

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324990401>

# How Nurture Groups Can Facilitate Inclusive Practice in Primary and Secondary Schools: A Theory Map for Enriching the University Students' Learning Experience

Poster · May 2018

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.18217.70244

CITATIONS

0

READS

1,089

3 authors:



**Joachim Broecher**

Europa-Universität Flensburg

324 PUBLICATIONS 287 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



**Joyce Hubbard Davis**

University of NC Asheville

8 PUBLICATIONS 43 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



**Janet F. Painter**

Lenoir-Rhyne University

15 PUBLICATIONS 54 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



The Metropolis of Berlin: Urban Spaces, Cultural Mapping and Innovative Learning Cultures [View project](#)



Stendal Study Materials: Pedagogical Knowledge Compiled for the Applied Childhood Studies [View project](#)

# HOW NURTURE GROUPS CAN FACILITATE INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## A Theory Map for Enriching the University Students' Learning Experience

Prof. Dr. Joachim Broecher, University of Flensburg, Germany; Dr. Joyce H. Davis, University of North Carolina at Asheville, USA  
Prof. Dr. Janet F. Painter, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, NC, USA

### What are the goals of a nurture group?

The goals of a nurture group are

- ... to restore for the child the **EXPERIENCES OF EARLY NURTURE** found in the child's neighborhood school.
- ... to **CREATE AN INCLUSIVE PLACE** within mainstreamed classes for children who are vulnerable to social, emotional and behavioral difficulties.
- ... to facilitate the **SUCCESSFUL RETURN OF CHILDREN** who have been separated from their mainstream classes due to social, emotional or behavioral difficulties.

### What are the qualities of children who are well-matched for nurture groups?

- they demonstrate an **INABILITY TO ENGAGE APPROPRIATELY WITH ADULTS**
- they possess **LIMITED RESOURCES** and the **LACK OF BASIC COMPETENCIES**
- who have **LIMITED SOCIAL SKILLS** and **POOR PEER GROUP RELATIONSHIPS**
- who seem to be **DEPRESSED IN THEIR FUNCTIONING** or **DISTRESSED IN MORE OVERT WAYS** (Boxall 2010, p. 201)

### What are the principles of a nurture group?

- GROWTH** is more important, than pathology.
- ENRICHING CHILDREN'S LEARNING** is the focus, not to provide therapy.
- The nurture process is **BASED IN ATTACHMENT**, and is mediated within and through a **SECURE RELATIONSHIP** (Ainsworth, Bowlby).
- CHILDREN'S LEARNING** is best understood **DEVELOPMENTALLY**.
- BEHAVIOR** of all kinds is a **FORM OF COMMUNICATION**.
- The classroom offers a **SAFE SPACE** to nurture **SELF-ESTEEM** and encourage **LANGUAGE**, which is a vital means of communication.
- TRANSITIONS** are important in children's lives and are critical to understanding.
- By **RECREATING THE PROCESS OF EARLIEST LEARNING**, children build **CONCEPTS, SKILLS, CONTROLS**, and develop **AUTONOMY**.
- Nurture group educators **INTERACT INTUITIVELY WITH CHILDREN** and **ONE ANOTHER, MODELING LEARNING EXPERIENCES** similar to those **EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS** in their **EARLIEST YEARS**.
- The **PARTNERSHIP**, visible by close proximity of the **TEACHER AND HIS/HER ASSISTANT**, is a key concept for the children's learning process.
- SLOW MOVING INTERLUDES** and **ROUTINES** during the class day provide **CLEAR TIME STRUCTURES** and allow for **INTIMATE INTERPLAY** and **SHARED FEELINGS/** satisfaction among nurture group members.
- TOLERANCE OF ASOCIAL BEHAVIOR** is practiced but with **PURPOSEFUL DIRECTION** provided, as well as **EACH CHILD RECEIVING FREQUENT POSITIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**.
- AWARENESS OF ONE'S PHYSICAL BODY** and **IDENTITY** is encouraged, as they assist in establishing attachment and trust.
- Children can **SATISFY** their **BASIC NEEDS, LEARN TO CHOOSE**, and **GROW** within a **PROTECTED** play **SPACE**.
- The nurture group **TEACHER MANAGES EXPERIENCES**, provides focused **OBSERVATION** of the children, and **ASSESSES** them with the **BOXALL PROFILE**.
- Within nurture groups **CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT EACH OTHER**, and to **SHARE THE TEACHER**, by **LISTENING** and **CONSIDERING EACH OTHER**.
- PLAY** has an important role in nurture groups (e.g., play as an **OUTLET FOR STRESS**).
- SHARING FOOD** is experienced as **CARING FOR MEMBERS** of the nurture group.
- In nurture groups, **TRANSITIONAL OBJECTS** are made available to provide children with **COMFORT, SUPPORT**, and **FEELINGS OF CONTROL**.
- Children in nurture groups are provided **DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES** and and **INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS**.

