

« Similar but different! »
**Cross-cultural analysis of the
application of the CLASS Toddler
in Quebec's home-based childcare**

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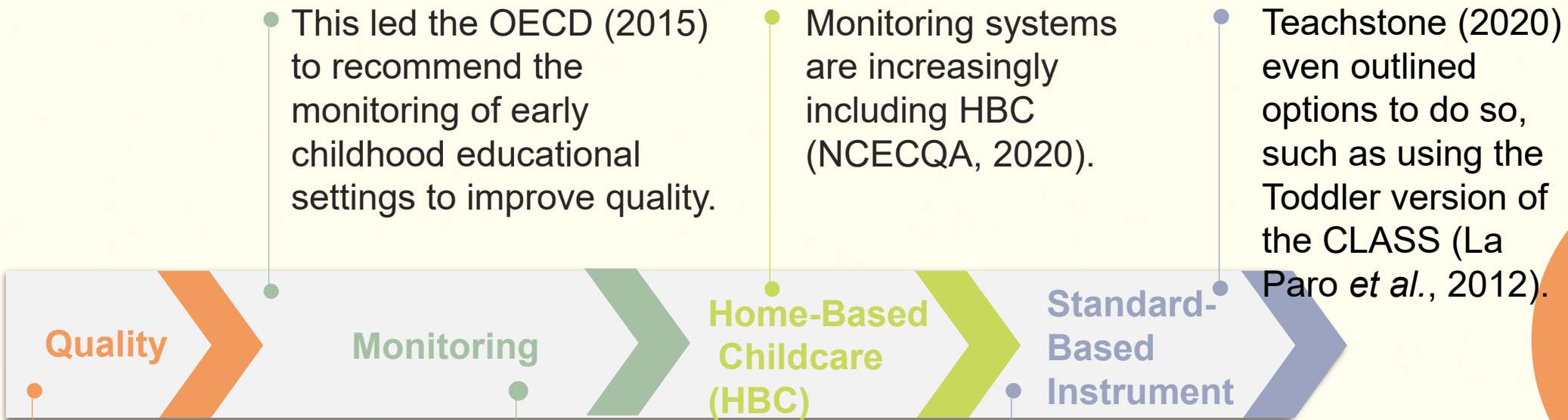
Context of the Study



- Home-Based Childcares (HBC)
- 8.85\$/per day
- 69,709 places (24% of places in ECEC)
- Setting is the provider's home
- Ratio
 - 1:6 (max. of 2 infants)
 - 2:9 (max. of 4 infants)
- Heterogeneous age group (multiage)
- Multitasks (cleaning, cooking, ...)



In Early Childhood Education, Quality Matters Most



This led the OECD (2015) to recommend the monitoring of early childhood educational settings to improve quality.

Monitoring systems are increasingly including HBC (NCECQA, 2020).

Teachstone (2020) even outlined options to do so, such as using the Toddler version of the CLASS (La Paro *et al.*, 2012).

High quality promotes children's development (e.g. Britto *et al.*, 2017). Quality of interactions is the strongest predictor of learning and development (Sabol *et al.*, 2013).

More than 66% of countries and jurisdictions conduct external monitoring of curriculum implementation (OECD, 2021).

HBC quality is assessed using standardized tools like the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta *et al.*, 2008).

How the CLASS tool applies in Quebec's HBC, moved out from its cultural matrix?



Critical Cultural Approach



A critical cultural approach to assessment tools ensures the consideration of underlying cultural complexities in childcare quality (Pastori & Pagani, 2017).

“CLASS tool is assumed to be a powerful highlighter of different cultural perspectives and a stimulus to activate ‘intercultural dialogue’ supported by and with the instrument itself.”
(p. 684; Pastori & Pagani, 2017)

Through this reflective dialogue, providers explicit their own definition of the quality of interactions that underlies their own practices (Delaney & Krepps, 2021; Pastori & Pagani, 2017).

Cultural Analysis of the CLASS (Pastori & Pagani, 2017)

Analyses the application of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, Toddler (CLASS-T; Laparo et al., 2012), in Quebec’s HBC.

The CLASS-T offers a common lens and framework for observing and comparing HBC providers’ perspectives regarding interactions that are conducive of children’s well-being, development and learning to the interactions assessed by the CLASS.



