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through research*

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# **Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference**

**27 – 29 November 2024**

**Education in a Fragile World:**

**Past, Present and Future**

**University of Dundee**

## Welcome from the SERA President

On behalf of the SERA Executive and the Conference sub-committee, I extend a very warm welcome to the SERA Conference 2024 hosted by the School of Education at the University of Dundee on the theme of **'Education in a Fragile World: Past, Present and Future'**.

This year marks a milestone for SERA as we celebrate our 50th anniversary of supporting educational research in Scotland. The 2024 conference theme was selected to allow us to reflect on our primary mission to improve education through promoting and sustaining high-quality educational research while being mindful of the fragile world we live in. As we move through the three days of the conference, we will pause to consider the past, present and future of SERA.

On the Wednesday morning from 10.30 – 11.00 am we will open with a panel who will consider the ways in which SERA has successfully created international partnerships, contributed to building our networks and publications. Following on from this panel, our first keynote, sponsored by the Scottish Education Review, Professor Ria Dunkley will share the work she has been doing in the field of environmental education through her lecture titled, **'Facing the Anthropocene: Community Resilience and Environmental Pedagogy for a Fragile Planet'**. To close the first day we would like to invite all delegates to join us on Wednesday evening at Dundee City Hall for a civic reception, this will allow us to thank our hosts, socialise and celebrate.

On Thursday, our second keynote Professor John Krejsler will continue to explore our conference theme via his lecture titled, **'The Choice: Provincializing Europe or engaging in activist dialogue with Otherness!'**. The day will end with our AGM, where we will consider the present by opening a dialogue with members to consider the next fifty years and mark the occasion with a toast. The evening will conclude with our conference dinner at the Malmaison Hotel in Dundee.

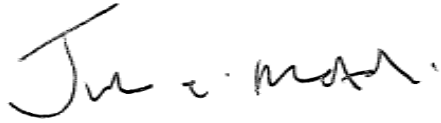
On the final day we will close the conference with a panel that focuses on the future by bringing together the presidents of our sister associations (ESAI and BERA) to join with SERA representatives to consider our next steps as an academic community.

Our annual conference is only possible through the dedication of a committed team. Special thanks to Dr Paul McMillan for chairing our Conference Sub Committee, to Doctors Donna Dey, Anna Robb and Derek Robertson for hosting the event at Dundee, and to Caroline Maloney, Dr Ian Matheson, and Dr John Queen for their invaluable behind-the-scenes work.

The conversations and the work of SERA continue well beyond the conference. Stay connected with us on social media, using the hashtag #seraconf24. Follow us on X, @sera\_conference and Facebook. If you are not yet a member of SERA, consider joining us through our website (<https://www.sera.ac.uk/about/joining-sera/>) or speak to us at our Conference Desk.

All in all, a very exciting set of keynote presentations and papers await us in Dundee! Whether this is your first SERA conference, or you are returning, we look forward to your contribution across the three days.

Yours with academic kindness which we need to inhabit this fragile world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie E. McAdam". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Julie E McAdam  
SERA President

**Keynote 1**  
**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**1100-1200**

**Professor Ria Dunkley**



Ria Dunkley is a Professor of Environmental Pedagogy at the University of Glasgow, where she creates pathways for meaningful engagement with climate action and sustainability. Her work centres on *ecopedagogy*—a people-focused approach that unites communities, educators, and researchers in addressing the urgent challenges of the Anthropocene, our current era of human-driven environmental change. Through the GALLANT project, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, Ria collaborates with Glasgow communities to develop sustainable, locally grounded solutions. As co-chair of the CIVIS Hub for Climate, Energy, and Environment, she partners with European universities to strengthen climate education and resilience. An advocate of community-led science, Ria is committed to empowering individuals and communities to contribute to a sustainable future. She also serves as an Associate Director of the Centre for Sustainable Solutions and welcomes collaborative efforts toward inclusive, practical climate action.

**Facing the Anthropocene: Community Resilience and Environmental Pedagogy for a Fragile Planet**

In this keynote, Ria will examine the critical role of education in addressing environmental fragility in the Anthropocene — an era in which human activity has become the dominant influence on Earth’s systems (Steffen, Crutzen, and McNeill, 2016). As societies encounter escalating challenges such as climate change, species extinction, and ecosystem degradation, Ria will argue that *ecopedagogy* - a pedagogy of the earth (Gadotti, 2002)—is essential. *Ecopedagogy*, an approach that focuses on raising consciousness about ecological issues and the ethical responsibilities of humans as planetary citizens, can help communities develop the knowledge and motivation to respond meaningfully to these crises.

Ria will trace the evolution of environmental pedagogy —teaching methods and practices that prioritise environmental understanding—and explore its influence on contemporary community engagement initiatives. She will introduce the concept of "ecological kin-making" (Haraway, 2016), a framework encouraging connections across species and ecosystems to foster empathy and a sense of care for the natural world. Ecological kin-making moves beyond

traditional environmental understanding, suggesting a relational connection and fostering a sense of kinship and responsibility toward all living beings. Through examples from her work with diverse groups, including families, children, and young people, Ria will illustrate that ecological kin-making is a critical component of ecopedagogy. She will discuss how fostering such connections can contribute to ecological consciousness, building on Paulo Freire's (1970) essential concept of consciousness — an awareness of social and political injustices. Ecological consciousness extends this idea to the environmental realm, promoting awareness of the ecological impact of individual and community actions and the value of shared responsibility.

A vital part of this approach, Ria will argue, is the need for ecopedagogues to engage across disciplines and beyond academia to play their part in addressing environmental crises. Given their skills in connecting theory to meaningful action, ecopedagogues are especially well-positioned to foster dialogue that brings together the strengths of varied perspectives. By linking theory with practical application, ecopedagogues may be well-placed to foster dialogue that draws on varied perspectives. The more ecopedagogues engage across disciplines, the broader and more resonant their impact, as diverse viewpoints can resonate more widely and inspire wider participation. Ria will discuss approaches that bridge environmental science and ecopedagogy, illustrating how they can jointly create pathways for resilience in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss. Drawing on community-centred projects like [GALLANT](#) (Glasgow as a Living Lab, Accelerating Novel Transformation), which integrates community science to support sustainable urban practices, she will outline strategies for fostering resilience within communities in the Anthropocene.

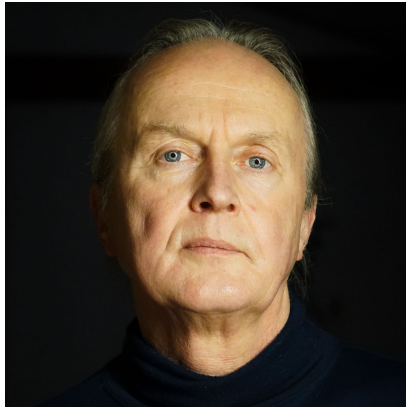
This keynote will close with suggestions for embedding community-focused environmental pedagogy across educational settings, whether formal, informal, or community-led. By inviting the audience to reflect on the evolving need for education in addressing global environmental challenges, Ria will suggest that an adaptive, reflective approach can help cultivate resilience, ecological awareness, and engagement in response to our increasingly fragile world.

## References

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**Keynote 2**  
**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**1100-1200**

**Professor John Benedicto Krejsler**



**John Benedicto Krejsler** is an associate professor at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University. His research on new conditions for (pre-)school and teacher education – in a transnational perspective - brings together education policy and new conditions for producing 'truths' & social technologies. In addition, he works continuously with theory development (drawing on e.g. Deleuze, Baudrillard and others). His current research interests include the question of the impact of a multipolar world on education, with the ambition to drawing on Indian, Chinese and Africana philosophy in a postcolonial perspective. He was President of the *Nordic Educational Research Association* (2019-22) and council member of the *European Educational Research Association* (2009-18 + 2022-24). He was a Visiting Professor at Kristianstad University (Sweden) (2009-2010) at UCLA (2015-2016) and University of Strathclyde UK (2023).

**The Choice: *Provincializing Europe* or engaging in activist dialogue with Otherness!**

The theme 'Education in a fragile world: Past, present and future' is - I truly believe - a great opportunity to reflect upon and discuss themes greatly impacting education in times when the world is becoming multipolar. The latter happens at a speed that exceeds the mental capacities in a European continent that had become too used to defining 'the world order', even in terms of 'universal values' for centuries!

One urgent issue that comes to my mind thus relates to how we can push for more constructively activist engagement with the Other in a fragile world. This I see as a precondition, *sine qua non*, to avoid provincializing a Europe that is rapidly shrinking in geopolitical influence. This requires serious and more systematic engagement with strong traditions (cosmologies, ontologies and epistemologies) in other parts of the world that have often been neglected. This includes e.g. India, China and the exciting and rich emerging tradition of Africana philosophy and thinking and well as a host of other traditions. In my view this could potentially revitalize rich traditions in European education/Bildung and philosophy, thus contributing to make them more fit for a world that is rapidly becoming multi-polar.

This poses, however, an enormous educational challenge. It requires alternative ways of dealing with the othering of the Other that a dominant continent has developed through its

centuries long global hegemony. Overt as well as covert 'global imperial ambitions' have visibly been coming to a close for a while, although realization of this turn of events still needs to materialize in European mainstream culture, including education and curricula. As an example, curricula in philosophy are still shamelessly Eurocentric!

These reflections thus raise troubling questions about whether concepts of 'universalism', 'individual rights', 'democracy' and so forth were really that universal after all... Maybe they should - more modestly - be reconsidered as ideas from a particular cultural sphere that need sincere engagement with other traditions in a more truly cosmopolitan ambition... This - on the other hand - is not in any way an argument for saying that all ideas in all cultures are equally good and worthwhile pursuing here... or maybe not even there!.... ....

In other words, how could education contribute to making the world less fragile by facilitating an activist – difference-affirming - dialogue with the Other, respecting the otherness of the Other, without undermining key values that characterize progressive struggles in Europe – across time and the diversity that this continent also represents.....

## Outline Programme

### Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

1000–1100	Registration
1030-1100	SERA 50 Breakfast Panel
1100-1200	Scottish Educational Review Keynote: Professor Ria Dunkley
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1400	Session 1
1400-1500	Session 2
1500-1530	Afternoon break
1530-1630	Session 3
1630-1730	Networks meet together
1900	Dundee Civic Reception – City Chambers

### Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

0900–0930	Registration
0930-1030	Session 1
1030-1100	Morning break
1100-1200	Keynote: Professor John Benedicto Krejsler
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1400	Session 2
1400-1500	Session 3
1500-1530	Afternoon break
1530-1630	Session 4
1630-1730	AGM discussion and post-AGM SERA 50 toast
1930	Conference dinner

### Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023

0900-0930	Registration
0930-1030	Session 1
1030-1100	Morning break
1100-1200	Session 2
1200-1300	Lunch
1300-1400	Session 3
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# Papers

001

## What do working-class students *really* need to succeed in higher education?

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**Keywords:** Student support, widening participation, low socio-economic, listening rooms

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Retention has become an increasing area of concern for HEIs in recent years. Where previously universities were judged on the employment destinations of their graduates, non-continuation rates are now being focused on (Hillman, 2021). Recent issues which have compounded the need for universities to focus on student retention include the Covid-19 pandemic (Aspinall, 2021) and the cost of living crisis (UK Parliament, 2024), furthering the pressures on many students.

Scott (2020, p14), Scotland's Commissioner for Fair Access, highlights that certain student groups are of particular concern, such as students from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, and it may be that such students require a specific type of support within HE (Ardis, 2020). Despite the barriers to entering higher education being reduced for such students through the widening participation (WP) strategy, following their admittance to university it is often found that little else is done to support their transition into and through university (Tight, 2020).

The aim of this Professional Doctorate research is to improve the student-supporting systems and strategies currently in place within HE establishments, with a particular focus on students from low socioeconomic areas. The study draws upon the experiences and opinions of existing HE students who self-identify as being from working-class backgrounds and the first in their family to go to university. A Listening Rooms approach (Parkin and Heron, 2022) was implemented where, rather than students being interviewed by an academic, they brought along a friend to have a discussion around the topic, without the presence of the researcher.

Please note that this research is currently underway and will be completed in October, so findings and conclusions will be added prior to the conference.

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**The problem in the 'middle': the misalignment of policy and practice for the career-long professional learning of teachers in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** Professional learning, education policy, policy-practice misalignment

**Theme:** Policy and Education

Previous research (Farmer & Childs, 2022) indicated a potential gap between professional learning policy and good practice and the lived experiences of teachers. This study set out to determine the extent of this policy-practice gap and to investigate the reasons behind it.

Using a case-study approach (Yin, 2018), this study gathers evidence from three sources: a systematic analysis of national policy documents relating to teacher professional learning, physics teachers across the north of Scotland, and school and system leaders in Scotland. The experiences of teachers are analysed against a theoretical framework based on Kennedy's models of professional learning (Kennedy, 2014), Timperley's principles of effective professional learning (Timperley, 2008), and a model of professional learning synthesised from models of professional growth and enquiry-based professional learning (Bryk et al., 2010; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Cobb et al., 2018; Rowland, 2013). A pragmatic, interpretive, abductive approach is used to analyse data. A comparison is made to ascertain how well aligned professional learning practice is with the policy as stated in the documents and with the literature on teacher professional learning.

The study finds that most of the teacher professional learning does not meet the needs of teachers well, is transmissive rather than transformative, and there is little evidence of collaborative enquiry-based approaches or enquiry-as-stance. There is a general policy misalignment, especially through the meso-level of the Scottish education system which is dominated by cultures of managerial rather than transformative professionalism. Recommendations are made as to how to better align policy and practice.

003

**Promoting Student Well-being and Global Connections: Strategies for Enhancing Collaborative Online International Learning, lessons learned for the Post-Covid era**

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**Keywords:** Internationalisations at home, Internationalisation at distance, human connection, student wellbeing

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

**Aim**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted lives globally, halting international travel and traditional methods of internationalisation in higher education (HE). This highlighted the urgent need for innovative approaches to maintain global connections within academia. Interest in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) surged, becoming pivotal for research and teaching. This study investigates the effectiveness of a COIL intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic in promoting human connection and enhancing student well-being, providing insights for future COIL initiatives.

**Methodology**

Using qualitative research methods through focus groups and questionnaires, this study examines the relationship between COIL interventions and digital empathy, digital connectedness, and digital presence. By exploring Internationalisation at Home (IaH) and Internationalisation at a Distance (IaD), the research analyses COIL's influence on student connectedness and well-being during the pandemic. The study spans two years with distinct phases, including complete lockdown and partial reopening in the UK while Italy remained restricted. It engaged students from the University of Glasgow on ITE programmes and University Niccolò Cusano, Italy, in educational exchanges via Zoom sessions.

**Main findings**

The study highlights the importance of digital connectedness in higher education (HE) and global landscapes (Naicker et al., 2021). While universities adopt technology for teaching, it reshapes human interactions. Practitioners must be creative with IT platforms to ensure students feel safe and connected (Hehir et al., 2021). Practicing digital empathy enhances online conversations, reducing misunderstandings and strengthening communities (Sperandeo et al., 2021; Terry and Cain, 2016). This involves active listening and a genuine desire to connect with others on a human level, even without face-to-face cues.

004

## **Contributing to fragility on university campus: the damaging idea that words cause harm**

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**Keywords:** hate, harm, safety, censorship

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The idea that speech is hateful and can cause harm is a relatively recent one that has implications for how students and faculty navigate contentious issues in the university classroom.

### **Aim**

This paper aims to trace some of the background to the belief that words cause harm through the emergence of critical social justice ideas and the internalisation of those ideas by students and faculty. The paper also aims to illustrate the impact of this development by introducing a specific finding from a research study with social work students in Scotland.

### **Method**

Social work students across Scotland were surveyed in respect to whether they felt reluctant to speak about contentious issues in the classroom. They were asked about topics they felt reluctant to discuss and what they perceived the consequences would be.

### **Main findings**

The research showed that 67% of students felt reluctant to speak about at least one contentious issue, the main reason being the perception that other students would criticise them. The second top reason, however, was that the students felt they might cause psychological or emotional harm to others in the class.

### **Conclusion**

At first glance, worry about causing harm may seem a benign and even caring student response. However, the idea that viewpoints one disagrees with can cause actual harm might in itself be deleterious to healthy emotional and mental functioning. Believing that words cause harm also erodes the healthy debate vital to the proper functioning and telos of a university.

005

**Assessing the Relevance of a Course Evaluation Model: Fostering Engaged Learning in Preservice Teachers through Flipped Classroom Experiences**

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**Keywords:** Course evaluation, flipped learning, higher education, illuminative evaluation model

**Theme:** Digital Learning

Parlett and Hamilton's (1972) Illuminative Evaluation Model (IEM) was adopted to investigate the course evaluation in flipped learning environments which allows the infusion of new technologies. The aim of this study was to identify an existing recognized course evaluation method that can be used by flipped practitioners in higher education institutions. Through an integrated data collection, including teaching videos, interviews from 17 preservice teachers, and course materials were gathered, and analyzed in an educational sciences course. Both quantitative and qualitative data showed that the IEM can serve as a catalyst for broader conversations on refining instructional strategies, advocating for a more systematic and comprehensive approach to course evaluation in educational settings. The relationships between the learning milieu and instructional systems demonstrate how the IEM helps uncover the design of a flipped course and further offer a suitable model for flipped course evaluations. While the research context is Türkiye, the main findings of the study can be valuable both for European contexts as well as for international context considering that the adaptability of this model worldwide showcases its potential to serve as a robust tool for evaluating flipped courses. An actionable model for designing and assessing flipped instructional frameworks pave the way for educators to enhance their course designs through a structured evaluation process.

