

**“Attitudes and actions of EAL: a reconstructive contribution to theory in individual child service treatments abroad.”**



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# What is “EAL”?

- That is basically the question of the research enterprise!

## What is already known:

- EAL is an abbreviation for the German expression “**E**rleben, **A**rbeiten und **L**ernen” which is in English “Experience, Work and Learn”
- It is the name of a union that provides child support services in Germany
- It is also the name of one special service project provided by this union within which one youngster and one key person move to a small farm in the Finnish countryside and live there together for approximately 6 months.



# About the topic

## Research field:

- **Child and youth service; Practice of social work**
- especially pedagogy and support of youngsters with severe behavioral problems in form of “**one-to-one intermediate treatments abroad §§ 35 SGB VIII**” (ISE-A), often also § 34 SGB VIII or § 41 SGB VIII

## Type of Research:

- Reconstruction of theoretical references and pedagogic traditions of a specific social work practice **NOT effectiveness** (this is already very well researched and proved as effective; now it is about the HOW and WHY)
- Practice Research
- Grounded Theory

# Research Interest & Questions

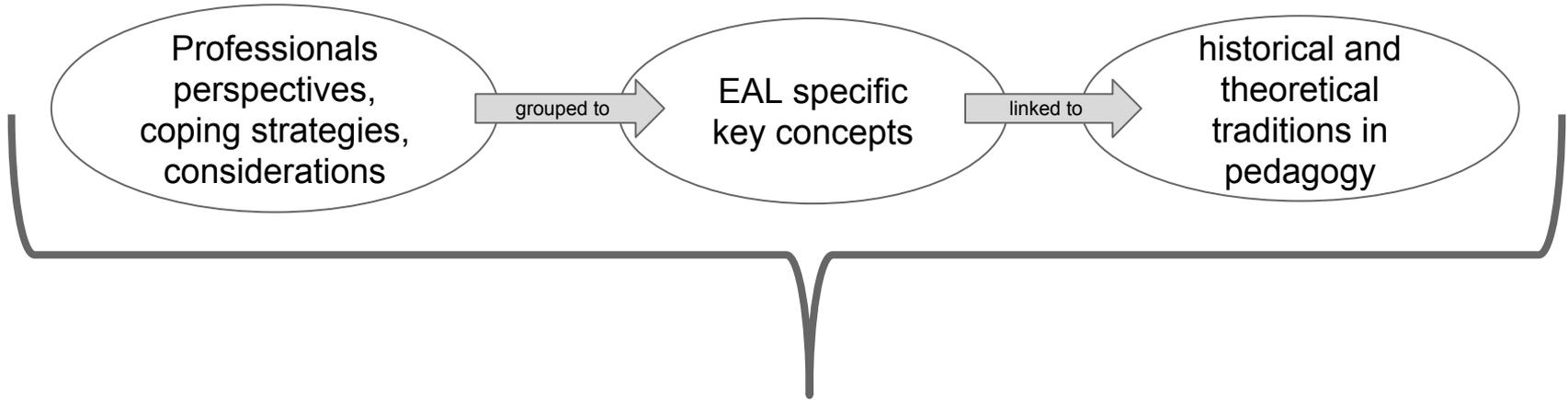
## Research interest:

- the “nature” of EAL as a conceptual example for ISE-A
- a holistic view on the phenomenon
- explore the history of ideas and professional practice of EAL

## Research questions:

- Which actions and procedures can be found in the practice of the EAL Project in Finland (=what is happening there)?
- Which attitudes and conceptions, perspectives and coping strategies guide the practice of the EAL Project in Finland (=why is it happening there)?
- What are the pedagogical traditions of the EAL Project (what’s its “history of ideas”)?