Methodology



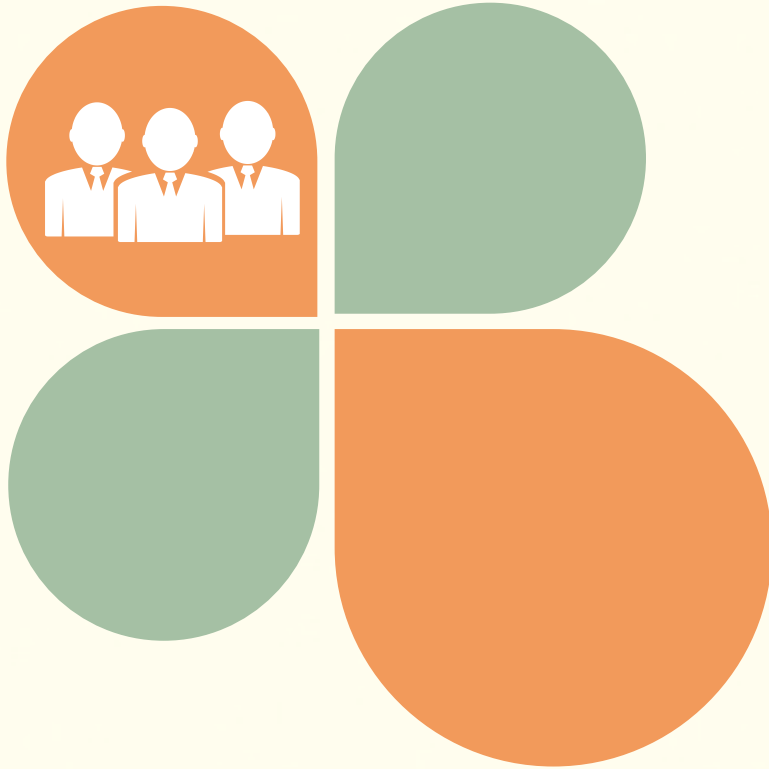
Participants

This study was conducted with 20 home-based childcare providers (Montreal, Canada).

Participants were recruited from a larger research project that observed quality of interactions with the CLASS Infant (Hamre *et al.*, 2014), Toddler (La Paro *et al.*, 2012) and Pre-K (Pianta *et al.*, 2008) in 38 HBC.

Ethical considerations

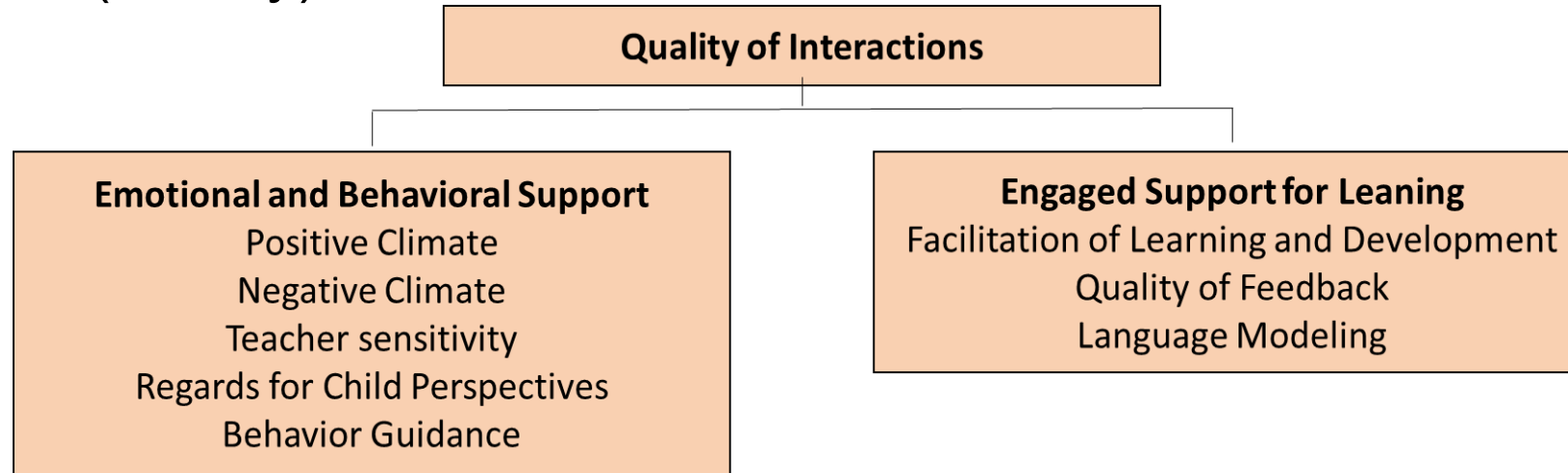
Providers were informed about the project and standard ethical considerations and signed a consent form agreeing to participate and to respect confidentiality.