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**Elective Home Education for Young Learners in the UK: The Untold Stories**

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**Keywords:** home education, UK, portraiture, life course, young learners

**Theme:** Community education and learning

Recent trends indicate a significant increase in the number of families opting for home education, yet research dedicated to this area remains limited. Moreover, there is a notable scarcity of studies focusing on the lived experiences of home educating families of young children. This study is based on five portraits featuring families in the UK. In order to reflect participants' changing status and the staged processes undertaken, the research developed a new conceptual framework combining the portraiture approach and the life course theory. Semi-structured interviews, observations of home education environments, and curriculum document analysis were used to gain insights into daily routines, curriculum, pedagogy, home education models employed, and children's participation in learning activities outside the home.

The study's findings revealed diverse motivations driving parents to choose home education. These include concerns about the traditional education system, a preference for personalised learning, and personal lifestyle choices and ideologies. The implications of this study extend to both practice and research in children's development, offering insights that can facilitate collaboration between homes and schools, as well as partnerships between families and professional educators.

The study contributes to the existing literature by exploring what home educators perceive to be conducive to parent-led education. This exploration aims to enhance the quality of home education environments and further contribute to the development of home-educated students. As more families choose home education, these insights become pertinent and beneficial not only to the home education movement but also to education policy in the UK and beyond.



007

**Physicists are key to ensuring our future in a fragile world but where will they come from if no one teaches them Physics?**

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**Keywords:** Physics Education, Teacher Recruitment

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Physicists, with their very specific skills sets, in understanding and analysing problems play a key role in positing solutions to such challenges as climate change and sustainability. Inspiring and enabling young adults to pursue a career in Physics predominantly begins with high quality physics teachers in secondary schools. There is however, consistent under recruitment into Physics teacher education courses across Scotland. One important pool of potential recruits into these courses is undergraduate Physics students. This research used a case study methodology to explore the views held by undergraduate Physics students at the University of Glasgow towards physics teaching as a career. The research aimed to develop a better understanding of why students may or may not consider pursuing a career in Physics teaching in order to inform strategies that may be used to increase recruitment. Analysis of data collected through an online survey (N=323) and in-person focus groups revealed four emerging themes: relative pay to workload ratios, anxiety around teenage classroom behaviours, lack of teaching experience and lack of career awareness.

008

**Modernism, Modernity and Contemporality: Conceptualising the Modern in Scotland's Modern Studies**

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**Keywords:** Modernity, Modern Studies, Curriculum, epistemology

**Theme:** Curriculum

This paper offers an analysis of Modern Studies, a school subject unique to Scotland. First taught in the 1960s, Modern Studies was originally conceived as an option for students discontinuing their studies in history and geography. Since then, though, Modern Studies has carved a distinctive curricular niche and has become one of the most popular subjects in Scottish schools.

Despite this popularity - or, perhaps, because of it – Modern Studies has not received the same critical analysis as other subjects in the school curriculum. The subject remains one defined by its content (political literacy, social issues, and international relations), rather than by its disciplinary or epistemic underpinnings.

This paper uses Toulmin's (1990) conception of modernity to analyse course documents and examination papers. This analysis suggests that Modern Studies was imbued from the start with three foundational assumptions. First, a positivist ontology that believes certainty about the social world is possible. Second, a belief that Weberian means-end rationality is the most appropriate approach to evaluating and making sense of social relations. Third, a telos which positions liberal capitalism as the inevitable end-state of human affairs. Modern Studies is, therefore, not just 'modern' but modernist. The paper explores and develops these critiques with reference to specific examination questions from a single year (2019) and concludes by proposing a programme for renewing and reinvigorating the subject in an age of epistemic uncertainty and global environmental crises.

009

## **Work and private life balance of early career female teachers in Icelandic compulsory schools**

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**Keywords:** Teachers' working hours, teachers' private time, early career teachers, female teachers

**Theme:** Policy and Education/Professional and Vocational Learning

Much research has been done on work-related teacher burnout and retention. Less work has been done on the strategies teachers use to balance their working hours and private time.

### **Background**

Much research has been done on work-related teacher burnout and retention. Less work has been done on the strategies teachers use to balance their working hours and private time.

### **Method**

This presentation relies on serial interviews, four times during two school years (2021–2023), from eleven early career teachers in Icelandic compulsory schools. Aim: The aim is to identify how the teachers dealt with finding the balance between work life and private life. Main findings: We identified four themes: 1) The responsibility placed upon the teachers while working, both in the classroom and during preparation times and meetings. In some of the instances, teachers in their fourth year had become the most experienced teachers. 2) The teachers tried not to bring tasks from work to home in the evenings or the weekends. Among these strategies was to work longer hours, such as that the spouse picked up the child from preschool or work even to 6 or 7 pm while not a parent. 3) Develop calmness and other survival skills. One of the interviewees argued that you must be fair to yourself – not demanding immediately that you are on top of everything. 4) Find ways to work at home that do not intrude upon the family life, such as not to work on these tasks until the children are asleep, or find times when other family members do not need you.

### **Conclusions**

We need to consider what kind of working environment is offered for early career teachers.

**Multidisciplinary Collaboration and Inclusive Education of Children with Complex Additional Support Needs in a Scottish Primary School**

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**Keywords:** inclusion, multidisciplinary collaboration, critical communicative methodology, complex additional support needs

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion/ innovative research methods

There is a consensus among researchers and policy makers about the usefulness of multidisciplinary collaboration for children with additional support needs, their parents, and the educators and professionals around them. However, there is a significant gap between the policy and practice of multidisciplinary collaboration, especially regarding the collaborative practices between different agencies and its impact on inclusive education. The aim of this research is to develop understanding on how collaboration among professionals, educators and parents can support the social and educational inclusion of children with complex additional needs in primary/preschool settings in Scotland. This paper shares one part of this work – an exploratory case study of multidisciplinary collaboration for the inclusive education of one child in one primary school. Critical Communicative Methodology (CCM) was used to generate findings using communicative observations and reflective conversations. In line with the principles of CCM new knowledge was constructed through egalitarian dialogue between the researcher and the participants. Findings further knowledge on the features of multidisciplinary collaboration that facilitate the child's inclusion in the mainstream class; features of multidisciplinary collaboration that impede the child's inclusion in the mainstream class; and ways to overcome the barriers. CCM will be discussed as an alternative approach to understand and transform participants' social reality.

011

## **Democratising the Benefits of International Education**

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**Keywords:** Internationalisation, Graduate Attributes, Home Students, Higher Education

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

This paper explores whether the benefits of internationalisation are being made available to all students or reserved for a specific few. An effectively internationalised HE experience can provide students with an opportunity to develop graduate attributes such as intercultural competence, global awareness, multilingualism, and global citizenship.

Moving the focus away from International Students, who tend to already be well-travelled, multilingual, and academically successful in their own national system, most students around the world study in their own home country (around 98%), and little is known about their opportunity to access the desirable graduate outcomes of internationalisation through their curriculum.

A systematic literature review was carried out to examine the intersection between 'Home' students and internationalisation. It was found that this intersection is poorly represented; understandings of internationalisation are culturally contextual, and policy success is not reported. How to quantify success in this area was a significant gap in the literature, triggering a further review into how such graduate attributes could possibly be measured.

It was found that while some means of measuring internationalisation outcomes exist, they are designed for those travelling abroad, either for study or business; they do not relate well to those gaining their internationalised perspectives through curricula and pedagogies. A research design for developing a means to measure outcomes for all students, as opposed to privileging international students, is presented. It is questioned whether Home students can gain the benefits without overseas mobility, and whether equality is a realistic goal.

012

## **A Survey of Gender Diverse Students' Experiences with Curricula in Game Design Programs in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** Game design, gender, inclusion, curriculum

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### **Aims**

This project aims to address the lack of gender-diverse (transgender, non-binary, intersex, gender non-conforming etc.) representation in games design educational programs and their related course materials (e.g. readings, games or films), with the goal of increasing the inclusivity of these programs and therefore the level of engagement and sense of belonging among these students. The overall research question of this work is: *to what extent do gender-diverse students of game design and related subjects feel represented and included in their curricula?*

### **Methods**

An online survey was used to gather information from current game design or related subject's students about their curricula experiences. The survey asked about their experiences in Likert questions and invited free-text responses.

### **Main Findings**

Participant responses generally indicated: a need for more inclusive course materials; a need for more representation of gender-diverse people in games course materials; and that their tutors and lecturers were generally aware of the issues affecting gender diverse students

Negative experiences were reported regarding 3d modelling classes, due to the traditionally gendered nature of discussion around anatomy when teaching character design.

A key theme emerging from responses was that participants' felt a distinct lack of queer diversity as a whole in the games industry and that diverse voices should be platformed in games design education to address this problem from a bottom-up approach.

### **Next Steps**

From this research, the key areas for future work are to: continue to collect data to widen the sample size; investigate how these issues fit into the wider landscape of higher education equality, diversity and inclusion issues; and to engage with public bodies that focus on LGBTQ+ wellbeing in Scotland to address how some of the issues that have arisen can be addressed.

013

## **Flourishing or Floundering? Exploring Ukrainian Elementary Schoolteacher Understandings of Their Professional Experience**

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**Keywords:** Post-Soviet, Ukraine, neoliberal education reform, professional learning

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

### **Aims**

An empirical study investigating Ukrainian elementary schoolteacher perceptions of their professional flourishing within the current education environment in Ukraine. Involving 12 participants, it explored the relationship between professional and personal flourishing, attending to the contexts of state and society within conditions of ongoing neoliberal education reform since Ukraine's independence. Teachers opined about the relationship between professional flourishing and continuous professional development, and a preferred educational future for the evolving democracy of Ukraine under the impact of both the worldwide coronavirus pandemic and the Russian invasion in 2022.

### **Methods**

A qualitative interpretivist/constructivist study employing narrative inquiry, template analysis, and virtual data collection through semi-structured group discussions, visual data instruments, and semi-structured individual interviews.

### **Main Findings**

Capacity-building elements for professional flourishing:

- Perseverance – a courageous disposition, sustained heutagogical approaches, and an outward stance, forming a synergistic personal/professional defence against uncertainty and danger.
- Innovation – principled infidelity when departing from traditional curricula, methods, philosophies, and policies; braving change agency; and early adoption of Education 4.0 technologies through entangled pedagogies.
- Identity cultivation – as caring nation-builders, envisioning a path forward for learners that does not sacrifice cultural identity in the name of Europeanization and globalization; developing diverse forms of professional community where professional identity can be safely interrogated and finessed for the benefit of self and society; and modeling democratic principles.

014

## Digital teacher education in Ghana: Opportunities and Challenges

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**Keywords:** Flipped classroom approach, ICT-based education, teacher education, inquiry-based learning, SWOT analysis

**Theme:** Digital Learning

Teacher education programs have incorporated ICT to adopt student-centred learning pedagogies. This study examined teacher educators and student teachers perspectives on the integration of ICT to adopt the digital learning approach called flipped classroom (FCA). Data were collected through questionnaires, focus group and participant interviews and thematic analysis used to analyse the data. The FCA was found to enable educators to use time efficiently, supporting interactive and collaborative knowledge construction among students, instructors, and peers. However, the adoption of FCA is weakened by the technological competencies of educators and students. Additionally, the use of ICT is threatened by inadequate infrastructure and rigid working conditions in schools. Continuous professional development training could provide opportunities for educators and student teachers to improve their classroom practices. Altogether, the results highlight some cautionary experiences for stakeholders of ICT-based education.



## Lessons learned about school-based teacher professional learning in the context of becoming-Activist

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**Keywords:** school-based teacher professional learning, activist approach, professional socialisation, teacher professional identity

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Traditional approaches to professional learning in physical education often involve off-site workshops, criticised for their lack of integration into school contexts (Armour & Yelling, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Conversely, research suggests that school-based professional learning offers high 'ecological validity' (Kirk et al., 2017) in so far as learning *in situ* has direct relevance and application to teachers' work. This study aims to explore how teachers experience school-based professional learning as they learned to enact a student-centred activist approach (Oliver & Kirk, 2015) with their physical education classes. This qualitative research project was carried out with two teachers' in two diverse secondary schools within Glasgow over the duration of one-school year. The teachers were supported in using an activist approach within their schools, combined with occasional reflective group meetings. Data generated included semi-structured individual and group interviews with teachers and their pupils, lesson observations, and field notes, analysed using dialectical thinking. Initial coding involved versus coding, followed by concept coding (Saldaña, 2021). These concepts were woven into narratives to represent the challenges teachers faced in enacting an activist approach in their school settings (Freeman, 2017). Three main findings emerged throughout teachers' becoming-Activist journeys: 1) the influence of traditional physical education contexts, 2) struggles with teachers' perceptions of physical education and professional identities, and 3) lessons learned in supporting school-based professional learning. We propose that school-based professional learning offers some advantages over traditional off-site approaches given its alignment with real-world challenges teachers encounter in their unique school contexts. Nonetheless, the challenges identified also prompt considerations for future school-based professional learning programmes.

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020

*I am what I am*

**Explanations and Excuses on learning, reflection, and relationships for Generation Z**

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**Keywords:** gen Z, personal constructs, reflection, relationship-based, game theory, convergent reality, digital identity

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The world in which Generation Z have been raised has been fraught with political tension and societal instability. Moreover, being in touch with their emotions and extremely online has influenced their expectations of each other, their educators and their place in society.

This has implications for faculty in adapting to teaching interpersonal skills, reflection and relationship-based practices to current and future cohorts of students.

This paper aims to explore the interconnection between the personal constructs of the current generation of higher education students and its impact upon personal and critical reflection.

Applying Kelly's personal construct theory, on a digital platform and applying aspects of game theory, a group of first year undergraduate students participated in a laddering exercise exploring their personal constructs relating to their learning experience and expectations of study. Having identified the themes or beliefs through which they interpret the world and their own lives this was utilised to further develop knowledge and skills across their personal, academic, and professional relationships.

The research showed a positive reception to the exercise. Participants were surprised by their personal constructs, associated thoughts, and emotions. The majority found it assisted them in their learning and that they would be confident in applying this in practice.

In addition, the methodology applied contributed to the students gaining a greater insight and understanding of abstract concepts relating to trauma informed practice and empathic approaches to communication.

The results of this research contributes to fostering a contemporary learning environment and accessible approach when seeking to explore the impact of trauma, empathy reflection and relationship-based practice across a number of disciplines.

021

## **Lobbying and Education. A Scoping Literature Review on Lobbying in Education**

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**Keywords:** democracy, lobbying, policy processes, scoping literature review

**Theme:** Policy and Education

The Education Inc. research project uncovered the use of lobbying by private entities in the Swedish school system, which was unexpected and raised concerns. While lobbying in the EU is well-researched and regulated, the study of lobbying in education in Sweden and other countries remains uncertain. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of lobbying in education on an international level, including how it is defined and utilized. This knowledge will inform a forthcoming larger qualitative study. This study includes a literature review using scoping review as a method and a content analysis of 52 articles related to lobbying within education. The main findings show that research in this field is primarily focused on the Global North, and there is a significant lack of research from other regions. Additionally, there is no prominent figure or strong research group within the field. The selected articles primarily address the efforts of interest groups to empower vulnerable groups, with topics such as social justice, civil rights, activism, minority groups, literacy, and reading skills frequently explored. The most significant result of this study is however the lack of systematic and fundamental research on lobbying in education. This is concerning because private actors have a significant influence on education through lobbying, informing policy directions and decisions, despite the potential impact on fragile democratic procedures and core institutions in society.

## Challenges of Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust in times of heightened tensions and conflict

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**Keywords:** Holocaust education, contemporary antisemitism, marginalisation

**Theme:** Curriculum

This study investigated how teachers approached Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust (TLH) within the Scottish curriculum and the recent challenges they have faced. Since the outbreak of the Israel- Hamas War, (October 2023), there have been rises in hate-crimes including antisemitism (Metropolitan Police, 2023) of which Scotland is not exempt (Community Security Trust, 2024). This has led to concerns about TLH, and reports of a drop in participation of Holocaust Memorial Day (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, 2024) . Vision Schools Scotland (VSS), funded by the Scottish Government, aims to support teachers in their practice of teaching TLH and its wider values within citizenship education.

Ethics was approved by the University of West of Scotland Committee and care was taken that the focus of the research was the impact on teaching TLH, rather than opinions on the war. This research draws data from two sources. The first source comprises textual materials from 8 secondary schools in Scotland which are part of the Vision School Network. The textual materials include the application forms to the vision schools' network and the internal evaluations which were the focus of analysis. The application form requires schools to provide information regarding their practice of embedding and teaching the Holocaust in their schools. The evaluation forms contain information about the perceived impact of the Vision Schools programme on schools in terms of motivation, staff engagement, school support, and successful implementation of VSS plans and activities in the school as well as questions around how current affairs impact delivery of the programme, for example the Israel-Hamas war. The second strand of data will come from teacher focus groups, with teachers, to discuss their experiences as well as challenges in teaching and learning about the Holocaust since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war and to expand on the data provided by the textual materials.

