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review 2

reviewer: sumaya babamia

**to meet each other, to know and grow, and to have a good
time:** insights from swedish pupils with intellectual
disabilities who participated in philosophical dialogues

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1. suitability of article to *childhood & philosophy*

a) title

I was somewhat confused about the relation between the first sentence (meeting, growing, and having a good time) and the second (a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews ...dialogue intervention). It is only evident towards the end of the abstract that the first part of the title is actually a quotation of the children's words that emerged during the interview – and in this case, the quote is – “To meet each other, To know and grow and To have a good time”. I suggest that the title be edited for grammar and also re-worded where possible, for example:

- i) “To Meet each Other, To Know and Grow and To Have a Good Time”:
Insights of Swedish Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities who Participated in Philosophical Dialogue.
- ii) “To Meet each Other, To Know and Grow and To Have a Good Time”:
Philosophical insights of Swedish Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities who Participated in Semi-structured interviews.

It is not necessary to add the semi-structured interviews to the title, though this is at the authors discretion and preference.

b) abstract

The abstract could be more concise, and I have taken the liberty to make editorial changes which the author is welcome to accept or decline. Please see the article for further details.

c) introduction/literature review

The literature review covers the following:

- Intellectual disability
- Some needs of pupils with intellectual disabilities
- A need for cognitively stimulating activities
- A need for communication and social skills
- A need for decision-making skills
- Education based on philosophical dialogues

Regrettably, I was unconvinced by the literature review and have raised many points for further clarification and explanation. The author needs to explain

what is meant by cognitive stimulating activities. While the author writes about the link between cognition and communication, less is stated about important aspects of ID such as memory (working, short-term, and long-term), attention, language, learning, processing, and perception. Much of what is written requires references. The author should be cautious about language that potentially incites discrimination/prejudice such as “cognitively understimulated”. I encourage the author to read the literature on children with ID’s such as:

Stoppe, P. Maisenhölder (2023) Teaching philosophy to learners with special needs: philosophizing and learners with intellectual disabilities, ICERI2023 Proceedings, pp. 5502-5510.

Nordmann, N. (2001). The marginalisation of students with learning disabilities as a function of school philosophy and practice. *Journal of Moral Education*, 30(3), 273–286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240120077273>

I was confused, if not uncomfortable, with the juxtaposition of children’s needs within a compulsory school system. What is compulsory schooling for children with ID in Sweden? What are the children’s rights and possibilities for freedom within such a context? What would be considered freedom? Is freedom of thought an option? Democracy and citizenship are inherent to well-being in P4wC and is critically important in the emancipation of children from contexts of compulsory schooling. This is a key aspect of Philosophy of Childhood! Further explanation from the author on this matter would be most welcome!

d) method

The research method is concise in terms of the qualitative approach to research methodology. The ethics section is strong and the author shows care and consideration of the children throughout the interview process. However, I wonder if there was a ‘less adult’ research design that could have been implemented. For instance, many qualitative researchers forego interviews with children (and adults) and choose art, drawing, play, weaving, knitting etc. I think that this is very important for vulnerable populations such as the children with ID in this study. Of concern to me was the ethics of asking children with ‘limited’ cognition (as in the case of ID) to engage in abstract meta-cognition such as hindsight perspectives about the 12 P4wC sessions. Is it reasonable to expect

children with weak memory, attention, language, auditory/visual processing etc to engage in oral-based interviews? Do we unwittingly create situations that might harm the child epistemically? I am troubled by the following report (p. 6):

In one of the oral interviews one of the pupils were unwilling to speak, leading the interviewer to orally describe and interpret the pupil's body language responses.

As I have commented in the article, is this not a violation of the child's privacy and right to withdraw from the study to have body language described/interpreted when the child actively chose not to engage in the interview?

A further concern relates to the manner in which the participants' responses were obtained. On page 6 the author writes:

The latter pupil was assisted by having the questions read aloud and, when the pupil seemed unable to produce an answer independently, was suggested possible answers from which the pupil could select what she felt fitted well.