### Literature, if you want to know more...

- Ainsworth, M.D.S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. London: Wiley
- Bennathan, M. and Boxall, M. (2000). *Effective intervention in primary schools: Nurture groups*. London: David Fulton
- Bennathan, M. and Boxall, M. (1998). *The Boxall Profile Handbook: A guide to effective intervention in the education of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties*. London: Nurture Group Network
- Bennathan, M. and Rose, J. (2008). *All about nurture groups*. London: Nurture Group Network
- Bishop, S. (2008). *Running a nurture group*. London: Paul Chapman Publ.
- Boxall, M. (2010). *Nurture groups in schools: Principles and practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., revised and updated by Sylvia Lucas). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi: Sage

### Where do nurture groups come from?

- Nurture groups originated in **EAST LONDON**, in the **1960s**.
- The first nurture groups provided education for **MULTICULTURAL MIGRANT CHILDREN**, whose **SCHOOLS** and **PARENTS** were **UNDER ENORMOUS STRESS**.
- Today, there are **MORE** than **1000 NURTURE GROUPS** in the **UK** across **PRIMARY, SECONDARY**, and **SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS**.
- A key figure in the development of the model is **MARJORIE BOXALL** (1923-2004), [Link](#)
- The **NURTURE GROUP NETWORK**, London and Glasgow, United Kingdom, [Link](#)

### In what kind of context is the model applied?

- The nurture group is **FULLY INTEGRATED** within a **SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL** which has a policy for nurture groups for the whole school.
- Each group has a **NAME**, e.g., **"RAINBOW CLASS"** (and *not* nurture group)
- The **SIZE** of a nurture group is **10 to 12** participants.
- Always **TWO PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS** in one group: a **TEACHER** and his **ASSISTANT**
- The **HEAD TEACHER** or **SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**, as well as an **EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST** take on **SUPPORTIVE ROLES** in the model.
- FULL-TIME GROUPS** and **HALF-TIME GROUPS** both run.
- Half-time groups run in the mornings with **SUPPORT** to the children in the afternoon **IN THEIR MAINSTREAMING CLASS**.
- Students take **TRIPS** with their **MAINSTREAMED CLASS**.
- The nurture group should be composed of **NO MORE** than **TWO-THIRDS** of the children who have demonstrated **AGGRESSIVE** or **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR** when the group is formed.
- Special **ARRANGEMENT** of the **ROOM**: creating a **NURTURING AMBIENCE**, also a **FRAMED** and **ENLARGED PHOTOGRAPH** of **EACH CHILD**, large **SOFT TOYS**, a **MIRROR**
- Working with **OTHER AGENCIES**
- Nurture group principles can also be applied to a regular classroom (**NURTURING CLASSROOM**) or to a whole school (**NURTURING SCHOOL**)

### What do the teacher and assistant do when they work with the children in a nurture group?

- They establish **DAILY ROUTINES** and **STRUCTURE** the **TIME**.
- They **CREATE** a **HOME AREA**: a **SECURE PLACE**.
- They make **EYE CONTACT**, drawing the children's attention to their eyes and faces.
- They give **COMFORT**, provide **FOOD** and **CLOSE PHYSICAL CONTACT**.
- They practice and **MODEL SKILLS** at a **SLOWER PACE**, using **SIMPLE LANGUAGE**, and giving **INDIVIDUAL HELP** to each child.
- They practice **CONSISTENT CARE** and **SUPPORT**.
- They practice **CRADLING** and **ROCKING**, combining **TOUCH** and **COMMUNICATION**.
- They **PLAY WITH CHILDREN** for mutual enjoyment, and develop **COOPERATIVE PLAY** activities.
- They **STIMULATE COMMUNICATION** through a **SOFT TOY**.
- They give **IMMEDIATE PRAISE** for **EACH SMALL GAIN**, and **INCLUDE CHILDREN** in **PREPARING FOOD, BAKING** and **WASHING UP**.
- They help children to **MAKE CHOICES**, yet **CONTROL EVENTS** and provide **MANAGEABLE CONSTRAINTS** and **ALTERNATIVES**.
- They provide a **VARIETY** of **LEARNING EXPERIENCES**: auditory, visual and tactile/kinaesthetic learning experiences, etc.

- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss, Vol. 1: Attachment*. London: Hogarth Press
- Bowlby, J. (1953). *Child care and the growth of love*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Cooper, P. and Whitebread, D. (2007). The effectiveness of nurture groups on student progress: Evidence from a national research study. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 12(3), 171-190
- Howes, A., Emanuel, J., and Farrell, P. (2002). Can nurture groups facilitate inclusive practice in primary schools? In P. Farrell and M. Ainscow (Eds.), *Making special education inclusive: From research to practice*. London: David Fulton Publ.
- Lucas, S. (1999). The nurturing school: The impact of nurture group principles and practice on the whole school. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 4(3), 14-19
- Lucas, S., Insley, K., and Buckland, G. (2006). *Nurture group principles and curriculum guidelines. Helping children to achieve*. London: Nurture Group Network
- Sonnet, H. (2008). *Nurturing success: How to create and run an effective nurture group*. Wisbech: LDA
- The International Journal of Nurture in Education*, [Link](#)