Thematic analysis of the textual materials found that whilst teachers emphasised the importance of TLH, the teaching of contemporary antisemitism was largely absent from the curriculum and different teaching challenges were highlighted. There were mixed opinions on how the rise in antisemitism had affected TLH. However, there was a theme of teaching staff being worried about how to discuss "controversial issues" in class, so in some cases it was largely avoided. This paper argues that there should be no "no go" areas for TLH and that TLH is more important than ever in supporting acceptance and inclusion across the curriculum. Findings of this research has implications for other Scottish schools, as well as organisations in other countries that are currently engaging in TLH or would like to develop TLH in the future and schools that want to develop antisemitism education in their programme and the impact of delivery in the current climate.

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023

## **Fostering Success: Building Effective Learning Environments for Equity - Insights from the Horizon Europe SCIREARLY Project**

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**Keywords.** Early school leaving, underachievement, vulnerable students, inclusive education

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### **Aims**

The Horizon Europe SCIREARLY project investigates early school leaving (ESL) and underachievement across 10 European countries. This paper presents findings from the second phase and focuses on data from Ireland, while other partners work on completing their parts for this phase. Inequities in educational outcomes disproportionately impact vulnerable students, including ethnic minorities, socio-economically disadvantaged groups, Roma, migrants, and refugees, often concentrated in low-income communities. Longitudinal data further reveals that the most disadvantaged students are significantly more likely to drop out compared to peers from high-income backgrounds. This study seeks to pinpoint effective learning environments to mitigate underachievement and ESL, particularly among vulnerable student groups, aiming to foster inclusion and inform policy development across various levels. Overall, findings from all ten countries will be reviewed and compiled into a toolkit of effective practices, which will be implemented in schools with a high proportion of vulnerable students characterised by underachievement and high dropout rates. This will be done using a quasi-experimental design to analyse the potential for transferability and scalability of successful learning environments across different contexts.

### **Methods**

A multiple-case study in 20 schools investigated conditions for student success despite socio-economic challenges. Case study selection criteria included serving vulnerable students and achieving significant reductions in underachievement and early school leaving. In Ireland, two DEIS (delivering equality of opportunity in schools) schools were chosen, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews with all tiers of school leaders, focus groups with parents and students, lesson observations, field notes made during the tour of the schools, observation of school activities and document review.

**Main Findings**

Benevolent leadership, national initiatives, comprehensive support systems, effective teaching strategies, research-based interventions, and interagency collaboration were identified as crucial factors. Proactive leadership emerged as pivotal in addressing ESL and underachievement, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts for academic success and societal advancement.

**Conclusions**

Ensuring equitable learning necessitates systemic approaches and access to evidence-based programmes. School leadership's role in creating inclusive environments that eliminate barriers to learning is paramount, underscoring the need for proactive, collaborative strategies supported by resources and scientific evidence.

**Examining Student Affairs Division Resilience Surrounding Student Death****Anneke Bruwer, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs****Email: [abruwer@uccs.edu](mailto:abruwer@uccs.edu)****Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Crisis management policies and procedures within higher education have come under increased scrutiny, not only due to the rise in student deaths or the COVID-19 pandemic but also other critical incidents impacting both students and staff. This study examines the resilience of student affairs divisions, offering insights that can assist professionals across various sectors of higher education in effectively managing and navigating student crises. Employing a mixed methods approach, this exploratory case study included semi-structured interviews with ten participants from a midsize U.S. public institution and an analysis of crisis management data from the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I). Data, collected in Spring and Summer 2023, included rich descriptions and logistic regressions to contextualize the study's results. Guided by the team resilience theoretical framework, which describes a team's ability to address problems, overcome obstacles, and withstand pressures without collapsing, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how professionals are trained, supported, and expected to respond to student deaths. This research aligns with the conference theme, "Education in a Fragile World: Past, Present, Future," by reflecting on past crisis management practices, assessing their present impact on staff and student well-being, and offering insights for future policy development and support. The study emphasizes the need for resilience and adaptability in higher education, contributing to a culture of inclusion and social justice. By linking the team resilience framework to broader higher education contexts, this research provides valuable guidance for institutions worldwide in fostering a supportive and resilient educational environment. The implications and recommendations of this study extend beyond the student affairs division, advocating for a holistic approach to crisis management that benefits the entire global higher education community.



**SERA at 50: the evolution of the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) and the educational research community in Scotland**

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**Angela Jaap, University of Glasgow**

**Theme:** Policy and Education

2024 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA). From the early foundations under the guidance of inaugural President Prof Stanley Nisbet to 2024, the research association has grown and experienced significant change, particularly through a more international outlook. While SERA has evolved, it has remained true to its core charitable aims: to enhance educational research. Reflecting on this 50-year milestone provides SERA with a valuable opportunity to contemplate the past and how these experiences move the association forward.

This paper examines the catalysts that have advanced SERA's charitable objectives and helped the growth of the research association. The rise of digital engagement in response to the physical/social restrictions during the pandemic has been a significant catalyst for growth and for SERA to reflect on the democratic nature of educational research and how we might best continue to utilise technology post-pandemic to manage and facilitate greater engagement in (a) continuing to meet the aims of our associations and (b) foster an increased sense of community within educational research.

This paper aims to investigate:

- the changing nature of SERA and its engagement with the wider educational research community it serves;
- the growth of the online/digital presence and how this sustains as we continue in the post-pandemic world, and
- explore some opportunities and barriers to engaging a diverse, broad educational research community.

Drawing on qualitative feedback and evaluations from online sessions (during COVID [2019-2021]) and from comments about the face-to-face sessions (post-COVID) at the recent SERA conferences as well as broader generic feedback from the educational community focused. The findings show that the educational research community has and continues to change. It also points to ways in which the activities of the last 5 years have positioned SERA well, establishing a solid foundation for the next 50 years both nationally and internationally.

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**Surviving and thriving: pre-service science teachers navigating the transition from STEM to Education****Nicola Jones, University of Glasgow****Email: nicola.jones@glasgow.ac.uk****Heather Earnshaw, Napier University****Email: H.Earnshaw@napier.ac.uk****Keywords:** Physics, Initial Teacher Education**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The supply of new physics teachers into the Scottish education system is in an increasingly fragile state. Longstanding recruitment and retention issues have become exacerbated in recent years. This research explored the experiences of pre-service physics teachers as they undertook a transition from a STEM field to the education/social science field. The differences between the fields of STEM and social sciences are well documented in the literature. STEM disciplines have been conceptualised as 'hard pure' where knowledge is considered objective and convergent, arranged in vertical structures. In contrast, Education within the field of social sciences is associated with 'soft applied' knowledge, which is considered subjective, divergent and arranged in horizontal structures. We believe our pre-service physics teachers need to become habituated into a social sciences discipline in part because of the academic requirements of the course, but perhaps more importantly because we agree, as Dewey and others have argued, that ITE should incorporate a well-grounded underpinning in academic theory.

This research sets out to understand whether and where barriers to this academic transition arose. We adopted a phenomenological methodology, gathering data through semi-structured interviews which we then thematically analysed. This analysis is ongoing, however we have identified the following tentative themes:

- Personal judgement of success moving from external to internal measures.
- Overcoming challenges through problem solving approaches.
- Moving away from the idea of a singular 'right' answer and becoming comfortable with that position.

**Teacher responses to racially motivated bullying in Scotland**

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**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion / Policy and Education

Racially motivated bullying remains pervasive across Scottish schools. Teachers have a critical role in nurturing a safe and inclusive environment and preventing stigmatisation and oppression by intervening when a racially motivated bullying episode occurs but also by actively developing an anti-racist climate within their school. Despite the crucial role teachers can play in providing a safe environment for minority ethnic young people, there is a paucity of literature examining teacher responses to racially motivated bullying. This study aims to add to our knowledge about this issue by investigating Scottish teachers' strategies when they are confronted with a hypothetical racially motivated bullying incident in their school. Interviews were conducted with a sample of eleven teachers from different levels of education in Scotland. Our findings demonstrate that teachers struggle to recognise racism and often reframe racist incidents through more de-politicised language and socially normative concepts of school values, kindness and respect. However, teachers' ability to recognise and respond to racism is severely constrained by the lack of clear policy frameworks, accessible training, and legislative directives. Our findings highlight the need to invest in schools, communities and young people in order to create the social conditions in which teachers' capacities to respond to racism can develop and flourish.

## **Contributions to in-service primary teachers practice from their engagement in mathematics landscapes of investigation**

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**João Pedro Mendes da Ponte, Universidade de Lisboa**

**Keywords:** Primary School, Teacher Education, Critical Mathematics Education, Mathematics Education

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

In Mathematics Education research, studies have pointed out the existence of little attention in initial primary teacher education for the exploration of mathematical content from critical discussions aimed at its pedagogical use in understanding emerging social issues (Gutstein, 2018). However, the treatment of these and other issues in mathematics classes has increasingly become a requirement of basic school curricula. As a consequence, many primary teachers, especially those at the beginning of their careers, do not feel prepared to work with these matters in mathematics classes, which leads them to seek subsequent education. Although this situation is known and remarked upon in the literature, there are few studies specifically aimed at understanding how teachers learn and implement tasks that allow for the treatment of social issues in their mathematics classes as a result of their engagement in in-service teacher education. Landscapes of investigation has been a way to address concerns as equity and social justice, for instance (Skovsmose, 2023). Landscapes of investigation can be defined as learning environments that provide students with opportunities to build their own conclusions, accepting the invitation to analyse didactic situations and problems with the principles of the investigation, exploration, questioning, and surveying of hypotheses and ideas. Furthermore, they provide opportunities for dialogue, cooperation, research, and decision making. The objective of this study is to understand how primary school teachers working with landscapes of investigation develop from the study and elaboration of investigative tasks. We will analyse teacher engagement in a teacher education course aimed at Portuguese primary in-service teachers. In this course, we will explore teachers' development of tasks based on the landscape of investigation in mathematics classes. Our study is in the initial phase. We are currently working on the teacher education course implementation with 12 primary school teachers from the Lisbon area, Portugal.

### **Funding**

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## Challenges, Tensions and Dilemmas in the Articulation, Portrayal, Underlying Political and Ideological Motivations of Inclusive Education Policies and how they are operationalised: A comparison between Scotland and Northern Ireland

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**Keywords:** inclusive education policy, national comparators, political ideology

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

It is argued that the theory and practice of inclusive education lacks a tight conceptual focus, leading to ambivalence and confusion in its enactment [1-3]. This paper seeks to cast light on how inclusive education is articulated, portrayed, and operationalised, and the underlying ideological positions represented, through a comparison of policy in Scotland and Northern Ireland, highlighting in the process challenges, tensions, and dilemmas.

This paper draws on a study examining the articulation and portrayal of inclusive education policies across the UK and Ireland and builds on a previous study focussing on the UK alone [4]. It constitutes a critical analysis of policy using Bacchi's 'What is the problem represented to be?' framework to interrogate policy recommendations of three key policy documents in each of the two nations which have been chosen because of their currency and relevance.

The findings reveal that, in Scotland, there is general consensus that the direction of policy is ethically correct but there is a significant gap between policy intent and policy on the ground with issues around visibility, voice and representation, amongst others, coming to the fore [5], acknowledged through two current inquiries into provision for children with Additional Support Needs. In Northern Ireland, there is a similar dissonance between inclusive policy and practice, with the most recent of a series of highly critical reviews [6] highlighting serious deficiencies in SEN provision and calling for radical and accelerated transformation, broadening the current conceptualisation of inclusion beyond SEN to all learners at risk of exclusion. In both nations, whilst the complexity of the problem has been acknowledged, there has been a tendency to look inwards and a failure to adequately explore international best practice and therefore to "question" and "disrupt" the current system to the extent that may be necessary.

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***“Who knew that teaching required so much time?”: Surfacing student voice through portraiture and poetry***

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**Keywords:** poetry, ITE, student, becoming

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

“Becoming” a teacher is a complex, multi-faceted process. Student teachers at the start of their 1-year post-graduate initial teacher education (ITE) qualification often hold idealistic and perhaps simplistic views of what being a teacher entails. Part of the work of the ITE year, then, is undertaking the journey to a more nuanced, informed, and far-reaching understanding that shapes both attitudes and practice in the classroom. Given shifts in health and wellbeing and recruitment/retention issues, there is increasingly a need for teacher educators to understand the nature of that lived journey. This study set out to investigate: *‘What kind of teacher do I want to be?’*

1. What is the student experience of their shifting conceptualisation of what it means to be a teacher in Scotland?
2. What can student voice tell us about the extent to which our programme adequately supports students to navigate their evolving understanding of ‘being’ a teacher.

Data collection is in the form of annotated self-portraits created at the start of the programme, and original poems created by the students at the end of the year. Why portraiture/poetry? This is a phenomenological approach, aiming to elicit genuine and insightful responses, making use of the inherent economy of language. Early thematic analysis suggested some amendments to our programme to address, for example, imposter syndrome, the ‘roller-coaster’ of emotions, ‘struggle’, and managing workload.

033

## **Good Education in a Fragile World: higher education as if the world mattered**

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**Keywords:** Sustainability, Educational purpose, higher education, interdisciplinarity

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### **Aim**

This presentation draws on a recently published edited text - 'Good Education in a Fragile World' (Bainbridge and Kemp, 2024) - to explore the potential of 'thinking educationally about sustainability, while also thinking sustainably about education', to imagine a 'good education' that meets the needs of a planet in crisis. We ask questions about the purpose of education in the 21st century and what kind of education (in terms of purpose, pedagogy and policy) is needed to restore the health and wellbeing of the planet and ourselves now and for generations to come?

### **Method**

The ideas contained within this book have been developed collaboratively with colleagues from across a diverse range of roles, disciplinary backgrounds and life experiences.. We prioritised time and space to meet regularly over an extended period. This involved whole writing days and monthly lunchtime seminars led by chapter authors where evolving ideas could be discussed and debated.

### **Findings**

Through exploring the tensions of addressing issues of sustainability within a defined 'parochial'/local education setting, while also paying attention to a wider interconnected global world, we introduce a conceptual framework - the 'Paradox Model' - to explore the tensions that underpin the challenge of developing sustainability thinking and practice in higher education in the 21st century. Drawing on a planetary health lens, we conclude by providing a 'manifesto' that synthesises key insights from an interdisciplinary diverse perspective. Finally, we shall also begin to share recent ideas in relation to the 'acts of translation' required to work across interdisciplinary boundaries.

***'I didn't think I would ever recover from failing': Evaluation of a Scottish tutoring programme to reduce the 'disadvantaged' student attainment gap***

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**Keywords:** Tutoring, attainment gap, under resourced backgrounds, learning gain

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

**Aims**

As a response to the increasing 'attainment gap' in Scottish education this initiative provided both face-to-face and online format subject-specific tutoring, catering specifically for students from areas of multiple deprivation, those in the care system, or young caregivers. The focus was on reducing the disparity in educational outcomes and achievement among high school students in East Lothian and Midlothian.

**Methods**

Using a mixed-methods research approach, our evaluation sought to add to the emergent research base on tutoring by collecting rich qualitative lived experience narratives of the tutoring ecosystem, and quantitative data through surveys and attendance records.

**Findings**

Our findings conclude that through taking time and care to identify and match pupils and tutors, almost 90% of the tutees are from the targeted group, with over 90% attending at least one tutoring session. The attendance and engagement was particularly high for care-experienced, or non-school attenders.

Good relationships enabled misconception(s) to be identified, monitored and individual learning needs met. This was particularly effective when carried out in collaboration with the school. Students appreciated the less rushed atmosphere tutoring provides feeling able to make mistakes and ask questions they might not in the classroom.

We acknowledge the difficulty in collecting sufficient quality data to reliably report on academic attainment but can report that approximately 70% maintain or improve their predicted exam performance. Over 70% feel more confident; over 80% would have tutoring again; and tutoring re-engages students with adults in a learning environment. The tutors also noted how students are provided with a legacy to make better individual life choices.



**Abstract of Challenging heterosexism and homophobia from gay teachers' perspectives****Yi Zhan, University of Strathclyde****Email: y.zhan@strath.ac.uk****Keywords:** Challenge heterosexism and homophobia, Gay teachers, Inclusivity

In today's fragile world, the path towards school equality for teachers is not straightforward. Huge progress has been made to introduce LGBTQ topics to the curriculum, however, often only as a side note. The school curriculum undoubtedly teaches students to view the world through a heteronormative lens. Many LGBTQ teachers are scared to share their sexuality with their employers, peers and students. Additionally, those teachers who are openly gay face the possibility of ridicule from students and suspicion from parents and peers.

This paper, "Challenging heterosexism and homophobia from gay teachers' perspectives", discusses the challenges faced by gay teachers in relation to heterosexism and homophobia.

