



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

MODULE CODE: ECDE7020

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: 1

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Doctorate in Education (EdD)

ECDE7020 Research Proposal

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Start Date	2025.2.15	End Date	2025.2.21

PhD by Research	PhD Practice Based	PhD by Published Works	Professional Doctorate (including DBA, DProf, Ed D)	MPhil by Research	MPhil Practice Based
☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
MA by Research	MSc by Research	MRes			
☐	☐	☐			

Proposed Research

Proposed Research Question and sub-questions (if appropriate):
Exploring the Teaching Situation of Nursery School Teachers in Wales from the Perspective of Chinese Preschool Education Professionals RQ: What teaching strategies are used by nursery teachers in Wales when teaching nursery-aged children? What is the purpose of using those strategies? Can these strategies provide researchers with ideas for developing vocational skills?
Background & Context (approx. 500 words)
As globalization deepens, cross-cultural education research is increasingly important, particularly in early childhood education. Understanding early education methods from different regions provides valuable insights for educators' professional development, broadening their perspectives and promoting reflective practice (He. et al, 2023). However, China's first kindergarten, Hubei Kindergarten, was established in 1903. The founding of this kindergarten marked the beginning of modern pre-school education in China (Qi,2017). Compared to Froebel's first kindergarten in Europe established in 1837

(Shirakawa,2021) , and the kindergarten attached to Tokyo Women's Normal School established in Japan in 1876 (Hirota,2024), China's pre-school education started somewhat later. Due to this later start, China's pre-school education has consistently been influenced by globalization, such as kindergartens adopting Japanese educational experience models and developing to readily incorporate teaching methods from other countries like "Montessori"(Zhou,2022). During this development, scholars have noted that Chinese pre-school education shows a lack of localization (Wang,2018).

My focus is on how to use cross-cultural perspectives whilst being grounded in local educational philosophy, learning from the strengths of other countries. I graduated with a degree in early childhood education in China and have practical experience in Chinese kindergartens. I am currently pursuing a doctorate in Wales. I have developed a strong interest in exploring the differences between Welsh and Chinese early childhood education systems. This unique positioning provides me with a cross-cultural perspective that few researchers possess.

During preliminary research using Chinese academic databases with search terms like "Welsh early education" and "Welsh kindergarten", I found only 6 relevant articles. Researcher Yan (2007) provided a simple introduction to the objectives of different curriculum stages based on the foundation phase document issued by the Welsh government. Gen (2023) introduced the objectives of different stages of the Welsh curriculum more broadly to Chinese scholars based on the 'Introduction of Curriculum for Wales guidance' document, whilst primarily describing how the "science" subject skills could inspire Chinese pre-school education. Researcher Cui (2008) also focused on the Foundation Phase policy and published two articles on how mathematics and language subjects could inspire Chinese pre-school curriculum design. And there have 2 articles didn't used Wales early education methods in the research, one is content the Wales culture, and another one introduce the Fly start in the paper (Yan,2007; Dai,2019). Upon careful examination, these publications merely provide simplified explanations of Welsh government policies without substantial data on actual educational practices. They lack first-hand observations, detailed descriptions of teaching practices, and authentic accounts of children's learning experiences. This indicates that Chinese scholars' understanding of Welsh pre-school education remains at a superficial policy level, with significant research gaps regarding the actual situation of pre-school education in the region.

This study aims to explore and observe the actual situation in Welsh nursery schools through the researcher's perspective as a Chinese pre-school education researcher. It will not only enrich China's authentic data on actual educational practices in Wales, providing reference for other scholars, but also explore and compare the differences between Welsh and Chinese pre-school education systems from a Chinese pre-school education professional perspective, promoting the researcher's professional growth.

Aims & Objectives (approx. 250-500 words)

For me personally, as an early childhood educator, understanding pre-school education in different regions is meaningful. Through this research, I want to understand, through myself, the actual situation in Welsh nursery schools, such as how children are educated, what methods teachers use to guide them, how they observe children, and how they identify children's developmental needs.

Currently, in my hometown of Guilin, China, kindergarten teachers are attempting to discover children's developmental needs by observing their daily lives. This is a recent change, and some kindergarten teachers have expressed to me their difficulty adapting to this change. Therefore, I am particularly interested in understanding whether teachers in other regions need to observe children to discover their interests and provide guidance accordingly. If so, I want to understand how they implement this in practice. This can provide practical experience for my professional growth.

I am pursuing an EdD degree in Wales currently, which gives me the opportunity to visit local kindergartens and personally observe early education practices in Wales. This advantage enables me to collect authentic data through direct observation, interviews, and participation, overcoming the limitations of policy text analysis. My professional knowledge and practical experience in pre-school education in China have provided me with a foundational understanding of Chinese pre-school education. Through reflexive thinking as a research method, I can further enrich this study, enabling me to identify meaningful differences between these two systems.

