another countries and that you are working with the same things and that you are going in the same process. And they are, they feel so proud to say yes, I'm doing like this, and I'm working so hard to do this. I think that the team feels that our work have a 'sentit'?

143 CF: Sense.

144 M: Have a sense, have a meaning with this, because we are working so hard, we are so tired sometimes but it's for something that is going in the good way. and somebody from outside is saying 'waw, it's wonderful, everything I love it' and the bad things too but to be proud of this I think is the best thing you can make with the team because they have more energy to continue.

145 CF: Exactly, self-esteem.

146 J: XXX

147 M: Yes, I don't know what to tell in English, I'm looking for the good words, not pretending (laughs). I was worried for the word all the week and I was saying pretending, pretending, to say another thing.

148 R: Inspiring, you meant to say inspiring.

149 CC: Alright, so besides the rain, rain cannot be mentioned as part of the answer to question number eight, any challenges or difficulties during this week? Here in Catalunya, in our settings?

150 J: No, because I didn't even feel that the language was a, I thought it was going to be (...) obviously we missed out on what someone's interactions were about and what was being said but it wasn't as challenging as I thought it was going to be at all, in terms of the language. I think that in terms of the reflection was quite intense, which you've already experienced (talking to Mireia). So it wasn't a difficulty and probably 'challenges' is the right word and it makes sense of your reflections.

151 R: I found the challenges really useful because in terms of thinking in toddler's wellbeing, because to arrive in a foreign country without knowing the area or knowing (...) reduces your competence a lot and it makes you much more dependent. And so noticing with even commenting the signs with your pair I thought it would be clear compared to London XXX but what does it mean to a toddler coming into your building, he doesn't have the language and he is looking 'where do I go, how do I know?' Lots of the children copying when the routines were being established and we were copying to cross the roads safely.

152 J: Where they go we'll go.

153 R: Yes, and lots of the challenges around the actual now and here. When you got to the nursery you are safe because you had somebody and you knew why you were there and you knew roughly what to expect. But all of the rest of it is just like being a toddler, and that was really useful to notice and to think 'How that made me feel?', what did somebody else do?, What was the new environment?', What were the people that helped me to come through that and feel okay about that', so we still go and be incompetent often. (laughs)

154 H: I think that about the language it has been difficult to think and listen and everything and reflect in another language for sure. Is very exhausting and then the difficulties with the language has been that I can't explain myself and my views properly and I'm searching, I'm searching for the words and I can't find them. It's very exhausting. Lovely and great people

understanding us with the words but it has been a huge profit for me as well for how exhausting it must be for a little child coming into Norway, not knowing anything of Norwegian and we couldn't in the classroom and you know a language. I just now my Norwegian and English. Yesterday when I fell asleep I was thinking 'oh, this was lovely' (laughs). And we talked together in Norwegian and half the words are English, not even English and helps me to understand how difficult it has to be for a little child. And also when I was observing I had observed other things than what you said because as an adult I would go to 'oh, what are they saying?', What is the meaning of the words?' I had to observe other things like the tone of voice and it was very helpful because I could block that up and could see almost my other senses were more focused. But it has been a challenge to see this and it has been a huge advantage.

155 S: Language has also been a barrier for you to share with our team because they really do not speak English and that's a pity, because finally TOWE is in Petita Escola and there was a barrier and we still were in the middle of the TOWE and the team and that's a pity but...

156 M: Imagine for my school. (laughs)

157 R: There were a lot of smiles. (laughs)

158 M: Many people saying yes, yes. (nodding)

159 CF: Yes, but what you said about the opportunity to activate other non communicative strategies.

160 CC: Is there anything else that you would like to add? Can you say that louder, please? (laughs)

161 J: I just was going to say that it has been wonderful and all the practitioners is incredible what you have done in a week. And you are just amazing people and you made us feel so welcomed and the impact you have on the toddlers and you are doing a great job.

162 M: Thank you.

163 S: Thank you. And we had lots of fun. (laughs)

164 A: And the staff were talking to us, Laura or some other people. One of the challenges for me was not to sound like it is an interrogation, 'how much shall I ask?, Is it the appropriate time to ask now?'. But they talked a lot to us today and Laura said things that she said yesterday, so I found it was really reassuring that they wanted to talk to us. And we were there observing but it felt very natural to have a conversation rather than an interrogation. So hopefully they felt happy we met in the middle.

165 H: I've learnt to say 'Molt bé'.

166 S: Molt bé.

167 J: I take with 'ay, ay, ay'. (laughs)

168 S: That's a bit Mexican. (laughs)

169 R: Thank you.

170 M: Thank you too.

171 CC: Okay, so I think we can finish. (applause)

172 M: I want to say that Maria José would like very much to be here but she cannot because the school need her and we cannot. And I'm sure because she bought something for you but she cannot come with it so we will come with it in...

173 CC: Take it to Norway.

174 M: Yes, I'm sorry. I know she wants to say sorry for that, because she wants...

175 R: Because she is XXX the children? (laughs)

176 CC: There you go, that's TOWE. Well I would like to say that I'm sure I can talk on behalf the three of us, that we feel very very proud of being part of this TOWE project and having you here, such wonderful practitioners that are making this possible and I just think it's a sort

of energy and happiness for us to do this. So, thank you very much for your motivation, for your positive attitude and for your excellent work. So now we call it off, we get out of things and we go and have lunch together. Shall we do that?

177 M: Sorry but I don't come to have lunch because I have a plane in two hours and I have to go running to the airport. I'm sorry.