As a speech-language therapist I am concerned about the in/justices we (as researchers) might do to children with cognitive and communication delays – how can we be sure that our research methods actually capture what the child had said? What researcher biases creep in when we state what the child has said or give the child options from which to choose? Without discrediting the capabilities of the child, how can we be certain that we truly know the child's thoughts given the disabilities that they experience? Though reliability and validity of the intervention described may be theoretically intact, I am unsure that such measures have been met on a practical level, calling into question the credibility of the answers obtained.

I am concerned about the erasure of the child with ID in this paper. For example, the author writes:

Some cleanup of the language was made in order to avoid confusion, but the leading principle was to retain the feel of the spoken word and the pupils' voices.

As indicated in the comments, the 'clean up' of language might infer researcher bias, and also the erasure of the child. What was confusing and why? How can we safeguard the well-becoming of the child with ID when we (as adult

researchers) decide what does and does not count as valid knowledge? Again, there is doubt cast on the credibility of the children's responses in this paper.

e) findings and discussion

There are three main themes (to meet each other, to know and grow, to have a good time) and a number of subthemes, all of which the author explains in careful detail. There were many powerful concepts raised such as feeling safe with grown-ups, feeling unappreciated, socially insecure amongst others, and so forth. I am grateful to the children and the interviewers for sharing many take-away lessons for us adult facilitators.

I wonder if any of these concepts were unpacked philosophically during the philosophical inquiries? For example, exploring the concept of safety from a philosophical perspective.

Overall the findings and discussion were of a good standard. I have included comments and questions for the author to consider at their discretion.

f) conclusion

The conclusion is well structured and also includes the strengths and limitations, indicating the fair and objective research practice. The role of humour in philosophical inquiries with children with ID could be discussed as an area for future research.

g) references

Suggestions have been made in this review. An edit is suggested to ensure that all references (and additions if any) conform to the referencing style chosen.

h) grammar, spelling, and edits

It is unfortunate that a fair amount of what the author conveys is lost in grammatical errors that significantly alter the content of this paper. Notwithstanding the courtesy that should be extended to scholarly work where English might not be the author's first language, I am concerned about bias and discrimination that regularly shows up in the writing. In addition, there are

numerous instances where the sentence structure is incomplete or does not make sense. I have indicated as such through comments in the paper.

2. relevance and timeliness of the topic

This paper addresses the importance of child with ID as an epistemic agent, an area of scholarly work which the author rightly points out is under theorised. I recognise the value of the children's expressions, and the power of their words "to meet, to know, to grow, and to have a good time" – which is paraphrased in the title.

3. argument structure and coherency

a) does the abstract adequately summarize the main issues addressed in the article?

The abstract should be revised, especially the aims and research questions as it is unclear whether or not the focus is on the children's needs, experiences, or experiences in relation to needs (which needs to be unpacked for further clarification).

b) does the article fairly reflect current literature?

The literature review should explain the links that the author is attempting to make. Care needs to be afforded to the specificities of ID, and this is achieved by briefly explaining key concepts such as communication and social skills.

c) are the objectives of the article well-defined?

The errors with grammar and sentence structure precluded the objectives of the article.

d) are the ideas clear and well-developed?

Revising the literature review is critical to clarifying the main ideas as well as making the links to the method, results and discussion section.

e) are the arguments well-founded?

The ideas are relevant and will benefit from more references.

f) are the conclusions expressed clearly?

Yes.

4. other aspects

No.

5. final assessment (result of the evaluation process):

publishable with revisions indicated in the review

I suggest revising the literature review section and an editorial proofread to ensure correct grammar and sentence structure. There are aspects of the methodology to be considered such as description of the participants, and also the issue of describing a child who did not want to participate in the interview. I encourage the author to respond to all the questions asked, especially where ethical concerns have been raised.