This study utilises self-data inquiry and theoretical analysis, drawing on reflective diaries and the concepts of gender performativity and queer theory as proposed by Judith Butler (1990, 1993). The aim is to examine the difficulties faced by gay teachers through the lens of social justice and equity, with a particular focus on challenging the prevailing norms of compulsory heterosexism and homophobia. Ultimately, the study argues that this challenge represents a pursuit of social justice and equity. Sequentially, stemming from the theory of gender performativity and queer theory, analysing the challenges from three angles, the Voice (The Discursive Construction of Gender), the Choice (The Performativity of Gender), and the privilege (Queer theory and the challenge). This paper emphasises the importance of eliminating heterosexism and homophobia boundaries in schools to promote equality and social inclusion. It concludes by highlighting the need for a more inclusive school climate for gay teachers.

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**Cultural Morality and Confirming Dispositions: Reproduction of social inequities through education among marginalised students**

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**Keywords:** cultural morality, social justice, conformity, disposition

**Theme:** Social justice and inclusion

This paper underscores the crucial role of 'cultural morality' propagated in families and reinforced in schools through everyday practices and discourses perpetuating social inequities. The study articulates how the attributes regarding caste, gender, educational access, and individual rights shaped through *primary pedagogic work* in family and strengthened through *secondary pedagogic work* in school conflict with the principles of equality and liberty of the democratic citizenry.

This is a case study of higher secondary school students (age group 16 and 17) from a marginalised community attending a rural Indian school. The project adopts the methodology of Biographical Narrative Interviews to capture and elicit conformity dispositions.

The term 'conformity' is conceptualised using the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, specifically the work of Adorno et al. on the authoritarian personality. I employed Bourdieu's theoretical work in operationalising conformity as a disposition. This means the concept of habitus is applied to understand the cultivation of an *unthoughtness* in action that plays a role in perpetuating unjust practices and relations.

The findings highlight the role of school in authoritatively reinforcing attributes among students under the guise of 'morality, such as blindly obeying elders, respecting the authority of teachers, etc., which has the potential to perpetuate caste and gender-based discrimination and other social injustices. This study establishes the critical role of educational institutions and pedagogical practices in catalysing and (re) producing sociocultural inequalities and unjust relations in Indian society. Moreover, it provides the foundation to challenge discourses and practices cited as 'good' or 'morally right' in the everyday life of the school. It suggests adopting alternative educational policies and practices to transform unjust relations.

## University leadership perspectives regarding the impact of teacher shortages on the education of autistic pupils

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**Keywords:** Leadership, Autism, Initial Teacher Education, Autism Spectrum Conditions, Higher Education, SDG 4: Quality education, SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### Aims

Among the many variables that affect the educational quality that autistic pupils encounter is teacher shortages. Yet, research into university leadership perspectives remains limited. This study was conducted to enhance understanding of university educational leaders' views on the impact of teacher shortages on autistic pupils, and what can be done to address or mitigate the impact.

### Methods

This descriptive phenomenological study utilised semi-structured interviews to gather data. A purposive sample technique was used to help identify and select participants who were knowledgeable or experienced with the phenomenon of study. A three-stage inductive thematic analysis of the data was performed.

### Main Findings

The data indicate a widespread belief that teacher shortages can only negatively impact the education of autistic pupils.

- Participants expressed teacher shortages negatively impact autistic pupil achievement
- Participants suggested teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing teachers to educate autistic pupils
- Participants proposed teacher shortages are not universal, but highly specific to certain specialties and locations (esp. ASN in urban or rural areas)
- Participants declared education of autistic pupils is the duty of all teachers, not only specialists

### Conclusions

1. The shortage of teachers highly qualified to educate autistic pupils in New York State adversely affects the academic and social outcomes for those pupils.
2. The shortages are pervasive, but the university leaders contend they are caused by:
  - a. a mismatch of supply and demand: too many primary graduates, too few secondary and ASN/SEND graduates
  - b. a deterioration in the reputation and working conditions of educators
  - c. a perception that pay is too low
3. Mitigation of teacher shortages could involve:
  - a. streamlining burdensome regulations on teacher education program development at the undergraduate-level,
  - b. cross-institutional and multidisciplinary collaboration between teacher preparation programs
  - c. enhancing existing coursework on best practices in autism education, and
  - d. increasing on-site internships for students pursuing study and teacher certification in special education.
4. There was little support for the conceptual creation of a teacher certification or licensure specifically in autism education.

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## **Youth Work and Fragility: Securing Young People's Futures through Relational Practice**

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**Keywords:** Youth Work, Fragility, Informal Education, Partnership

**Theme:** Community Education & Learning

### **Aims**

This paper will reflect on how community education can contribute towards solving the fragility outlined in the conference title. It will demonstrate how destabilising trends impact negatively on young people, and will explore how youth work supports their adaptability and resilience. It will draw from an evaluation of a unique Partnership between one Scottish local authority and a charitable trust safeguarding universal youth work services throughout the district, to highlight how community education fosters inclusion and empowers young people to play an active role in the lives of their communities.

### **Methods**

The paper will draw on data generated through practitioner interviews and focus groups with young people. All discussions took place in the youth work settings where participants were involved in either delivering or accessing universal youth work provision. Discussions captured participants' perspectives on the impact of the Partnership's youth work provision, and identified elements of practice that could be replicated in other districts to achieve similar outcomes.

### **Main Findings**

The inquiry found that the universal youth work offer is valued by the young people because it is so inclusive, and that practitioners are committed to anti-discriminatory practice to facilitate wider participation. Informal approaches have resulted in young people achieving outcomes unlikely to be achieved in formal settings, contributing to their enhanced wellbeing and resilience. The value of the professional relationships between practitioners and young people was foregrounded, with skilled adults able to support young people navigate complex challenges by tailoring their provision to address individual needs, even within group contexts.

## Developing lesson study collaboration in Scotland

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**Keywords:** lesson study, collaborative advantage, curriculum, collaborative inertia

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

### **Aims**

Translating lesson study into a new country comes with implementational challenges. Scotland is no exception to this. The importing of ideas means that both the method and the context can become fragile, as both need to evolve. We explore how researchers have adapted and developed parts of the lesson study cycle to meet the collaboration needs of teacher-participants in Scotland.

### **Methods**

We present two lesson study cases; one exploring English lessons with 7-8-year-olds and the second exploring fractions with 8-9-year-olds. Both cases have been mapped against Kager et al.'s (2023) lesson study conceptual model. The cases were analysed using collaborative advantage theory to identify elements that supported collaboration or caused inertia.

### **Main Findings**

Shared cognition is a key element to the successful translation of lesson study into Scotland. Shared cognition evolves throughout the Scottish LS cases showing that joint understanding, psychological safety and processes that enable productive conflict to occur in LS are important to the development of collaborative advantage. As we reveal the importance of joint understanding, leading to shared cognition of curricula and pedagogic actions, we also expose fragilities in the Scottish educational landscape that impact on the outcomes of collaborative professional learning like lesson study.

### **Conclusion**

The implications of this research are that if collaborative professional development is to flourish in Scotland's educational system, we need to consider the elements of the landscape that create collaborative inertia and prevent collaborative advantage. Only by focusing on building stronger shared understanding of aspects of curricular design/progression can we support collaborative professional learning.

**Exploration of the relationship between physical literacy and literacy through a health and wellbeing perspective****Alison Murray, University of Stirling****Pamela Murray, University of Worcester****Kristy Howells, Canterbury Christ Church University****Brian Johnson, University of Stirling****Joe Cowley, University of Strathclyde****Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Implementing an environmental approach, as set upon the lifelong continuum (Gabbard, 2021), is one means to embrace literacy as a holistic pedagogical concept to towards lifelong health and wellbeing. Complementing this with a pedagogy interweaving critical thinking into the learning series seeks to progress student self (and collective) agency along this journey (Murray and Napper-Owen, 2021) seeks to justly facilitate beyond school opportunities amidst the variation of accessibility for children in differing settings and circumstance. This quasi-experimental study employs mixed methods. It seeks to learn more about the role metacognition plays upon physical literacy toward health and wellbeing as implemented in an interdisciplinary manner. It proffers to provide a tangible way to integrate agency developing strategies for children across learning. Participants completed a semester in physical education, set across a varied set of environments (Murray and Howells, 2024). They completed formative and summative national level evaluations, together with pre-post evaluations around critical thinking and health related fitness biomotor indices. The secondary school students (N=90) were randomly assigned into two groups; in efforts to illuminate any correlations between critical thinking competence and capacity to progress learning and proficiency across physical literacy concepts. We sought to learn more about whether children with greater critical thinking aptitude displayed greater propensity and competency across their semester of learning, and indeed how they might utilise (any of) this when both in class, and furthermore, any likelihood of intention when away from school over the summer. Its design is based upon the Brown Framework of Metacognition (1987).

042

## Place-making through the design of a nature rich play space

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**Keywords:** place-making, consultation, play space, nature

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### **Aims**

The aim of this research is to explore place-making through community consultation to design a nature rich play space for a children's nursery. Perspectives based on connection to place, nature and ideas which were influenced by and influence, sustainability, within a university campus, were gathered. Underpinning theories include nature connectedness and Place Based Education.

### **Methods**

This is a single case, case study within an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach. Data were gathered through interviews, questionnaires, visual and design-based methods. Overall, the findings reflect perspectives of six different data sets that included children, their educators, and parents; expert interviewees, education staff and wider university staff and students. Data were analysed using a reflexive, thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

### **Main findings**

Four key themes were interpreted from the data:

- Play and relationships in nature are integral to place-making, learning, wellbeing, and development
- Affordances can support positive environmental attitudes
- Community and collaboration are at the heart of wellbeing and sustainability
- Pedagogy is significant in scaffolding children's engagement with nature in a nature, play-based, environment

Community consultation in planning for place-making of a nature-rich outdoor play space is an effective process. It supports the development of human to human and human to non-human relationships. Place-making as part of the design process leads to a positive effect on the community's wider environmental attitudes and dispositions and on the physical environment. This highlights the value of collective voice in designing nature rich spaces for young children.

## Sponsoring as an approach to enhancing career progression among Black and Minority Ethnic teachers

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**Keywords:** equality, diversity, inclusion, career

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

The Scottish Government's Diversity in the Teaching Profession Scotland Annual Data Report (2023) points to progression among the cohort of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) teachers as being a persistent challenge. This manifests itself both in terms of retention and promotion: the proportion of BME teachers in employment one year after completion of their probation is significantly lower than in the wider cohort. The proportion of BME teachers in promoted posts is less than 1%.

Sponsoring, as a strategy, seeks to eschew deficit thinking. Instead, it is intended as an institutional and cultural response to the systemic issue of under-representation of BME people within the teaching profession (Cornish and Morgan, 2022; Valencia 2021). Informal Sponsoring can happen in practice without any formal acknowledgement that this is the case. However, BME teachers do not always experience this (McClung et al 2018). There is a need to make more explicit and intentional the type of relationship between a teacher and more senior colleague that supports career progression.

This presentation reports on data gathered through a scoping review of the extant literature and stakeholder engagement interviews with BME teachers and local authority education officers, undertaken for the purpose of developing proactive steps to enhance BME teachers' career progression.

Results suggest the importance of a baseline of racial literacy for those offering Sponsorship, as well as highlighting the discussion about whether Sponsors should be from ethnic majority or minority backgrounds. This research contributes to enhanced understanding and greater engagement with the national aspiration for a more diverse teaching profession (Arshad 2021).

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047

**Promoting professionalism in preschool: Action research**

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**Keywords:** Preschool, professional practices, values, leadership

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Attending quality preschool can enhance children's overall development and learning and providing positive influences. Preschool teachers are role models and contribute to quality practice. Shortage in preschool teachers is a persistent issue in Iceland, and the proportion of assistant teachers is high.

The purpose of this research is to draw attention to the importance of professionalism in preschool. The aim is to shed light on the development of professional practice in a new preschool for young children. This action research involved a preschool teachers' leading role in collaboration with administrators developing professional practices in the preschool. Data consists of a research journal, meeting notes and official documents related to the preschool. Data analysis was regular alongside data gathering and narrative inquiry was applied to extract stories from the data. I discussed developing findings with a critical friend, and we evaluated what it was indicating and how our next actions could be adapted to support professional practice in the school by responding to emerging challenges.

Findings show that administrators had ambitions to create a curriculum for the school, reflecting its professional values and practices. Professionalism in the preschool was challenged by lack of opportunities for professional discussion and mutual understanding of the preschools' values. One response to these challenges was developing a manual, aiming to promote coordinated practices.

All children have the right to attend quality preschool and we argue that administrators and leaders in preschools must show determination and resilience to ensure professional practice in preschools.

**Is the challenge of science literacy based on misguided focus in teaching?****Auður Pálsdóttir, University of Iceland****Email: audurp@hi.is****Keywords:** Vocabulary learning, science literacy, word frequency, language use**Theme:** Curriculum / Assessment and Evaluation

The purpose of this paper is to address the decline in 15 year old learners' performance in the reading and science literacy of PISA over the last decade, and ask if and how science teachers need to change their focus in teaching. Vocabulary lies at the heart of literacy development and is foundational in learners' academic performance. Extensive international research indicates that 98% of words in a text need to be understood for reading comprehension, i.e. to grasp the central meaning of a text an understanding of 98% of the words is required. In this paper most recent research on reading and science literacy is analysed and summarised. Findings indicate strongly that a focus that includes systematic use of word frequency and the three layers of vocabulary, Tier 1, 2 and 3, is a promising way forward in science teaching. Words in Tier 1 are high frequency words that are common and are learned in daily communication, words like a *dog*, and to *read*. Words in Tier 3 are specialised vocabulary with less frequency, concepts that have defined meaning within each subject field, e.g. *carbon*, and *multiplication*. These words are specially taught by teachers and explained in textbooks. Words in Tier 2 are however used across diverse disciplines, are more common in academic writing than in oral language and do not have a key function in academic texts, but support what is explained or discussed. Thus, words in Tier 2, words like *relative*, and to *adapt*, are 'the tools' we use to explain words in Tier 3, but learners' poor knowledge of Tier 2 words seem to be the main reason why learners have difficulty in comprehending a text. This means that clearer focus on Tier 2 words in science teaching seems to be an way forward to effectively strengthen science literacy.

**Key Concepts in Promoting DEI through Lifelong Learning****Bei-Yun Wang, National Chung Cheng University****Email: [bethiawang@alum.ccu.edu.tw](mailto:bethiawang@alum.ccu.edu.tw)****Keywords:** DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion), Citizenship, LLL(Lifelong Learning), AAR (Anticipation, Action, Reflection) Model**Theme:** Community education and learning

This study aims to explore the key concepts of promoting diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and citizenship through lifelong learning. It particularly focuses on applying the theoretical framework of the AAR (Anticipation, Action, Reflection) model, analyzing its significance in lifelong learning and its implications for citizenship. Through a literature review, the paper investigates how the AAR model promotes the integration of DEI and citizenship in various educational contexts. Additionally, DEI, as an integral part of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education, promoting opportunities for lifelong learning for all. Finally, specific theoretical assumptions are proposed to illustrate how the AAR model can be applied to enhance social integration, economic opportunities, and citizenship awareness. The findings reveal that the AAR model not only enhances learners' self-efficacy but also fosters understanding and inclusion of diverse cultures. This study provides educators and policymakers with a new perspective, emphasizing the consideration of the AAR model in designing lifelong learning programs to achieve a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

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## Dialogue in Icelandic lower secondary classrooms

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**Keywords:** Classroom Discourse, Teaching Quality, PLATO Framework, Student Engagement

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning/Teacher education/Curriculum

The current study aims to provide insights into the quality of classroom discourse in Icelandic lower secondary classrooms. Video data was collected from 8th grade classrooms in ten Icelandic schools in mathematics and Icelandic language arts, totalling 78 recorded lessons. The analytical framework PLATO (Protocol for Language Arts Teaching Observation) was used to assess teaching quality, with a focus on "classroom discourse."

Classroom discourse is crucial for student learning as it fosters critical thinking and deeper understanding by encouraging students to articulate their thoughts and engage with diverse perspectives. This interactive process enhances communication skills and promotes active learning. The study aimed to examine what characterizes dialogue in lessons where classroom discourse was rated highest (level 4) according to the PLATO framework, focusing on opportunities for student talk and teacher uptake of student responses. Only eight lessons met the criteria: five in Icelandic language arts and three in mathematics.

These lessons were transcribed and analysed in detail, focusing on the nature of teacher questions and uptake (how teachers integrated student responses into subsequent questions). Both aspects are important in highlighting student contributions and extending dialogue beyond immediate question-answer patterns. Preliminary findings indicate that even in high-scoring discourse lessons, there was limited demand for student argumentation and justification, and teachers rarely used questions to connect students' input and ideas.

The use of the PLATO framework for assessing teaching quality provides insights that are directly relevant to teacher education and professional development. The study's findings on the effectiveness of teacher questioning techniques and classroom discourse can inform professional learning programs aimed at improving pedagogical practices.

**The Influence of Digital Competencies on Teaching: A Comparative Study of ASN/SEN Education in Türkiye and Scotland)****Cagla Ergul, The University of Edinburgh****Email: C.Ergul@sms.ed.ac.uk****Hatice Yarar, The University of Edinburgh****H.Yarar@sms.ed.ac.uk****Mustafa Ciftcioglu, The University of Edinburgh****Email: M.Ciftcioglu@sms.ed.ac.uk****Keywords:** Additional Support Needs Education, Comparative study, Digital Competencies, Teacher Professional Development**Theme:** Social Justice & Inclusion/Digital Learning

This study aims to comparatively analyse the digital competencies of teachers working with students categorised as having Additional Support Needs in Scotland and Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Türkiye. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, it is essential for teachers to master digital technologies and effectively integrate these skills into inclusive educational practices that address the diverse needs of all students (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2021). To gain a deeper understanding of the current situation regarding how ASN/SEN teachers use digital skills in schools, this study will collect qualitative data from these teachers in both countries.

