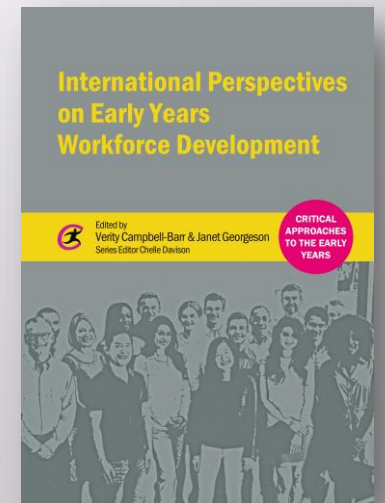


International Perspectives on Early Years Workforce Development

Verity Campbell-Barr & Jan Georgeson



About Verity Campbell-Barr



- **Verity Campbell-Barr** is a Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at the Plymouth Institute of Education, Plymouth University.
- Her research interests include:
 - the mixed economy of childcare and early years education provision
 - experiences of working in early childhood occupations
 - the role of childcare in supporting employment and the welfare to work agenda
 - understandings of quality childcare and early years education from multiple perspectives.

About Jan Georgeson



- **Janet Georgeson** is a Research Fellow in Early Education Development at the Plymouth Institute of Education, Plymouth University.
- Her role involves developing and conducting independent research projects and collaborating with colleagues in the development of research within the School of Education.
- She is currently researching the professionalisation of the early years workforce, and early cognitive development, including the role of parents, practitioners and other care-givers.

The Many Pedagogical Influences on Early Childhood Education and Care in the UK

This Presentation:

- The UK, Britain, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and our Islands
- Brief policy context
- Early childhood education and care pioneers
- Exploring the contrasting histories

The UK, Britain, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and our Islands

- UK or Britain?
 - Often used interchangeably
 - BUT
 - The UK = Four Nations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
 - Devolved responsibilities for education policy, including early childhood education and care
 - Britain also includes our islands, such as Guernsey and Jersey
 - These are dependencies of the British crown
 - They do not have EU membership, but have recognition through their relationship to the British crown
 - Have their own parliament and Governor
 - May follow UK policy, but have their own departments and scrutiny panels
 - Acts of Parliament do not routinely apply
 - Can legislate independently
 - Subtle variations in each island

What does this mean?

- Fragmentation
 - The Government tries to limit fragmentation by seeking to influence decisions across Britain
 - e.g. the allocation of resources from the Treasury
 - However, each part of Britain makes its own decisions on early childhood education and care, so there are differences between them
 - Very hard to speak of a British approach when looking at policy

An Early Childhood Education and Care History

- Historically there has been very little political support for early childhood education and care
- Services developed through philanthropic endeavor
- Gave rise to early childhood education and care pioneers

Philanthropic endeavour

- Margaret McMillan (1860-1931)
 - A campaigner and advocate for children's health
 - Free school meals
 - Poverty campaigner
 - Founded the Open-Air Nursery and Training Centre in London (Deptford) in 1914 with her sister
 - Interested in how children could learn in an outdoor environment
 - Declared that 'the best classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky'
 - Focused on working with the most vulnerable children
- 1923 became the first president of the Nursery School Association (NSA)
 - Now Early Education