This study aims to explore and discover the actual situation of Welsh early education through the perspective of a researcher with a Chinese pre-school education knowledge background. By documenting and analysing daily teaching activities, curriculum design, teacher roles, and teacher-student interactions in Welsh kindergartens, this study will provide Chinese scholars and practitioners with authentic reference materials currently unavailable in Chinese literature. To some extent, it can fill the research gap in Chinese academic literature regarding authentic data on Welsh early education, providing reference for other researchers.

On a personal level, this research will promote my growth as a cross-cultural educator, helping me integrate the strengths of different educational traditions into my own practice and develop a more comprehensive and flexible educational philosophy that connects Eastern and Western approaches to early childhood education.

Proposed Plan of Work

Suggest a reasonable timeframe within which your research study could be carried out. This could be based on the assumption that this proposed study will be your research for module ECDE7021 in the summer term OR your thesis research.

The events below can be altered, added to or deleted as required.

Planned development	Target date for completion
Reading and writing of introduction and literature review	2025.5.10
Reading and writing of methodology chapter	2025.5.24
Piloting research tools	2025.5.30
Collecting data	2025.7.12
Analysing data	2025.7.26

Writing up of results	2025.8.9
Writing conclusions	2025.8.16
Proposed Methodology (approx. 500 words)	
This study aims to conduct qualitative research through reflexive thinking, observation, and interviews based on an interpretivist philosophical framework. Regarding the selection of research targets, convenience sampling will be used to select a kindergarten that represents Welsh pre-school education characteristics for observation and interview activities. Interpretivism Interpretivism holds that social reality is constructed through individuals' subjective experiences and interactions (Mukherji& Albon, 2023). Based on this theoretical foundation, the researcher's task is to "understand" and explore the experiences and meanings of individual behaviours and analyse the reasons for their actions (William,2024). In this study, I hope to understand Welsh pre-school education based on my background in Chinese pre-school education, which will involve subjectivity. Interpretivism allows researchers to analyse through subjective experiences, which meets my research needs. Reflexive Thinking Reflexive thinking requires researchers to analyse their understanding of things through critical thinking, make cultural presuppositions about research objectives, and critically analyse the research process (Alvesson,2009). In cross-cultural research on Welsh and Chinese pre-school education, reflexive thinking can help researchers as a tool to enhance validity (Creswell,2023). This can also help researchers avoid excessive subjectivity whilst using interpretivism for analysis. In this study, reflexive thinking will permeate the entire research process. In the initial stage of the research, the researcher will organise their own experiences, primarily divided into two parts. First is the current situation of Chinese kindergartens, particularly regarding teacher guidance—how Chinese kindergarten teachers conduct curriculum and how they observe and guide children. The second part is the personal professional skills, such as how the researcher would respond to and guide children in unexpected situations, and how they would conduct observations of children. Such presuppositions can help the researcher maintain clear logical thinking when accepting new educational concepts, reducing confusion. During the data organization stage, existing teacher professional skills will be analyzed and compared with the reflexive texts from the initial research stage to understand the professional growth experiences gained and analyze the reasons. Observation Method Regarding the choice of observation methods, the research methods that may exist and be used include participant observation and non-participant observation. The main difference lies in whether the researcher enters the nursery research as a visitor or as an insider (Patton,2015). The	

non participatory observation method can better maintain the natural state of the environment, while the participatory observation method can better understand the significance of the behavior of the research object (Cohen& Morrison,2018). In this study, I will focus on recording teacher behaviors, understanding teachers' daily routines, teaching situations, and unexpected situations. I will promptly record these using mobile phone documents or voice memos and process the observed situations on the same day to form observation document.

Interview Method

Semi-structured interviews and field interviews are the interview methods that may be used during the research process. Semi-structured interviews ensure flexibility during the interview process (Bryman, 2016), while field interviews provide timeliness to the research (Spradley,1980). However, field interviews may involve ethical risks, requiring further ethical consideration and ensuring interview anonymity.

I will summaries and organize findings from the observation process, including teaching situations and different operations in cultural conflicts, to form an interview outline. Field interviews can help me promptly understand the meaning of teacher behaviors in the field, avoiding memory blurring due to time lapse.

Introductory Bibliography

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Claude(<https://claude.ai>) on 2025.2.21 to check my work. I used the prompt(s):

1. Please check the following text for grammar with England English.

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 2025.2.17 to support my research using the prompt(s):

1. Please provide me reference about Reflexive thinking.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.