Methodology

Morning
(3h)

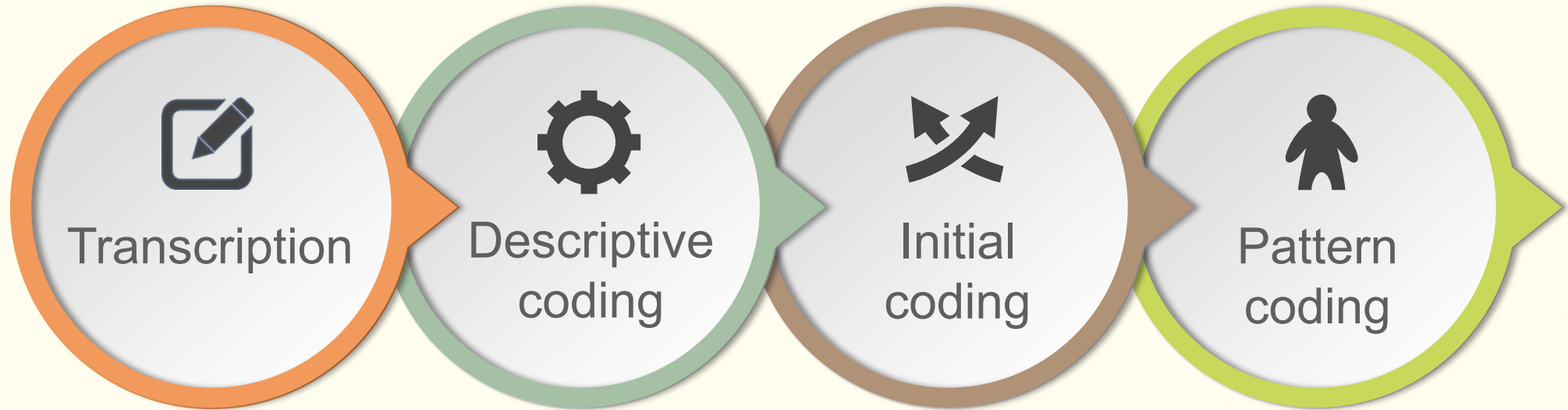
Participants received a CLASS-T Intro training facilitated by a certified trainer (Lemay).



PM
(2h)

Participants were divided into 2 focus groups of 10 providers. In each, facilitators (Lemay and Lemire) followed the same interview guide. They were questioned about their perspective on adult–child relationships and that offered by the CLASS-T (La Paro *et al.*, 2012).

Data Treatment and Analysis



Audio recordings transcribed into verbatim.

Read by another assistant for errors.

First cycle (Saldaña, 2021) in Word.

Highlighting statements related to dimensions and indicators from the CLASS.

First cycle (Saldaña, 2021) with Nvivo

Applying provisional and tentative codes

Second cycle (Saldaña, 2021) with Nvivo

Aggregating similar codes, to make themes emerge.



Continuities - Which dimensions/indicators in the CLASS-T seem familiar?
Within which did you find yourself most involved as an HBC provider?

Emotional and Behavioral Support



Positive Climate

"If you don't have a positive climate, you don't have anything, you don't have the basis, you can't create a bond with the child to be able to do everything else."
(HBC-01)



Negative Climate

"I think it can contribute to a somewhat negative climate if the HBC is exhausted, tired, and not able to do everything, if she doesn't take the time or she doesn't have the time to take care of herself [...]."
(HBC-33)



Teacher Sensitivity

"As an HBC provider, it's a great strength, we can be sensitive, to listen because we have the children for a long time, we know the parents."
(HBC-22)



Regard for Child Perspectives (RCP)

"RCP is very important to me, I'm very flexible, I listen to observations, often my plan falls through because even though I've planned, I go with the children, their interest."
(HBC-23)



Behavior Guidance

"Behavioral guidance is really about my expectations of the children, what I tell them, how clear I am."
(HBC-30)

Engaged Support for Learning



Facilitation of Learning and Development

“We have to really observe what the child needs in order to help and support them in their learning.” (HBC-09)



Quality of Feedback

“We already do a lot of feedback too, by asking ourselves, you know, we often have lunchtime chats and "what did you do this morning, your construction, did it finally work? Did you manage to get a car into your garage?", [...] we do a lot of feedback on that, to say what went well, what we didn't like so much.” (HBC-08)



Language Modeling

“Being a model for them, talking, narrating all our actions as we do things [...] we get them talking, we get them chatting, we make links with their personal lives, we give feedback and we talk a lot, we tell stories, we play search and find [...].” (HBC-08)

Disagreements - What dimensions/indicators would you eliminate?