Through semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups, we aim to explore teachers' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in utilizing digital tools to support students categorised as having ASN/SEN. This qualitative data will be supplemented by an analysis of secondary sources, including professional development guidelines, policy documents, and existing literature in the relevant fields.

Preliminary analysis suggests that in Türkiye, the focus on digital skills is predominantly theoretical, with limited opportunities for practical application. In contrast, Scotland prioritizes hands-on, practical training, enabling teachers to more effectively integrate digital tools into inclusive educational settings. Furthermore, while Türkiye's approach to SEN education often centres on individual differences and the application of individualized education plans, Scotland's approach is characterized by more inclusive and integrative practices that leverage digital technologies to support diverse learners. Thus, this study aims to comparatively examine development and application of digital competencies in the professional practice of teachers, particularly within the context of ASN/SEN education in both countries.

In conclusion, this study will compare the insights gathered from teachers in both countries and offer recommendations for enhancing ASN/SEN teacher education programs in terms of the influence of the digital competencies on teaching while working within the field of ASN/SEN. The findings will contribute to the development of strategies aimed at better equipping teachers with the digital skills necessary to effectively support students perceived as having ASN/SEN for the sake of enhancement of equity.

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## Parents' Perceptions of Computing Education, Computational Thinking, and Computational Activities for Young Children

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**Keywords:** Computing education, computational thinking, children, parent

**Theme:** Digital Learning

As the importance of computing education in the digital age becomes more evident, efforts to incorporate it into early childhood education have grown. Curriculums in the UK such as National Curriculum (England) and Curriculum for Excellence (Scotland) include computing and computational thinking (CT) concepts from early age (starting at 3 in CfE).

Children between the ages of 3 to 5 spend the majority of their time outside of school. Therefore, their learning experiences are significantly influenced by their parents. However, parents may not have had any experience with computing education during their own educational or professional experiences (Manches & Plowman, 2017). In order to engage parents in the learning process, it is important to understand parents' perceptions towards computing education and CT. To investigate the CT perceptions of parents with children aged 3-5, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 parents.

Findings suggest that although parents recognised the importance of introducing CT to their children at an early age, they lacked the awareness and knowledge of how to incorporate it into their daily routines, and they had limited knowledge of the available resources to support it. However, when presented with activity examples that might support CT, parents were able to relate these to the activities they already engaged in with their children. They also expressed a willingness to receive support to aid their children's CT development. By identifying the potential and obstacles to parental involvement in CT education, this study offers valuable insights that can inform the development of educational programs and policies that promote parental engagement in this area.

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053

## **STEAM in a Fragile World: Powering Imaginative, Inclusive Initiatives to Immunisation Awareness**

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**Keywords:** immunisation, HPV vaccination, collaboration

**Theme:** Curriculum

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programmes with falls in uptake rates across Europe (Crul et al, 2020). Vaccination coverage in many EU countries is well below 50% (European Commission, 2024) which does not meet the WHO recommendation for 90% to eliminate cancers caused by HPV. Face-to-face educational interventions are recommended to address vaccine hesitancy (Edwards et al, 2022).

We aimed to develop Irish school students' awareness and understanding of immunology, vaccines and HPV vaccination; empower them to critically analyse information to promote informed choices around HPV vaccination; develop confident advocates for HPV immunisation through bringing the arts into science education, using science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) approaches and peer to peer collaboration in learning and in communication.

This 3-phase project worked with 380 volunteer students and 22 teachers from across 5 post-primary schools and 2 primary schools from urban and rural settings in Ireland. Case study was employed and a qualitative, arts-based methodology using poster creation, story boarding, journey mapping, role play, improvisation and video creation. Focus groups and questionnaires were employed for student feedback on their experiences. Data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Preliminary findings indicated: multi-representational forms, through a STEAM approach, enabled students to explore and build on their previous learnings of immunology, vaccines, HPV cancers and vaccination; their attitudes to the HPV vaccine moved from passive to positive; students felt more confident in communicating their knowledge about immunology, vaccines and HPV vaccination to peers and others.

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## Inspiring the Future of Moral Education in Scottish Primary Schools

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**Keywords:** Moral Education, Curriculum for Excellence, Religious and Moral Education, Moral Development

**Theme:** Curriculum

### Aims

Moral Education has been an explicit part of the Scottish curriculum since its terminology was first used in the Millar Report (1972). However, literature around moral education suggests that the curricular area still faces many challenges in the present as it did when first implemented (Clanachan and Matemba, 2015; Maxwell, 2014). This paper is based on an ongoing doctoral project which aims to explore how moral education is currently implemented in non-denominational primary schools.

### Methods

Three qualitative data collection tools were used in the current research project: semi-structured interviews, researcher observations, and document analysis. All three strands were thematically analysed to further understand how moral education was being implemented implicitly and explicitly within the case study primary school.

### Main Findings

In the current paper, there will be a focus on two of the main findings. The first is that teachers have quite different definitions and ideas about *explicit* moral education and the development of values. The nine educators in the sample highlighted that a serious shortage of training in this area contributed to their lack of confidence and knowledge. Secondly, the current PhD has explored the *implicit* implementation of moral education through the school's ethos and modelling. It aims to discuss how the *implicit* and *explicit* aspects can strengthen or hinder one another in relation to the moral education curriculum.

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**“Before lockdown, you could just leave your bag of worries at the door and get going to work”  
Practitioners’ perspectives on changed EY practice post Covid**

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**Keywords:** Early Years, practitioner role, workload, change

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

**Aims**

The early years of education have experienced significant changes over the last few years, affecting how practitioners experience their profession (Joyce et al., 2023). The Covid-19 pandemic presented an additional impactful change for practitioners, children, and families. We set out to explore the experiences of practitioners at a time when children born during the pandemic started formal education, aged 3-4. In this paper, we focus on the perceived impact on the practitioner role when working with children and families in comparison to pre-pandemic times.

**Methods**

We followed an interpretivist paradigm and employed a qualitative research approach. Nineteen practitioners in a variety of staff roles within ECEC settings across Scotland took part in semi-structured interviews. Practitioners were asked about their recent experiences with children and families and changes to their role in the setting since lockdown. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then analysed following a thematic approach.

**Main Findings**

Initial themes show a significant change in the perceived role and responsibilities practitioners fulfil, where relationships to children, families and external agencies have changed. Children require increased support, modelling, and care. Families are engaging less face-to-face, and more parents require significant support in their role. The need to engage with external agencies like speech and language and educational psychology is now a regular rather than a rare occurrence. These changes lead to a significant increase in workload for practitioners and a need for more training. Practitioners reported a heavy impact on staff mental health and morale.

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**Developing scholarship: the value of a research reading group in Higher Education ITE**

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**Keywords:** reading group, teacher educator identity, research-informed professional learning

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

In this paper, we share research findings gathered from users of a teacher educators' reading group in a Scottish university. In the last 10 years, the importance of scholarly professional development for teacher educators has been emphasized, with approaches such as communities of practice, self-studies and study groups being used to address this need (Smith & Flores, 2019).

In 2021, a teacher educators' reading group for academic staff and associate tutors in the School of Education (University of Glasgow) was formed and is currently ongoing. At monthly meetings, a peer-reviewed research paper serves as a stimulus for discussion to deepen understanding on initial teacher education in Scotland (and beyond) and the role of the teacher educator.

**Aims**

The research explored the impact of the reading group on the professional learning and teacher educator identity of the participants.

**Methods**

The reading group participants completed an online questionnaire (n=15), and some participated in semi-structured interviews (n=6) to explore themes related to their professional learning and their identity as educators. The open-ended questionnaire responses and interview transcripts were analysed with thematic analysis methods.

**Findings**

The participants highly valued the opportunity to discuss relevant research issues with colleagues. They indicated that the reading group provided a unique shared space for scholarly engagement with research and research findings within their fields to underpin and inform practice.

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## Young adults' perspectives on sex education at school in Scotland

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**Keywords:** sex education, inclusion, LGBT+, teacher confidence

**Theme:** Curriculum/Social Justice and Inclusion

There is a wealth of evidence on the benefits to young people's health and academic achievement from timely, good quality sex education (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2020; Lindberg & Kantor, 2022; Pound et al. 2017; Schmitt et al 2022; UNESCO, 2018; van Leent et al. 2023). Conversely, sex education that is poor or too late poses risks to mental and physical health (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2020; Pound et al. 2017; Schmitt et al 2022; Seiler-Ramadas, et.al. 2021; van Leent et al. 2023). Situated within an interpretive perspective, this small-scale qualitative study set out to explore young adults' perspectives on the sex education teaching that they received at school in Scotland. A semi-structured questionnaire with predominantly open text questions was devised. It asked respondents to reflect on their experiences in school and consider the strengths, gaps and overall usefulness of school sex education to their lives. Recruitment was via universities and colleges, school alumnae networks and post-18 careers services, with additional snowball sampling. In total, 48 young adults completed the survey. Data were analysed thematically. Findings reveal that what was taught often came too late to be useful and was covered in insufficient depth by teachers who seemed awkward or lacking in confidence. The narrow heteronormative, cisgender focus often made LGBT+ young people feel excluded or stigmatised. In conclusion, consistent with findings elsewhere in the world and despite previous research findings and updates to guidance and policy over the years, these young people still received a sex education that did not meet their needs. Further research is needed, but it is likely that greater focus on sex education in ITE and additional regularly updated professional learning would be beneficial for both student and in service teachers.

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**Thank you for thinking about helping our children’’: Families’ and children’s perspectives of being part of a tutoring project for New Scots children**

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**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

In Scotland, Syrian refugee communities are re-settled through the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (Scottish Government, 2018) which places an emphasis on education. Building on evidence that educational interventions can be beneficial to the wellbeing inclusion and achievement of children from refugee and asylum-seeker families, (Ataman & Uysal, 2023; Erdemir, 2022; Mendenhall & Bartlett, 2018; Naidoo, 2009; Tubbs Dolan et al. 2022; Weeks et al, 2011), Re-Act Scotland developed and still run a tutoring project for children from the local Syrian New Scots community. The project aims to support the children’s educational achievement and sense of inclusion in school. Coming at the end of the first year of the project, this study sought to uncover the views and perspectives of the children and families taking part.

Qualitative data were collected through questionnaires and a focus group discussion at a Re-Act project event to which all participating families and children were invited. The researcher was accompanied by Re-Act project leads, one of whom was from the same community as the families and acted as translator. Eighteen parents and one child contributed to the focus group discussion. Thirteen parents and 19 children completed the questionnaires. Data were analysed thematically.

Findings reveal that the project addressed areas of priority for parents, many of whom emphasised the importance of education. Relationships between tutor and child were seen as fundamental to learning and confidence. Both parents and children recognised a positive impact on the children’s achievement and confidence in school. Children enjoyed and valued the tutor sessions. Endorsing the value of such third sector community education projects, the overwhelming response was one of appreciation and desire for the project to continue. In conclusion, prioritising positive relationships between child and tutor are clearly a priority in projects such as this.

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**Understanding university students' multiple and multi-dimensional transitions and impact on their wellbeing: A cross-country comparison**

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**Keywords:** Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions (MMT) theory, university students, multi-national study, wellbeing

**Theme:** Policy and Education

Starting, and going through, university triggers multiple transitions for students due to several reasons. These include the need to adapt to change in identity/ies on an academic and personal level; different academic level and expectations of teachers; more independence and self-reliance etc. These multiple transitions can be exciting and worrying at the same time with negative impact on wellbeing if any problems persist over time. However, none of the studies to date have highlighted the proportion of students experiencing positive/negative transitions, impact of educational systems, and impact of transitions on wellbeing. Due to these identified gaps in literature, this study examined these aspects across eight countries, namely, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Korea, UAE, and the UK. There were three research questions:

RQ1: What proportion of university students had a successful transition, and what are the reasons for that?

RQ2: What are the university students' transitions experiences when moving to, and through university, and to what extent are these related to the country they study in?

RQ3: To what extent do the university students' transitions to, and through university have an impact on their wellbeing?

Altogether, 1,481 university students from eight countries participated in the study. Data were collected using a transitions questionnaire and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS: Tennant et al., 2007).

The majority of students (74.7%) reported that they had a *Very successful* (26.2%) or *Somewhat successful* (48.5%) transition. Only 6.6% indicated that they had a *Somewhat unsuccessful* or *Very unsuccessful* transition. There were substantial and significant differences across countries.

Further, positive anticipations of starting, and reality after starting and through university were consistent. However, negative anticipations went remarkably down after starting and through university.

Analysis of the WEMWBS data indicated significant variation among the participants from different countries. Malaysian participants on average had the highest score (50.83), followed by South Korea (49.21), UAE (49.16), Indonesia (47.27), Japan (46.93), UK (47.32), India (45.52) and Pakistan (45). ANOVA results also indicate significant differences across countries ( $F = 4.123$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .021$ ), but with a small effect size.

The study findings have implications for global and local higher education policies and practices, including efforts to change the current negative discourse, providing ongoing support at the start and across the university years, and careful consideration of national and cultural factors that might have an impact on students' wellbeing.



## Exploring the boundaries: Pushing the limit of student teachers voice (s) to explore social justice learning

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**Keywords:** Voice, Vignettes, Embodied listening, Thinking with theory

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

### Aim

Qualitative research has privileged the voice of the participants allowing researchers to gather data where voice has been recognised as a marker of truth telling (Mazzei, 2009, p. 45). This notion has largely gone unchallenged, but now we are witnessing an array of research highlighting the limitations of voice as data, exposing its instability and uncertainty (St. Pierre, 2008, p. 319; Mazzei and Jackson, 2012, p. 745). The aim of this paper is to explore methodologies to support working at the limits of voice as a means of initiating new thinking in teacher education. Using the empirical data from six undergraduate student teachers a multi-step process was established to analyse the voice data. First, an embodied listening approach was adopted to familiarise the researcher with the data. Then, a series of vignettes were created from each of the interview transcripts alongside a reflexive journal to gather and justify the process of selection of each vignette. This was followed by a thinking with theory approach, using the Freire's concepts of dehumanisation, critical consciousness, and false generosity to think with the data. Preliminary findings suggest that working at the limits of voice both disrupts the data and uncovers attitudes, beliefs and prejudices about social justice that may be concealed using conventional approaches to data analyses. This paper suggests that new methodologies for qualitative inquiry may help to create new knowledge and analytical questions, that may help researchers to listen to non-normative voice(s) which are a critical aspect of social justice.

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## Evaluating HCT Assumptions: Socioeconomic Outcomes of Foundation Apprenticeships in Scotland

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**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Foundation Apprenticeship integrates classroom and work-based learning within senior-phase schooling, emphasising the advantage of accumulating industry-specific skills and workplace experience alongside academic qualifications from a young age. This reflects Human Capital Theory (HCT) assumptions tying credentials to employability, higher wages, job security, and economic growth (Becker, 1962). My work examines two key assumptions of HCT: meritocracy and economic growth. Empirical research finds vocational graduates enjoy enhanced initial earnings and minimal duration of job search (Chankseliani and Anuar, 2019), however, competition from university graduates entering the labour force later reduces or reverses these early returns (Brunello and Rocco, 2017), indicating discrimination amongst academic and vocational qualifications, undermining the meritocracy assumption. Job stability for vocational graduates may be especially precarious due to the narrow skills focus of vocational programmes, leading to fractured employment patterns in light of evolving labour market demands and technological shifts (Neyt, Verhaest, and Baert, 2020), eroding economic growth.

To test HCT assumptions in the Scottish context, I evaluate the socioeconomic outcomes of apprenticeship through quantitative analysis of the Labour Force and Annual Population Surveys, comparing employment status and type, wage, and education level for individuals with vocational and academic qualifications. I also compare outcomes across the dimensions of gender, sector, and region since research suggests these background factors impact post-apprenticeship outcomes (Simon and Clarke, 2016; Smith, 2010). I expect differences in outcomes amongst individuals with vocational and academic qualifications and variation in individual employment, earnings, and educational attainment associated with gender, socioeconomic background, region, and sector.

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**Embracing diversity: assessment for inclusion in upper-secondary school in Iceland****Ívar Rafn Jónsson, University of Akureyri****Email: varrafn@unak.is****Edda Óskarsdóttir, University of Iceland****Email: eddao@hi.is****Keywords:** inclusive education, upper-secondary school, dialogue, assessment**Theme:** Social justice and inclusion

Approaches to supporting inclusive education are grounded in ideas of social justice, democracy, and human rights (UNESCO, 2020). Although the National curriculum in Iceland is built on these ideas, analysis of the curriculum uncovers conflicting assessment ideologies: Institutional instrumentalism versus a humanistic approach to learner diversity (Ministry of Education, 2012).

