



# Play-based learning and assessment practices in early years: methodological explorations

## Article Summary

**Background** Teachers' perspectives provide crucial insights into classroom practice in early childhood education settings. Although many kindergarten programmes emphasise play and assessment to support children's learning and development, recent research suggests that there are some disparities between teachers' articulated role of play and what they report assessing during periods of play. As a range of research designs can be used in efforts to probe the complex relationships between perspectives and practice, it is important to consider which methodological approach, or combination of approaches, may prove optimal in early years contexts. **Purpose** The study sought to explore the relative merits of using (1) semi-structured interview and (2) video-elicitation interview approaches to gain deeper understanding of the connections between teachers' perspectives and practices within kindergarten education. **Methods** An in-depth, qualitative enquiry was undertaken. This included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and video-elicitation interviews from 20 kindergarten classrooms in Ontario, Canada. Interview data were thematically analysed. **Findings** The analysis indicated that video-elicitation interviewing influenced the structure and content of participants' responses when compared with semi-structured interviews, providing additional and valuable insights into the ever-present negotiation between perspectives and practice. **Conclusion** The study highlights how semi-structured and video-elicitation interview approaches each offer particular strengths and limitations, and can be used independently or in combination to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between teachers' perspectives and their classroom practices. The selection of one approach, or combination of approaches, needs to be carefully aligned with the overarching research goals of a study.

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