HBC providers expressed no disagreement about the 8 dimensions and their indicators of the CLASS-T (La Paro *et al.*, 2012).

Complementary

“ I wouldn't take anything away, because if they're there, it's because they're all useful and complementary. I don't think one can go without the other [...].
(HBC-43)

Important aspects regardless of educational context

“ Everything that's there is hyper-relevant, it's super-important for children, whether they're in an HBC environment or in a day-care center. “
(HBC-01)



Differences - What dimensions/indicators do you perceive as more exposed to a different interpretation? Are there any that seem important to you, but that you experience differently as an HBC provider?

HBC providers expressed one main difference with the CLASS-T (La Paro *et al.*, 2012).

Long term relations to children and families

Stability
Extensive knowledge of family history
Perceived as family member
Community involvement



Other HBC specificities

Multiage group
Multiples tasks
In own home
Decision making
Each their own « colors »

Missing elements - What dimensions/ indicators would you add (i.e. what dimensions/ indicators are missing that you consider key as an HBC provider)?

HBC providers stressed five missing elements from the CLASS-T (La Paro *et al.*, 2012).

Environment

The CLASS-T dimension descriptions do not consider the layout of the premises.

Relations to families

Importance of partnership with parents.

“ I think that this is a particularly different within HBC, so I'd add another domain that would have to do with parental involvement.” (HBC-34)

Multiage group

Interacting with multiple age group all at once.

Learning from peers.

Multiple tasks

Demonstrating adaptability

Adding tasks through interaction

Provider's reflective practice

“ Knowledge of one's weakness and strength. ”
(HBC-36)

Discussion



At first, providers agreed that the CLASS-T dimensions/indicators applied in Quebec's HBC. Then, while not pointing out disagreements, they highlighted differences and missing elements.

Methodological reflections on the use of the CLASS-T in Quebec's HBC

Valuable resource and its application could offer a **common basis and a shared language** to compare ECEC services and to address cross-cultural continuities.

But some dissonant elements do not seem to reflect the meanings assigned to interactions of quality in the context of Quebec's HBC.

So, a **critical reflection on the CLASS** cultural consistency and ecological validity when applied outside American childcare centers seems important.

Implications

In the process of adapting-validating the CLASS and assessing with it in HBC, providers should be involved in an intercultural dialogue supported by and with the tool to allow for a better understanding on its application to measure quality of interactions, as we have done in this small-scale study.



Discussion



Theoretical reflection on 'universal vs. culture-related' views on education and quality

Applying the CLASS tool without considering the underlying complexities of the HBC **poses the risk** of assessing quality of interactions based on dimensions\indicators that do not belong to HBC and can't fully capture their quality.

“This reduces the CLASS tool and the assessment process to a sort of screen that obscures the meanings that emerge from contexts” (p. 693, Pastori and Pagani, 2017).

Instead of being a tool to measure quality of interactions, **the CLASS become the definition of what quality of interactions is** (Vandenbroeck & Peeters, 2014).

Implications

No extreme relativistic position is necessary. An hybrid approach (Lemay et al., 2017) would mean that: “Some universal criteria may have different local interpretations and implementations (Rogoff, 2003)” (p.693, Pastori & Pagani, 2017).



Conclusion



Even though the CLASS-T (La Paro *et al.*, 2012) seems to capture quality of interactions in Quebec's HBC, monitoring systems should be attentive to the specificities of this educational culture as shared by providers.

A critical cultural approach encourages to think about adapting standard-based assessment tools to different cultural contexts, beyond their mere translation and statistical confirmation of their factorial structure.





Qualité des
contextes éducatifs
de la petite enfance

THANK YOU!

Looking forward for further discussions with you.

If you have questions or comments : lemay.lise@uqam.ca



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