The purpose of this research is to understand the culture and characteristics of assessment supporting inclusive education. The theoretical framework is based on critical pedagogy and social justice and the view that the conventional idea of assessment is too narrow which can lead to unhealthy competition, lack of access and marginalisation (Tai et al., 2022). Focussing on social justice in assessment calls for a holistic perspective, considering those who are involved and the context of assessment (Nieminen, 2022).

Data were collected from two purposefully chosen upper-secondary schools that offer study programs in vocational and academic subjects and that have diverse student body, in all senses of that word. Data consists of focus group interviews with students and teachers in each school, and individual interviews with student counsellors.

The preliminary findings suggest that active dialogue about assessment between teachers and students created a learning culture based on trust. Problems appeared easier to solve at the counsellors' table, when students were willing to engage in dialogue about assessment with teachers. Furthermore, teachers described the benefits of working together in groups in sharing and trying new assessment approaches. These results emphasize the importance of fostering open communication to embrace diversity in assessment.

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**Is there a manual? Autistic academics in higher education****Jane O’Kelly, Dublin City University****Email: jane.okelly@dcu.ie****Neil Kenny, Jessica K Doyle, Fiona Earley, Stuart Neilson, Dublin City University****Keywords:** Autism, higher education, equality, inclusion**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

This paper will explore the findings from a small scale qualitative research project that aimed to explore the current workplace experiences of Autistic academic staff in Irish higher education institutes. Research on this topic is extremely limited internationally and virtually non-existent in the Irish context (Gormley, L., Feeney, A. & McNally, S., 2023). The study was funded by AslAm, Ireland’s national Autism charity and was conducted using an exploratory case study approach (Yin, 2018). Participants were recruited through a research invitation and a short survey circulated through academic networks. Autistic academics (n=14) participated in individual hour long semi structured interviews with researchers from a neurodiverse team. Participatory autism research (PAR) approaches (Pellicano, et al., 2014) were applied throughout the project from design stage, implementation, analysis and write up. The research team was composed of Autistic and non-Autistic researchers as PAR aims to facilitate meaningful input from Autistic individuals regarding what research is conducted and how it is implemented (Long et al., 2017). The research addresses the theme of social justice and inclusion as findings demonstrate that the lived reality of autistic academics in the workplace is at variance with their perceptions of academia including academic performance, Autistic identity, exclusion and stigma. Recommendations include the need for accommodations and flexibility in working practices for Autistic staff, understanding of Autism from colleagues, and an acknowledgement of Autistic strengths in the workplace.

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## Teachers' Current Literacy Practices

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**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Ability to read enables a young person to access all other aspects of the curriculum, achieve qualifications and develop the skills for life after school. The Scottish attainment gap in reading impacts the lives of the children and young people who live in poverty and those with additional support needs (The Scottish Government, 2023, 2015). Effective literacy instruction has attracted new education policies worldwide and has stimulated discussion about how to equip teachers with knowledge about best practice, novel approaches and support for additional needs in literacy (e.g. Castles et al., 2018; Catts, 2021; Petscher et al., 2020). Despite considerable interest in teacher knowledge (e.g. Arrow et al., 2019; Pittman et al., 2019), research examining actual classroom practices in reading or teacher views on literacy remains limited.

### Aims

The purpose of this research is to document real-life current literacy practice in classrooms and give teachers a voice: to highlight good practice and to influence policy and practice in improving effective literacy instruction.

### Method

This is a 2-part questionnaire which examines current practice and knowledge in the teaching of both word reading and language comprehension in Scottish Primary schools. Part One examines the classroom practice of teachers and asks questions about use of resources and provision for struggling readers. Part 2 utilises the Survey of Teacher Understanding of Evidence-Based Literacy Instructional Practice (Hall et al., 2023). There is one open question where teachers shared their views on literacy. 507 of the participants taught P.1 -P.3 and 410 taught P.4- P.7.

### Indicative Findings

- There was variability in teacher's report of practising evidence-based strategies but overall around 80% report practising evidence-based strategies relevant to their teaching group.
- Teacher knowledge of literacy varied across areas of literacy with strongest knowledge in Reading Comprehension and weakest knowledge in Phonics, Decoding and Encoding.
- There was no statistical difference between P.1-P.3 teachers and P.4-P.7 teachers in any areas of knowledge.

- Qualitative data demonstrated that the barriers to effective instruction were similar for all teachers regardless of knowledge: Changing Society, Structural Challenges, and Need for Improved Training.
- In terms of practice, those teachers with more knowledge were more aware of the use of non-evidence-based practices. Those teachers with less knowledge felt more strongly that lack of training in ITE was a concern.

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## School leaders' experiences of policy enactment in a time of crisis: navigating the pandemic and beyond

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**Keywords:** leadership, school leader, policy enactment, pandemic, political literacy

**Theme:** Policy and Education

The closure of schools to all during the COVID-19 pandemic was an extraordinary moment in Scottish education. Schools were not prepared for such an unprecedented event, yet school leaders were expected to quickly assemble new systems for online learning while also supporting the most vulnerable members of their school communities (Mowat & Beck, 2023).

During this period, and the s 'recovery' phase that followed, school leaders found themselves navigating a new world of fast-paced policy decisions made by government and local authorities, often without the involvement of schools. Drawing upon Braun, Maguire and Braun's (2010) model of policy enactment, we explore school leaders' experiences of policy enactment during a time of crisis.

This paper draws from a two-phase qualitative longitudinal study conducted with two cohorts of 'Into Headship' students. In phase one (June 2020), a questionnaire was issued to both cohorts towards the end of the first UK lockdown; in phase two (January 2023), 8 individual interviews and 3 focus group discussions were conducted across secondary, primary and special education sectors. Data was thematically analysed using King and Horrock's (2010) framework.

Despite facing a number of challenges, school leaders demonstrated their ability to navigate an increasingly complex and volatile policy landscape due to an enhanced level of political literacy, the development of which was supported by participation in Into Headship. We reflect on the critical role that Masters-level professional learning can play in supporting school leaders to become confident policy actors, and the implications of this for current education reform.

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## **Coordinating support to children and their families in Iceland**

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**Keywords:** Integration of services, children, families, special educational needs, legislation stipulating coordination of services

**Theme:** Social Justice and inclusion

Accommodation for children with special educational needs and their families can depend on diverse professionals of social services, health care and educational system. Good coordination of services, particularly in the case of children with complex needs can be complicated and does not necessarily happen naturally (e.g. Carière, Gascon and Déschenés, 2013). In later years attention has been drawn to the fact that in Iceland coordination between the different services and institutions that provide support to children and their families has not always been adequate. The ministry of children and education has therefore recently made an effort for improvement, resulting in a new legislation intended to ensure access to and integration of professional services to children and their families. Four pilot municipalities were selected to start implementation of the law.

The paper presents the first results of a small qualitative study intended to explore the experiences of municipal staff that play key roles in implementing the legislation.

Six members of two pilot municipalities were interviewed using semistructured interviews. Data was analysed according to thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2013) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory used as framework.

First results show that the experiences of the participants were on the whole positive. They found the legislation serving its purpose despite some initial difficulties when for example institutions had different working methods. A particularly positive effect is the appointment of a special coordinator to children with more challenging needs and their families which has significantly eased the burden of parents.

**Managing School: Young People Affected by Parental Drug Use in Scotland****Joyce Nicholson, University of Glasgow****Email: Joyce.Nicholson@glasgow.ac.uk****Keywords:** drug use, teacher educators, wellbeing professional curiosity**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Young people whose parents use drugs are present in many classrooms throughout Scotland, but their lived experiences are often hidden. A significant body of evidence has detailed the harms of parental drug use on young people, including effects on academic outcomes, school attendance and school engagement (Alati et al. 2013). Schools are key in enabling the well-being and flourishing of young people and they have a unique role and responsibility in safeguarding.

**Aims**

The study aimed to examine the day-to-day experiences of school of young people affected by parental drug use and teachers' recognition of, and responses to, young people impacted by parental drug use.

**Methods**

Qualitative data was collected in home-based interviews with young people impacted by dependent, long-term parental drug use and in discussion groups with classroom teachers.

**Main findings**

The study found that young people have complex relationships with school and are attempting to mitigate multiple problems, including parental drug use, poverty, and mental health issues. Several strategies to manage school were identified centred around young people's management of stigma(s). There are tensions between young people wanting to be 'under the radar' and have their needs recognised and responded to in school. There is no easy or 'quick fix' to resolve this tension. I argue for the need for teachers and teacher educators to develop a deep understanding and professional curiosity about the lives of young people affected by drug use. This paper offers insights into young people's lives in school and has implications for teacher education.

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**Reconceptualising Health and Wellbeing Pedagogy : Flourishing and Thriving not just Coping and Surviving**

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**Keywords:** Health and Wellbeing, Thriving, Academic Potential, Student Teachers

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The theme of wellbeing has gained significant attention in educational policy in recent years, with a marked increase in investment in mental health awareness and quality care (WHO, 2023) to help individuals cope in a post covid fragile world. To meet the needs of students, universities worldwide have developed a range of interprofessional support services that focus on remedying deficits (Rashid, 2017). These can include counselling services, disability services, student advisors, and academic leaders. However, this surge in support aimed at helping students cope and survive has led to a decline in attention to academic opportunities for students to flourish and thrive, resulting in academics being underutilised to make a meaningful impact in this area (Shavard, 2023). Drawing on Aristotle's work and theories of thriving, the research aimed to investigate student teachers' perceptions of thriving and its application to their academic work. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected from 105 Physical Education Students as part of their degree at the University of Edinburgh. Data revealed the significance of academic health and wellbeing practices within the curriculum that have not been foregrounded in previous studies that contribute to a developing understanding of ways to support students in their studies, provide opportunities to thrive and as a result achieve academic success. These findings are both relevant and timely and may be critical to the development of curriculum design and effective pedagogy that supports our collective, everyday practice preparing students for future challenges in the workplace.

**Teaching Social Studies: Exploring the impact of a transdisciplinary approach towards initial teacher education****William Quirke, Kathryn McCrorie, Sarah Proctor****Keywords:** Initial Teacher Education, Curriculum, Social Studies, Transdisciplinary**Theme:** Curriculum

This article examines the impact of a transdisciplinary approach on the delivery of social studies Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in a Scottish University, particularly focusing on student confidence and impact on their first placement in a secondary school. The restructuring of Scottish secondary schools into faculties, where geography, history, and modern studies are often taught by a single teacher, has prompted a re-evaluation of traditional university-based teacher education, which typically emphasises subject-specific specialism.

A new immersion programme was developed to address this discrepancy, integrating social studies ITE students in a collaborative and immersive learning environment to develop their pedagogical skills and subject knowledge. This study does not critique school restructuring, but rather, explores its influence on early career teachers as they build their professional understanding during ITE.

A deductive approach was taken to assess the effectiveness of the immersion days in enhancing placement outcomes for Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) students specialising in geography, history and modern studies. Data was collected via an online questionnaire administered to all participating students after their first placement, capturing their perceptions of the initiative and its value as professional learning. This data was then triangulated with observations of practice made by the researchers during the student placement period. This research found that students undertaking placement experiences in transdisciplinary social studies departments valued immersion days as a mode of professional learning. The experience of collaboration beyond their core expertise during the immersion days enhanced students' impact on placement.

## Between designing and making: Articulating response-ability in teacher professional learning and development

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**Keywords:** Professional response-ability, Policy Discourse, Curriculum-makers, Curriculum designers, STEAM

**Theme:** Policy and Education

Within the Scottish policy and professional landscape, teachers are positioned as both curriculum ‘makers’ and ‘designers’ (GTCS, 2021), but what do these terms mean to and for teachers working in Scotland? What pedagogical responses and ways of thinking about curriculum do these two terms invoke and what tensions do they surface? While the concept of design places emphasis on resources and a desired aim or goal, making is more closely related to an attitude of sensorial responsiveness and emotional attunement to materials and places (Lahti and Fernstrom, 2021). As both design and making deal with change, they differ in the way they support response-ability (Haraway, 2016; Hoffman, 2023) towards the uncertain and the unexpected: the former is orientated towards problem-solving while the latter finds impetus in the resourceful making-with the situation at hand.

Drawing on a collaborative project with Education Scotland, ten Scottish teachers and two policymakers from across early years, primary and secondary level, we explore these different propositions vis a’ vis the current attention towards ‘interdisciplinary learning’ and the ‘ethos and life of the community’ in the school curriculum (see, <https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/>) as key dimensions of curriculum design. By inviting the teachers and policymakers into an experiential and experimental ‘making space’, we co-created a rich, qualitative data set, including drawings, photographs, sculptures, models and interviews over a series of in-person and virtual workshops. We will draw upon this data to offer some insights into the possibilities (and tensions!) that exist for teachers who are working in times of uncertainty and fragility, to cultivate their ability to respond through careful tinkering – including a reflection of what the arts can offer in terms of seeing, sensing, and doing differently in the current school context.

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## Amplifying Criticality in Health Education Curricula

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**Keywords:** mental health, well-being, curriculum theory, social determinants of health

**Theme:** Curriculum

### Aims

Mental health, a key component of the well-being of children and youth, demands of health education curriculum complex, critical pedagogies. As Kutcher et al. (2018) observe, numerous approaches “ignore the fact that the usual/every day stress response has a purpose – to promote adaptation [...], reach out to others for assistance, engage in social interaction, and thus help create social cohesion” (p. 94). Consequently, we advocate for health education grounded in social determinants of health (SDH) and attentive to the intersectionality of subject positions of both students and teachers.

### Methods

Combining curriculum analysis with a “critical love letter” methodology (Barillas Chón et al., 2024), we query health education tenets from two, Canadian contexts. The resulting, co-created narratives adopt an iterative process, providing both appreciation and critique of health education curriculum.

### Main Findings

SDH offers a framework for learners to engage with mental health and health education concepts in critical ways. Two promising findings emerge from the critical love letters: first, adding complexity to health education classrooms by including both Western and Indigenous epistemologies can serve to broaden health content and decision-making schemas; and second, emphasizing SDH can open up spaces for student agency in the face of systemic inequities.

### Conclusions

Amplifying criticality in health education offers possibilities for improving resilience and reflectiveness of both learners and teachers within overarching discourses that continue to under-emphasize SDH. By resisting discourses of individualism and healthism, our work promotes more socially-just conversations, embracing personal and social sustainability and well-being.

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## Language Leadership: A Case for Gaelic in Initial Teacher Education

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**Keywords:** Gaelic, language teacher education, educational leadership, heritage languages

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

### Aims

More than two decades after *Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural and Social Impact Study* (Kennedy, 2002), commissioned by the provincial government, the availability of provincial, initial teacher education (ITE) programming specializing in Gaelic language instruction remains limited. Through an examination of the historical underpinnings of Gaelic as a “teachable subject” in the province of Nova Scotia, Canada, this paper examines the importance of educational leadership as an influential component of language rights advocacy.

### Methods

Organized in two parts, this paper offers (1) an historical analysis of Gaelic within a recognized cultural group (“The Gaels of Nova Scotia”) and as a teaching specialization, and (2) drawing on Barad’s (2007; Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012) notion of entanglements, provides contemporary possibilities for advancing Gaelic education in ITE. These ‘entanglements’ are theoretically situated in view of post-qualitative perspectives posited by Lather (2016), wherein ‘cartographies of understanding’ make some things possible within a context of agential realism.

### Main Findings

The analysis reveals ways in which public discourses and public funding (or lack thereof) support and impede access to language education, and heritage language education in particular. Examining the entanglements associated with Gaelic in ITE identifies a need to disrupt the hegemonic pervasiveness of English as a monolingual construct in Nova Scotia schools.

### Conclusions

By analysing the entanglements of languages of instruction other than English in Initial Teacher Education programs within an Anglophone context, this work proposes a theoretical framework for advocacy and action as necessary components of language leadership for ITE contexts.

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**Secondary English teachers' perspectives on their responsibility for health and wellbeing: creating the capability and functioning of *Affiliation*****Louise Barrett, University of the West of Scotland****Email: [louise.barrett@uws.ac.uk](mailto:louise.barrett@uws.ac.uk)****Keywords:** wellbeing, English, capabilities, affiliation**Theme:** Curriculum

Drawing on research which used Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (2000, 2006, 2011) as a framework for analysis, this paper aims to explore ways in which teachers of English develop the capability of *Affiliation*. Nussbaum describes capabilities as what a person is able to do and to be, a set of opportunities to make choices and take action. Her definition of *Affiliation* includes being able to "recognise and show concern for other human beings" and "be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others". The research used semi-structured interviews with eight teachers of secondary English to gather their perspectives on the responsibility for health and wellbeing which is assigned to all teachers within Scotland's Curriculum. While varying discourses of wellbeing have been identified within curriculum documentation, Spratt (2016, 2017) notes an absence of the discourse of wellbeing as flourishing. Applying Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as a framework for analysis has enabled perspectives on wellbeing as flourishing to be gleaned. In terms of developing *Affiliation*, participants described using texts to develop pupils' empathy for characters dealing with issues including racism, poverty, homelessness and facial disfigurement. They also referred to exploring the experiences of characters which relate to those of their pupils, such as coping with dyslexia or celebrating Eid, in order to help those pupils feel understood and included. Participants spoke of the importance of building respectful relationships between pupils through group discussion as a foundation for being able to discuss the sensitive issues that arise from literature texts.



