




L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty for Social Wellbeing


Research, Publications and Scholarship Committee

Disabled Children, Their Voice And The Ability To Be Active Agents In Their Everyday Life

A Brown Bag Seminar by **Ms Elvira Psaila**

Department of Disability Studies

 Tuesday 23rd May 2023

 10am-12pm

This Brown bag seminar will be held online via zoom.

Kindly register on the below google form

<https://forms.gle/EWxuUHMd3vVD2sqT9>

For more information please contact Ms Elena Mallia on research.fsw@um.edu.mt

Please RSVP by Friday 19th May 2023





Disabled Children, Their Voice And The Ability To Be Active Agents In Their Everyday Life

Brown Bag Seminar by **Ms Elvira Psaila**

Abstract:

Children are nowadays being increasingly recognized as valid social actors who have a right to have their voice heard and to be actively involved in the on goings of their daily lives, as well as the broader scope of childhood itself (UNCRC, 2006). Yet, in my practice within a pediatric setting, together with the silence surrounding disabled childhoods in both childhood and disability studies, it was increasingly evident that the voice of the disabled child themselves was still left unheard and unexplored. The aim of this study, is thus to provide a better understanding of whether the disabled child is allowed to be an active agent in their own life and have their voice heard and recognized and acknowledged as valid. In order to address this research question, the Mosaic Approach (Clark & Moss, 2005) was employed as the methodological approach of choice. This approach recognizes the child themselves as the expert and places them at the helm of the research design, hence facilitating the creation of a living picture of the child's life. The knowledge generated was then analyzed through a theoretical framework based on the philosophy of Jacques Rancière. The choice of using Rancière's school of thought stems from his belief that all humans, irrespective of social standing, possess the same, equal, innate knowledge. This research project, thus follows the life of three, young, disabled Maltese boys in the key institutions of their lives, namely the home, the school and clinical settings. Their narratives are then presented and discussed through a Rancierian perspective. The knowledge generated is then utilized to explore and better understand whether the disabled child, locally, has the opportunity to be active agent in their lives and have their voice heard and acknowledged, thus addressing the research question posed.

Ms Elvira Psaila

Elvira Psaila graduated as a physiotherapist in 2008 and has worked in both inpatient and outpatient settings within the Public Health Service. She has practised as a physiotherapist at the Child Development and Assessment Unit (C.D.A.U.) from 2011 to 2020. In 2020, she moved to Aġenzija Sapport, the national provider of services for persons with disability, as a physiotherapist. Since then, Elvira has taken on the role of Services Manager at Aġenzija Sapport, where she is responsible for the running of the Day Services. In 2015, Elvira completed a Master of Arts in Disability Studies, where her study focused on the experience of disability as lived by a young, physically-impaired child. Elvira has also published work in international, peer reviewed journals and books within the disability studies arena. Presently, she is furthering her studies at Ph.D. level, with her area of study again focusing on the role of active agency and voice in the lives of disabled children.