# Research in a Nutshell



**Reconstruction of the nature of EAL as an exemplary practice/model/approach/idea/... for ISE-A**

# Research Plan

## Research Paradigm :

Grounded Theory  
Historical Research

## Sources/ Study units:

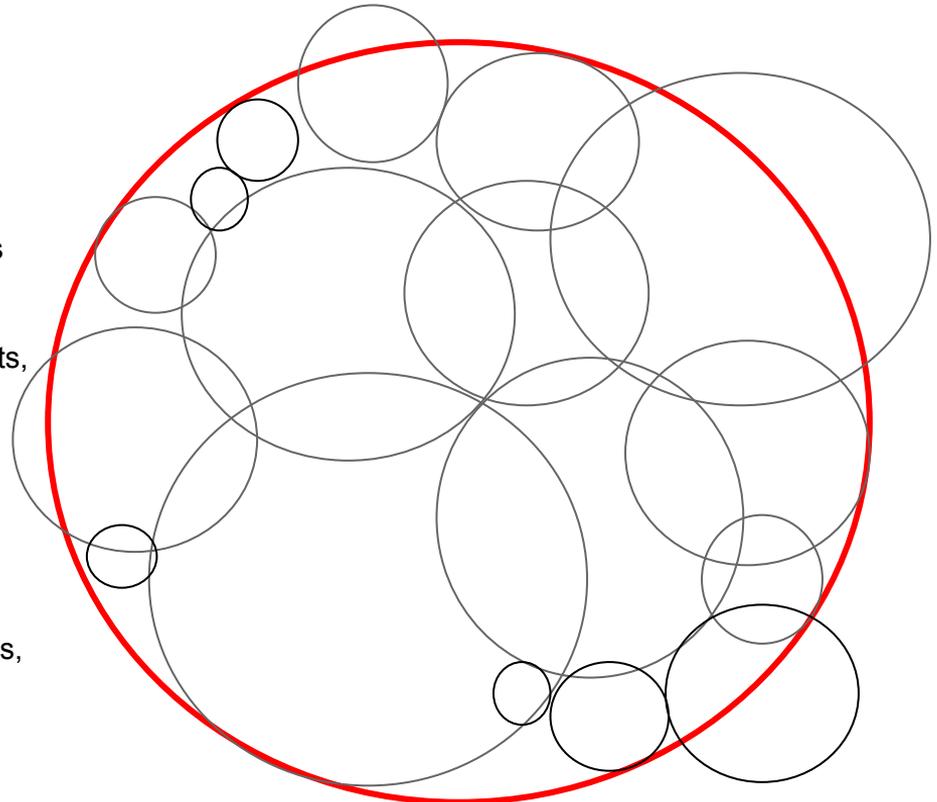
Main field is EAL, units of inquiry are experts and key workers

## Methods:

- secondary analysis of already existing data (documents, case files, literature, previous research)
- expert interviews
- guided interviews and focus groups with key persons
- field visits and photographs taken by workers

**Analysis:** Grounded Theory three step coding of all textual data

- 1) **open coding** to find categories of actions and attitudes, perspectives, coping strategies, considerations in practice
- 2) **selective coding** to identify types of categories (key concepts)
- 3) **selective coding** to identify patterns in practice and their historical and theoretical traditions



**Concept of EAL** = combination of several key concepts (perspectives, coping strategies, considerations, actions)

# Key Words

**Professionals:** inherent structures; implicit knowledge; practice theories; personal considerations; professional attitudes; actions; types; conceptions; experiences; conclusions; interpretations; perspectives; **practice wisdom**

**Nature:** key concepts; traditions; history of ideas\*; patterns; roots; practice; holistic view

**Research Interest:** knowledge base; theorizing; modelling; understanding; history of ideas

\* term used referring to Nohl (Niemeyer 1997) and Soydan (2012)

# Work in Progress

- 2nd draft of research plan with focus in research paradigm finished in December 2015 ⇒ agreed Grounded Theory as research paradigm
- Pretest-interviews with 1 expert and 1 key worker done  
development/improvement of interview guide to start interviews
- Interview structure and know how has to be developed
- Pedagogical theories and action theories need to be studied

# Some Open Questions

# Thank you for your attention!

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