## Challenges in Early Childhood Education in Impoverished Areas of China: Teacher Qualifications, Attrition, and Policy Intervention Strategies

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**Keywords:** Professional Qualifications and Development, Teacher Career Support, Education Quality and Inequality, Professional Support Structures

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

In the current society, the importance of early education teachers' resources is becoming increasingly obvious, because they are not only the direct implementers of early childhood enlightenment education, but also the key factors influencing children's future development. Therefore, research on teacher resources is not only a reflection on the current state of education, but also an outlook on the future development of education (Pan, 2016). Despite the successive policies introduced by the Chinese government to improve the level of teachers in impoverished areas, early education in impoverished areas still faces major challenges such as high teacher turnover and a shortage of highly qualified teachers (Li, 2020). These challenges not only hinder the improvement of education quality, but also exacerbate the inequality of education resources (Liu, 2023). This research aims to investigate and describe the challenges of recruiting highly qualified early education teachers in poor areas of China through a theoretical exploration based on an extended literature review methodology, focusing on 26 relevant papers based on the past decade, as well as to explore the specific reasons for the high attrition of early education teachers in these regions and to propose strategies and policy interventions to improve the quality and equity of education. It also provides insights for the next step in empirical research.

The research findings show that limited professional development, poor working conditions, inadequate social support, low personal well-being, and heavy family responsibilities combine to contribute to the high teacher turnover in impoverished areas. Meanwhile, challenges faced by poor areas in recruiting high-quality early childhood teachers include low salary, limited career advancement opportunities, poor working environment, and insufficient welfare benefits, which undermine the ability of these areas to attract high-quality teachers.

In response, the following policy and strategy recommendations are put forward. Firstly, the government and education departments can improve the salaries and benefits of early education teachers in poor areas. Furthermore, local education departments and schools can provide these teachers with regular professional training and clear career advancement paths. In addition, schools can improve the working environment. Moreover, raising public awareness of the importance of the profession of kindergarten teachers in impoverished areas. The combined implementation of these measures can increase the attractiveness of poverty-stricken areas to high-quality teachers and improve the quality of education in poor areas.

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**Teacher as theorist – rising from the swampy lowlands**

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**Keywords:** teacher as theorist, insider perspective

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

This paper argues for a reawakening of the concept of the teacher both as researcher and theorist. It aims to dispel the notion of a hierarchical educational research model in terms of positioning teachers as practitioners in the ‘swampy lowland’ (Schon 1995) while academics occupy the lofty ‘high hard ground’ of research. It argues that teachers themselves should be considered as competent researchers who envisage research in their practice as being pivotal to their professionalism and who generate new theory from that process.

This paper draws on and promotes the methodologies of educational action research, Living Educational Theory research and self-study. It is a creative form of research that is undertaken from an insider perspective and it seeks to capture the lived reality of the researcher and their context. Few teacher-research accounts are publicly shared or presented in academic settings that have an impact on policy in education (Glenn et al. 2023). Yet, teacher-research accounts are pivotal to generating new educational knowledge. The invaluable insight of teachers into their local context needs to be heard in discourses pertaining to education and educational policy –alongside the more traditional forms of education research. The role of the teacher as researcher is of greater importance now than ever before in our fragile world.

A need has now arisen to position teachers as a community of competent researchers who ask new questions about their practice, generate theory from their learning and make a contribution to the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead 2016) in challenging times.

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## **The Invisible Hurdles Confronting Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) Students in Advancing Through Formal Education to Further or Higher Education in Ireland**

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**Keywords:** Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Low Socioeconomic Status, Equity Theme: Social Justice and Inclusion

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Equity in higher education access is a central concern for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland, as evidenced by the Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation, and Success 2022–2028, known as the National Access Plan (HEA, 2023). Despite ongoing efforts, only 10% of students in Irish higher education come from low socio-economic status (LSES) backgrounds, while 20% hail from affluent areas, with disparities magnified in specific courses such as medical, finance, engineering, and National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels (Carroll, 2022). This raises the question: what are we missing? This paper presents preliminary findings from a doctoral research study exploring the impact of social and cultural capital on the educational progression of students from LSES backgrounds attending DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) post-primary schools in Ireland. The study addresses Irish national findings from the Pobal HP Deprivation Index (Pobal, 2023), which reports the barriers posed by social and cultural factors to the educational prospects of LSES students. The first phase of data collection aims to understand the challenges faced by LSES students from their own perspectives through qualitative methods including questionnaires and focus groups. The research design employs an exploratory case study approach that acknowledges a broader spectrum of social and cultural barriers and the impact on the student, parent, family and community. The study aims to contribute to ongoing efforts to promote equity in education and advance policies and initiatives that will ensure equal access to progression routes in education and training for all students.

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**Analysis of twenty-five years of Scottish and English assessment policy****Michael Taylor, University of Glasgow****Email: m.taylor.2@research.gla.ac.uk****Aims**

To explore the key themes of assessment policy in Scotland and England since 1998 to critically analyse areas of commonality and divergence. The ways in which assessment processes are described and idealised within these documents will be explored.

**Methods**

This work reviews policy literature over the past twenty-five years using an inductive framework. Starting with the texts, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022) is used to extract and explore developing themes that emerge from the policy documents. These themes can naturally emerge to suggest meaning and contradictions within texts.

Using ideas from Ball (1993) which transforms notions of policy as mere text but also discourse. Whilst analysis of the text is important, acknowledging the wider social interactions and non-interactions with it are also included. In addition, Ball's (2021, p. 7) warnings that 'we must never confuse the claims and assertions of policymakers with the enactment and effects of policy on and through practice' are pertinent to this work and decisions to not just review policy texts but to look at the wider effects of policy processes over the past twenty-five years.

**Main findings**

Education in Scotland has traditionally been proud to have many key differences from its neighbours in England. The formal devolvement of power over education to the Scottish government in 1998 however, marked a potential for increased divergence of policy and practice. Whilst some key policy differences were initiated with Curriculum for Excellence and many reforms to national assessments have been made, there remain many key similarities to how assessment processes operate in these two nations.

**Conclusions**

Scotland and England have both pursued political changes to assessment processes in a bid to drive educational change. These changes have had mixed success, leading the two countries to shift their priorities and sometimes steer multiple directions simultaneously. Purposes such as accountability and demonstrating improvements in national education standards have often taken priority, while policy documents describe the use of assessment for formative purposes as continuing without tension.

## **Drama Education in the primary classroom in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** drama, primary, teacher confidence

**Theme:** Curriculum

Drama education in the primary setting is an under researched area, especially within the Scottish context. The aim of this research project was to develop an understanding of drama education in Scottish primary schools provided by non-specialist primary teachers.

The study drew on data from a mixed methods questionnaire of 83 Scottish primary teachers' views on drama education. An information request was also sent to all Scottish ITE providers for details of drama content in Primary Education programmes.

Almost all teachers (93%) indicated that they believed drama to be an important area of the curriculum. However, a quarter stated that it was either non-existent or nearly non-existent in their schools. Despite their view on its importance, many respondents said that they lacked confidence in planning and delivering a connected drama curriculum, and almost half felt primary drama should be taught by a specialist. A majority of teachers indicated that they did not feel prepared to teach drama through their initial teacher education experiences and that there was a scarcity of professional learning opportunities in drama. Interestingly, almost half the responding teachers indicated that their conceptualisation of drama did not completely align to education policy, raising questions about the effectiveness of curriculum guidance, as well as a need to evaluate teacher understanding of drama education.

These findings will be discussed in greater detail in relation to national and international drama education theory, policy and practice; and a set of recommendations will be shared for discussion.

**Grounding teacher-learner relationships in professional practice: striking a balance in a fragile world****Paul McMillan, Charles Anderson, Mike Jess, University of Edinburgh****Email: paul.mcmillan@ed.ac.uk****Keywords:** Teachers, Learners, Relationships, Learning**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning**Background**

There has been increasing interest in teacher-learner relationships in research and policy since the 1990s (Aspelin, 2022). The benefits of establishing positive relationships are well documented (e.g., improved behaviour, raised attainment, increased attendance); and when one views the world as fragile a focus on relationships becomes particularly salient. However, much of contemporary research on relationships is guided by theoretical frameworks rather than examining how accomplished teachers represent relationships with learners.

**Methods**

Underpinned by grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), the study built a novel interpretation of teacher-learner relationships. In-depth interviews were conducted with six teachers in different schools committed to building relationships with learners. Interview transcripts were analysed inductively and a theoretical frame was constructed to capture key insights into how participants viewed and built relationships with learners.

**Main Findings**

Findings indicate that relationship building is an ongoing, shifting and dynamic endeavour with the pursuit of learning at its heart. At the conference we will present how the participants negotiated different dilemmas and, at times, had to strike a difficult balance between various instrumental (e.g., timetables, class sizes, learning needs of individuals and groups in classes) and moral (e.g., mutual respect, caring, recognition, restorative justice) matters.

**Conclusion**

The findings extend existing literature by providing detailed insights into how relationships are viewed and continuously constructed and repaired by teachers in school contexts. Recognising such tensions and dilemmas can assist teachers to negotiate the local and wider challenges of relationship building.



**Complexity leadership in unpredictable and unstable times: insights from senior leaders leading collaborative inquiry****Paul McMillan and Mike Jess, University of Edinburgh****Email: paul.mcmillan@ed.ac.uk****Keywords:** Senior Leaders, Leadership, Schools, Collaborative Inquiry, Lesson Study, Complexity Thinking**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning**Background**

While complexity thinking has informed organisational leadership since the 1990s, it has received comparatively less attention than other leadership perspectives (Daniels, 2019). However, the increasingly dynamic, demanding and unpredictable nature of education has created a climate that increasingly requires insights from complexity leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2007). As such, the current study shares insights from senior leaders leading a collaborative inquiry initiative in their schools. Analysis of their practice through a complexity leadership lens provides valuable, practice-led examples for this lesser-known leadership perspective.

**Methods**

This longitudinal study, initiated in 2019, has periodically conducted focus group interviews with senior leadership teams at two Scottish secondary schools. Eight focus group interviews (school 1: n = 4; school 2: n = 4) were conducted between 2020 – 2024 and data were analysed deductively using the following complexity leadership concepts: 'open systems', 'self-organisation', 'emergence', 'interconnectivity'.

**Main Findings**

Viewing the school as an open system, senior leaders provided freedom for self-organisation and emergence by encouraging teacher colleagues to work together and select the focus for their inquiry projects. However, for this rich interconnectivity between teachers to prevail, senior leaders needed to create the space and time within the system by negotiating working time agreements and balancing wider operational tensions from outside the school environments.

**Conclusion**

The findings broaden existing literature by providing long-term, practice-led examples of complexity leadership within education. Recognising the dynamics of an open system was central for senior leaders to leverage the innovative and operational potential within and beyond their schools.

**Primary school teachers, mathematics and social justice****Pete Wright, University of Dundee****Email: pwright002@dundee.ac.uk****Caroline Hilton, University College London****Email: caroline.hilton@ucl.ac.uk****Joel Kelly, The Blue School****Email: joel.kelly@theblueschool.com****Keywords:** Primary mathematics, social justice, socio-mathematical agency, participatory action research**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion/Curriculum

Our recent collaborative work with primary school teachers has focused on exploring ways of tackling social justice issues through teaching mathematics. Whilst making the world a better place is a common motivation for teachers, they often lack confidence in enabling students to harness the power of mathematics in understanding social justice issues and developing arguments for change. We previously reported (SERA Conference 2023) on the Primary Maths & Social Justice (PMSJ) project and its positive impact on learners' 'socio-mathematical agency'. In this presentation we focus on the development of teacher agency.

The PMSJ participatory action research project was a collaboration with six teacher researchers in two London primary schools, which involved meeting to discuss relevant research literature and planning/evaluating two research lessons. We interviewed each teacher researcher at the beginning/end of the project to capture their experiences/reflections. A follow-up study involved interviewing most teachers in one school to explore the wider and sustained impact of the project on classroom practice. The interviews were recorded, and a thematic analysis carried out on the data. The findings show how the mutually supportive approach enabled teachers to challenge their own (and their students') previous views of mathematics. They became increasingly able to recognise links between social justice issues and mathematics learning and identify opportunities to develop these within the existing curriculum. We conclude that such an approach can foster teachers' agency in cultivating the knowledge, skills and dispositions in learners that are needed to address the social, environmental and economic challenges facing society.

## The Tangled Experiences of Belonging to The Global South and Conducting Research in the Same Context

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**Keywords:** Reflexivity, Fieldwork, Global South, Early Career Researcher

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

There is an increased understanding and acceptance of the contextual complexities that an education researcher encounters while researching in a non-western context. Cross-cultural education research often requires researchers to constantly reflect upon their positions, identities, and ideologies (Naveed et al., 2017). Researchers are often required to navigate across borders while dealing with the ethical standards stipulated by Western universities. Often, these standards do not necessarily fit in the local contexts and cause further complications in recruiting participants and conducting the research (Tikly and Bond, 2013). There is an urgent need to unpack further the nuances of the contextual complexities of conducting research in these differing contexts, but an important dimension that seems to be under-explored is exploring the experiences of researchers from the Global South studying their own contexts.

Through this presentation, using specific examples, I aim to share my experiences and challenges of conducting fieldwork in my own global-south context as a doctoral candidate. I will discuss, how I used culturally contextual practices to collaborate with participants, both teachers and learners, to generate data. I will also talk about how creative approaches such as arts and craft and drama, aided us in challenging the power dynamics between different participants and created a space where they could freely engage with one another. Finally, I will be explaining how reflexivity helped me navigate these blurred areas including my identity as a researcher, pressures from the university to 'maintain' ethical standards, my country's structural inequalities, my own positionality.

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## Education for Sustainable Development to Promote Authentic Relatedness to the World

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**Keywords:** Sustainability, Transformative Education, Authentic Learning, SDGs

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

"The crisis of the earth is not a crisis of Nature but a crisis of society" (Foster 1999, p. 13). Transformative education is widely recognised as a long-term solution for the societal crisis. In the past five decades, we see emergence of new educational concepts and discourses with an underlying aim of societal transformation. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is one of these concepts. ESD has been widely promoted globally during the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). UNESCO's framework ESD for 2030 has recognised ESD as a tool to achieve 17 sustainable development goals. Although ESD is a dominant global educational discourse, its impact in terms of increased socio-economic justice or lower carbon emissions is not visible; rather we see a constant increase in carbon emissions and inequalities. I argue that one possible reason for the lack of impact of ESD is a narrow or technical conceptualisation of ESD where ESD is mostly viewed as a tool to raise learners' awareness of sustainability issues and changing individuals' behaviours to make them pro-environmental. Such a conceptualisation of ESD is rooted in "information deficit model" which sees knowledge/information about sustainability as a pre-condition for a change in behaviour (Rabinovich et al., 2022). I critique this conceptualisation of ESD and argue that unsustainability is not a simple issue of lack of awareness of (un)sustainability rather an issue of injustice, 'alienation' or 'otherness' and that ESD. . ESD should aim at empowering the learners to build authentic relationships with their world (humans and non-humans). Drawing on the Critical Theory, theory of transformative learning and eco-justice, I argue that building authentic relationships requires understanding of one's *situationality* (Freire, 1970), challenging one's *for-granted assumptions* (Mezirow, 1978, 2006), co-constructing new knowledge, and engaging in actions for socio-economic and ecological justice. Using Erich Fromm's (a notable Critical Theorist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) ideas of 'being' mode of existence and education in 'being' mode, I contend that ESD is a kind of education that engages learners in non-alienated activities or authentic learning processes such as: critical reflection, systems thinking, collaboration, critical dialogue, and pro-sustainability actions. These processes can help the learners to question their *taken-for granted, unjust* assumptions, co-construct new knowledge, understand their *situationality* and transform it to contribute towards a more just and sustainable world.

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## **Agency and Female Disengagement: Investigating Empowering and Controlling Influences Throughout Teachers' Practice**

**Rachael Downs**

**Theme:** Professional and vocational learning

### **Aim**

To provide an insight into the empowering and controlling influences teachers' face when tackling the contemporary concern of female disengagement in Physical Education. To develop an understanding of teacher strategies adopted to enhance female engagement in certificated Physical Education.

### **Method**

Beista, Priestly and Robinson's (2015) ecological model of agency was utilised as framework to gather and analyse data gathered on one male PE teacher within Falkirk council and his adapted practice to enhance female engagement in his certificated PE class. Throughout a nine-week process, the researcher observed eighteen lessons. In addition, interviews were conducted at the start, middle and end to gauge an understanding of the participants past teaching and life experiences, current contexts for teaching and future aspirations.

### **Main Findings**

The study highlighted the desire for all-girls PE classes as well as an adapted curriculum, but commonly with less competitive females. Strong student-teacher relationships were identified as an essential factor in the likelihood of participation but barriers remained.

### **Conclusion**

This study concluded that wide-ranging factors both empowered and controlled the extent to which the participant could exercise his agency, when tackling the contemporary concern of female disengagement in PE. It was evident that social support from his colleagues tied together with a strong sense of self were empowering, some factors - school structures and timetabling – were deemed out with the participants control and inhibited his ability to enhance the participation in his classes.

