Studying very young children qualitatively

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The Study

- Children’s TV viewing habits
- 18 children aged 4-7
- Semi-structured interviews
- Combined with projective technique (collages)
Advantages

- Children’s own perspective, rich descriptions and unexpected outcomes

- On the Showtime channel, I saw a movie where a guy had hooks in his arms, back, belly, mouth and everywhere. He tried to pull out those hooks, but he couldn’t /.../And then there was a woman and a key inside something... The woman had to pick up this key, but her hand caught fire.

_**She wanted to take the key?**_

Yes, she had to.

_**And her hand caught fire?**_

_**She was bleeding all over and she fell /.../(Girl, six years old).**_
Methodology

- Pre-visit, getting to know

- Semi-structured interviews
  - No need to be afraid of too difficult «why» questions
  - Closed questions are helpful for children as they introduce opened questions

- Collages (of all shows aired on previous month)
  - Reminds programmes
  - Catches limited attention
  - Fun
Shortcomings

- Exaggerations
- “Too” rich imagination
- Limited attention
- Wishing to give “right” answers
- Challenges of interpreting
Children’s vs teachers’ perspective

- Studying children’s own perspective lead to different results compared to teachers’ sayings.

- Teachers: children are disturbed by action movies, crime serials, news programmes.

- Children: enormous bananas, scary animals (e.g. a wolf), various fictional characters.
Questions

- How far can you go in trusting children’s own perspective?
- Which perspective to use if children’s and adult’s perspectives are different?
- Collages worked well to complement the interviews. Which creative ways have you used to study young children?
  - iPad game to do “structured” research?