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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

**AUGUST 16-18, 2017**

**LOCATION:** HARVARD UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, CAMBRIDGE, MA, USA

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*Proceedings Book*

*ISSN: 2146-7366*

*Volume 1*

*Editor*

*Prof.Dr. Aytekin İŞMAN*

*Published Date: 03.12.2017*

## **A CRITICAL CULTURAL APPROACH TO STANDARDIZED EVALUATION TOOLS. A STUDY ON CLASS THROUGH THE VOICES OF ITALIAN, PORTUGUESE AND DUTCH ECEC TEACHERS**

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The international application of standard-based measures to assess ECEC quality raises crucial questions concerning cultural consistency and ecological validity of instruments migrating out of their ‘cultural cradle’ (Pastori & Pagani, forthcoming). However, the topic has received only marginal attention in the literature (Ishimine & Tayler, 2014). This presentation, which aims to address this gap, focuses on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta et al., 2008). It presents the research design and findings from an international qualitative three-country study (Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands) set within the European project CARE. National ECEC experts and teachers have been involved in focused discussions, using CLASS as a lens and frame to observe and compare the perspective of the tool to the local-cultural and pedagogical perspective. Results offer interesting insights into a methodological and theoretical reflection on ‘universal vs culture-related’ views on education and quality, and on the international use of standardized evaluation tools.