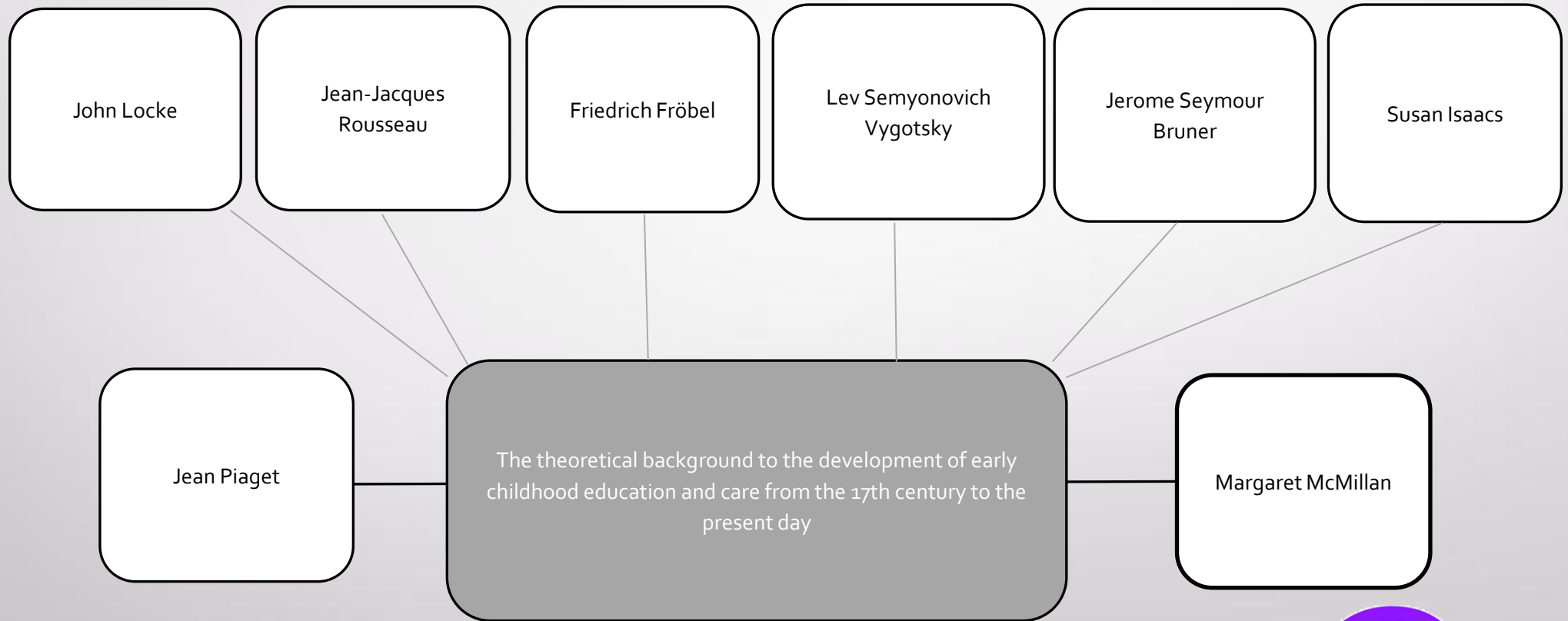
Developing pedagogical ideas

- Susan Isaacs (1885-1948)
 - Principal of the Malting House in Cambridge from 1924-1927
 - Believed in child-centred learning
 - Nursery school provides social experiences and enables children to form friendships, with these being central for children's development
 - Built on the work of McMillan in focusing on the importance of the outdoors
 - Also drew on the ideas of Fröebel and Vygotsky (both of whom have had a lasting influence on understandings of early childhood pedagogy in Britain)
 - Believed in the role of observation to create an understanding of the whole child to inform pedagogical practices
 - However, it was not just about observing the child as a teacher should also participate in children's play to encourage their imagination and (in turn) their physical and cognitive development

- Susan Isaacs (cont.)

- Children need to develop skills that enable them to exercise independent judgment
 - Supports the development of the individual
- Children learn best through play
 - Experimentation
 - Play as children's work
 - Social interaction through play

Pioneers and influences



Historical summary so far

- Little Sate support
- Influence of British pioneers who campaigned for early childhood services to support children's holistic development
- Influence of international ideas

The influence of World War Two

- Nursery provision is expanded during the war to support women entering the work place
- After the war women are encouraged back into the home to care for their husbands who are returning from the war
 - Also ensure that there are jobs available for the men
- Influence of Bowlby's Attachment Theory
- 1967 - The Plowden Report signals some interest in the provision of early education to support child development, particularly for disadvantaged children
 - But no action is taken
 - Children remain the private responsibility of families, except where there is an identified need

A period of rapid development

- 1990s – Tentative steps from policy makers to provide support for early education and out of school care
 - Nursery Education Grant
 - Criticised for poor quality and lack of places
- 1998 – Introduction of the National Childcare Strategy
 - Focus on quality, affordability and accessibility
 - Period of rapid policy development
- 2010 – Change of government, but continued support for early childhood education and care
 - But with a shift in focus...

- 1998-2010 (New Labour)

- Focus on quality, affordability and accessibility
 - Upskilling the workforce
 - Improving the curriculum
- Educare model
- Early Years Professionals
- Emerging school readiness agenda
 - Foundation stage profile

- 2010-Present (Coalition followed by Conservative)

- Focus on quality, affordability and accessibility
 - Upskilling the workforce
 - Improving the curriculum
- A division in care and education
- Early Years Teachers
- Increased school readiness agenda
 - Baseline assessment
 - Exceptional levels of development
 - Increased accountability

Pedagogical tensions

- Britain has a long legacy of early childhood education and care pioneers who have focused on:
 - Child centred approaches
 - Observations to inform pedagogical practice
 - Play based pedagogy
- Many of these features are still present in the early years curriculums that are present across Britain
- BUT – Increasingly pedagogical principles are compromised by political accountability

For more...