**The efficacy of educational policies in advancing citizenship education and promoting children's democratic participation in Ghana**

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**Keywords:** Citizenship education, Diversity, Inclusion, Democratic participation

**Theme:** Policy and Education

The aim of this research is to examine the influence of Ghana's post-independence education policies and reforms in promoting citizenship education in Ghanaian basic schools. Also, it addresses the challenges of citizenship education and democratic participation among children in Ghana, a nation grappling with the complexities of embracing diversity and social inclusion. The research is based on the recognition that a multi-ethnic society such as Ghana faces the challenge of balancing a unified concept of citizenship with respect for diverse identities.

Therefore, through historical policy analysis and relevant literature examination, we analysed how well education policies promote citizenship education in basic schools in Ghana. Our analysis and review drew from a variety of policy and reform documents and legal frameworks relating to the implementation of citizenship education in Ghana.

The research finds a historical interplay between democratic values, human rights discourse, nationalism, economic development, and cultural preservation. Key findings highlight challenges such as effective management, fairness, inclusiveness, and social accountability within citizenship education. Additionally, the study reveals that Ghana's citizenship education is primarily influenced by liberalist ideology, which presents a skewed perspective on children's citizenship participation, inclusion, and diversity.

The findings of this research will provide valuable insights for education policymakers, assisting them in contextualizing the concept of citizenship education within both historical and modern contexts. Finally, the findings will enlighten stakeholders about the importance of broadening the reach of citizenship education beyond traditional school environments.

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**Did we do a good job? Rural students evaluate their education and learning**

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**Keywords:** Rural education, educational assessment, student perceptions

**Theme:** Assessment and evaluation

Small rural schools with less than 100 students are unique in their structure and their operations. With graduating classes commonly featuring less than 10 students, the experiences of students and perceptions of alumni are very distinctive. This presentation presents new data from a qualitative study involving six graduates of a very small school in one Rocky Mountain state. Through a series of in-depth interviews, findings related to school effectiveness, district climate and culture, and missed learning opportunities were discovered and placed within the small-school context and concepts related to place.

This work builds upon recent scholarship that has focused on the experiences of small schools (Gristly, 2023; Midha, 2024; Tatbe, 2021). Understanding the challenges and opportunities related to attending schools where class sizes can be as small as one or two, provides insight into the role that schools play in individual lives and the larger communities where these schools are located.

The findings associated with this research are clear. Graduates of small schools see a well-defined benefit to attending such a small high school, despite the inherent limitations present in schools with limited faculty, technology, and the lack of diversity. Most respondents recognized that there were significant failings in their experience, but found the opportunities for leadership, participation in athletics, and autonomy made up for any limitations found in small schools. Future research on this topic will focus on the variance found in rural schools in regions based on agriculture when compared to local economies based on tourism.

**Promoting transformative change through educational research: Participatory Action Research and Design Thinking for Social Innovation****Ruth Jörgensdóttir Rauterberg, University of Iceland**

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**Keywords:** inclusive education, social innovation, participatory action research, innovative research methods**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

Inclusive education challenges educational researchers, as it calls for transformative processes to remove barriers and foster participation and learning for all. These challenges require methodological innovation that gives critical insights into how these processes can be designed to have a social impact. Social innovation addresses societal challenges through positive action, while design thinking sparks innovation by generating ideas that can be used to find solutions.

This presentation explores how participatory action research (PAR) and ideas of social innovation can merge to create more inclusive schools and society. The authors draw on the results, experiences and learning from a PAR study conducted in an Icelandic comprehensive school. The study aimed to involve children in inclusive school development and create collaborative spaces where children and adults work together to find effective solutions for participation. The PAR process was structured around five collaborative cycles incorporating basic design thinking principles. Through creative conceptualization and dialogue, participants identified needs for change. They engaged in collective data analysis and joint reflection to generate ideas, develop solutions, and make shared decisions on testing and implementing new practices.

Findings show that the PAR methodology introduced innovative approaches to collaborating with children and fostered new ways of collaboration. This interactive process highlighted areas needing development, provided a platform for innovative and collective thinking, and led to changes in practice, new solutions and measurable social impact. In conclusion, the authors discuss the potential of PAR as an innovative research method contributing to transformative change in the field of education.



## Exploration of how effectively Scottish Qualifications Authority is supporting net-zero policies and lifelong learning?

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**Keywords:** net-zero, green economy, survey, qualifications

**Theme:** Policy and Education

### Background

The Scottish Government has set a target to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2045 (<https://www.netzeronation.scot/>). The transition to a net-zero economy will reshape all day-to-day life, including the type of work we do. Therefore, it is important to understand how well the education system is developing skills for a greener economy.

### Aim

Using administrative data and primary research, this project aimed to explore how Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)'s qualifications align with our stakeholders' perceptions, existing policies, and wider research on green skills.

### Method

We reviewed 455 SQA qualifications and 10,266 units to quantify the provision of green skills, for the first time. A survey on awareness and demand of green skills was conducted with 1849 stakeholders (learners, practitioners, employers, and parents/carers) from September-October 2023. The results were analysed using descriptive statistics.

### Main Findings

Awareness of net-zero policy terminology was lowest among learners compared to other stakeholder groups. Energy was recognised as an important sector by 93% of employers and only 33% of learners. Awareness may also be linked to lower uptake of relevant SQA qualifications.

SQA provides a range of qualifications and units for green skills. Roughly 31% percent of all SQA qualifications that were reviewed were in a 'green' sectors. However, these sectors made up only 12% of all entries on average, suggesting demand for these qualifications could be improved.

This research highlights several opportunities for SQA's provision of qualifications to be developed to meet stakeholder needs and support the net-zero agenda better.

## Mapping the sociomaterial: Towards new research possibilities through the lens of Actor-Network Theory and Social Network Analysis

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**Keywords:** Actor-network theory, social network analysis, higher education, education for sustainable development

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

### **Aims**

This paper presents an innovative research method that combines actor-network theory (ANT) and social network analysis (SNA). This combination provides a unique perspective for analysing and visualising the formation of a specific sociomaterial phenomenon – pedagogical practices of education for sustainable development (ESD) in higher education institutions (HEIs). The benefits and limitations of using ANT with SNA are retrospectively evaluated to develop further methodological possibilities for broader educational research contexts.

### **Methods**

ANT's emphasis on the equivalent agency of human and non-human actors and their interrelations allowed us to make ESD teaching and learning practices within HEIs more visible. To achieve this, a document analysis method was adopted. We sourced publicly available sustainability reports and ESD-related web pages of eight Scottish HEIs to understand how ESD pedagogies are enacted. Firstly, we identified the corresponding actors, networks, and interrelations captured in the reports and web pages. Secondly, using SNA, we visualised this analysis to produce a map representing the actors and how they relate to one another.

### **Main Findings**

This method provides a novel way to model an ANT analysis using the visual mapping tools of SNA in a qualitative inquiry. We also discuss several challenges in conducting our experimental analysis regarding scope and analytical (in)consistency. Our methodological approach resulted in an aggregated map of ESD pedagogical practices not only existing in a specific university but also potentially implemented across the sector. This paper reflects on the possibilities of this approach to offer a new way of researching and visualising educational practices.

**Policy Rhetoric or Meaningful Collaboration? Community and Youth Workers within Schools****Sinéad Gormally, Anne McGreechin, Helen Martin, Amanda McDonald****Keywords:** Community Development, Youth Work, Community Learning, Informal Education**Theme:** Community Education and Learning**Context**

Recently (2023) Scotland has concluded a national discussion on the education system. There is recognition of the need to re-evaluate the focus of education to ensure it is an agile and responsive system that works for, and with, all young people. The report found “One very strong theme...was the importance of valuing and appreciating all educational professionals working with and within schools” (Scottish Government, 2023). Similarly, the National Youth Agency have produced a report, ‘Better together: Youth work with schools Complementing formal education to change young lives’ (2023) exploring the benefits of partnership working and the positive impacts for children and young people.

**Aims**

With this context, lecturers from across the School of Education at the University of Glasgow have been working together for the past 5 years on developing integrated teaching materials and forging new links for community development and youth work students to undertake professional practice in school settings. Drawing on interview data, this research aims to produce a range of recommendations for school leaders, policy makers and informal educators on partnership working and exploring the potential to utilise diverse yet complimentary approaches to education.

**Methods**

In-depth qualitative interviews have been conducted with 16 participants including students, school leaders and educational partners. Whilst this is a relatively small sample size, the use of thematic analysis has produced insightful conclusions and areas for reflection on professional practice locally, nationally and internationally.

**Conclusion**

This paper concludes by highlighting the differing approaches adopted to engagement in informal and formal education and questions if youth and community work and formal schooling can forge positive collaborations where young people’s needs are genuinely prioritised over policy rhetoric.

**Embracing diversity through mining funds of crafts knowledge****Soffía Valdimarsdóttir, University of Iceland****Email: soffia@hi.is****Svanborg R. Jónsdóttir, University of Iceland****Email: svanjons@hi.is****Keywords:** craft knowledge, diversity, funds of knowledge, informal education**Theme:** Social justice and inclusion

Perspectives on acquiring knowledge and the value of different types of knowledge are undergoing interesting changes in individualized late-modern society. Cultural knowledge and personal competencies are gaining importance alongside the prior ruling form of knowledge acquired through formal education. In Iceland for instance, demand and supply of in-person learning opportunities in crafts are skyrocketing, as well as local and international online options. A common factor is the type of knowledge being transmitted and received, that is, *craft knowledge*.

This presentation reports preliminary findings of a qualitative study conducted in Iceland in 2024 amongst transmitters and receivers of craft knowledge in informal educational settings. The purpose of the research is to shed a light on what educational potentials and purposes crafts knowledge may hold in contemporary society. The aim of the study was to gain an insight into the participants' ideas and attitudes towards craft knowledge.

The research is based on participation observation, semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, and field notes. Constant comparison method was used during data collection and thematic analysis was conducted. Emerging themes were discussed with members of the focus group for validation.

Findings indicate multiple strands of educational potentials and purposes. Among interesting ones is bridging cultural gaps between different multicultural groups. Findings also indicate *opportunities to embrace diversity* through the ideology of funds of knowledge. In the light of my findings, I argue the importance of acknowledging and including more and different educational venues than only formal educational settings for the sake of social justice.

**Wellbeing for all: How a Scottish secondary school conceptualises health and wellbeing support for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils****Stephanie Hardley, Shirley Gray, Ruth McQuillan, University of Edinburgh****Email: shardley@ed.ac.uk****Keywords:** health and wellbeing, children and young people, socioeconomic disadvantage, curriculum**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion**Aim**

Scottish national education policy emphasises an integrated, ‘whole school’ approach to health and wellbeing (HWB) promotion for all students; however, this can be challenging because schools must adapt policy guidance for their own local context. Furthermore, little is known about how staff in schools serving primarily affluent populations understand and implement policy to support wellbeing when they have a minority intake of lower socioeconomic status (SES) pupils. Therefore, this study aimed to understand the key factors which influenced how educators from a school serving predominantly affluent pupils conceptualised their HWB practices, especially for those from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds.

**Methods**

A strengths-based qualitative case study methodology was adopted to examine school policy documents along with individual and dyadic interviews in order to provide an in-depth, situated account of the school context and practices. Data were analysed thematically to identify influential factors which impacted educators’ practices to support whole school HWB, particularly for lower SES pupils.

**Findings**

The study identified four interconnected factors which influenced and facilitated the educators’ practices: school ethos, relationships, leadership, and educators’ identity. These findings suggest a shared holistic understanding of HWB and a multifactorial, whole school approach to supporting wellbeing. However, understanding the specific needs of lower SES pupils was challenging due to concerns about stigmatisation. The findings suggest that schools may need extra support and training to assess the needs of lower SES pupils and evaluate the effectiveness of HWB initiatives, especially those targeted for socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.

**Leadership for wellbeing: How a Scottish secondary school embeds whole school health and wellbeing****Stephanie Hardley, Shirley Gray, Ruth McQuillan, University of Edinburgh****Email: shardley@ed.ac.uk****Keywords:** school leadership, whole school approach, health and wellbeing, teaching**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning**Aims**

Scottish education policy recognises the importance of leadership to create the conditions conducive to a 'whole school' approach to supporting health and wellbeing (HWB). However, this can be challenging as individual schools and school leaders must each negotiate unique contextual factors which can enable or constrain practice. This study aimed to explore how leadership influenced (and was influenced by) the priorities, ethos, relationships, and practices in a school serving predominantly affluent pupils but with a minority from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds.

**Methods**

A strengths-based, qualitative case study approach was used to gather semi-structured individual and dyadic interview data to explore the experiences of educators in the specific context of an affluent school with a minority population of lower SES pupils. Thematic analysis was used to identify the leadership characteristics highlighted by participants as contributing to successful whole school HWB promotion.

**Findings**

This study explored the characteristics of school leadership which were deemed to enable and facilitate whole school HWB support, especially educators' practices. Drawing on leadership theories seen in the literature, the findings suggest school leaders integrated two leadership styles: transformational (e.g., focused on building shared purpose and collaborative culture) and pedagogical (e.g., focused on strategies to enhance teaching and learning) to support whole school approaches for wellbeing promotion. These leadership styles had effects on school organisation and culture, as well as collegiality, power-sharing, and buy-in from educators which may support whole school HWB and may have implications for leadership training.

## Developing Young Workers: A critical exploration of ‘work inspiration’ activities and the role of school in preparing young people for work

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**Keywords:** Policy, work, careers

**Theme:** Policy and Education

This paper aims to critically engage with the Scottish Government youth employment policy, ‘Developing the Young Workforce’ (known as DYW) and focus specifically on how the link between exposure to work and eventual employment is understood. Drawing on the work of Brown (2015), I argue that young people are positioned within this strategy as ‘homo oeconomicus’ or human capital. In this way, they are responsible for their own economic destiny and schools and teachers are encouraged to broker exposure to work, working and workplaces. Such exposure is positioned, in DYW documentation, as universally good.

I focus on one such type of activity specifically – a category called ‘work inspiration’. No concrete definition of this exists in the DYW (2014) strategy but a content analysis of 107 ‘work inspiration and preparation’ entries in the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) DYW Marketplace online tool reveals that these activities are typically awareness-raising in nature or focus on generic employability skills that are deemed to be useful in any line of work. In addition, these opportunities are presented as separate to other, broader programmes of career advice.

As such, I argue that these types of activities lack a meaningful connection to the lives of the young people participating in them – an aspect that is considered key to effective career development, including by SDS (see Hooley et al, 2021). Further, I discuss how the promotion of any and all contact with work, working and workplaces through schools as the ‘solution’ to the ‘problem’ of youth unemployment is predicated on a deficit view of young people and the role of school in preparing young people to contribute to society (see also Prendergast, 2020). I conclude by questioning whether these ‘apparently benign’ (Prendergast, 2020 p274) work inspiration activities may be taking up time when young people could, more usefully, be considering their own personal goals and aspirations and what support they might need to achieve these.

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## Characterising Scottish in-service primary and secondary school teachers' attitudes towards Learning for Sustainability

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Julie Isdale, University of the West of Scotland

**Keywords:** Learning for Sustainability, Self-Efficacy, Attitude, Professional Development

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Sustainability is a hot topic in educational policy terms since education is seen by politicians as the focus for policies that support governmental aims designed to reduce societies impact on the environment. Teachers are pivotal to efforts to bringing about the social change required to lead to a more sustainable future. Teachers' attitudes are important as they influence their cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses which impacts what and how they think, feel, and act professionally. This research aims to explore teachers' attitudes towards Learning for Sustainability (LfS) by answering the research questions, *do in-service primary and secondary teachers' hold positive attitudes towards LfS?* and *Do primary teachers' attitude towards LfS differ from that of Secondary teachers?* The research used an online survey to gather Scottish In-service Primary and Secondary teachers attitudes towards LfS. The survey contained 77 items across 10 sub-scales (Self-efficacy, Anxiety, Context Dependency, Relevance, Difficulty, Enjoyment, Conceptualisation of LfS, Limitations of LfS, Teacher Action, Government Policy Action). A total of 66 Primary and 88 Secondary teachers completed the online survey. Findings indicate that both primary and secondary teachers hold positive attitudes towards LfS but that primary teachers are statistically more positive than secondary teachers in terms of self-efficacy, enjoyment, and relevance. Interestingly, context dependency is not correlated with self-efficacy. The data indicates that 40.6% of primary teachers and 50.8% of secondary teachers do not know where to find quality professional development relating to LfS. University based Teacher Education needs to develop high quality professional development courses relating to LfS.



**Hope and Cultural Conflict – The Dilemma of Cristo Rey Schools in America****Julie Robinson, University of Glasgow****Pauline Cooney, University of Glasgow****Stephen McKinney, University of Glasgow**  
**Email: Stephen.mckinney@glasgow.ac.uk****Keywords:** Cristo Rey, Catholic schools, Jesuits, Social inclusion**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion**Aim**

The aim of this paper is to critically examine the vision and operation of the Jesuit founded Cristo Rey schools in America. These schools are designed to provide greater educational opportunities for marginalised and ethnic minority working-class young people in areas of deprivation.

**Methods**

The paper draws on documentary analysis that examined a wide range of relevant literature. The documents analysed consisted of many different types: official reports; primary historical accounts of Jesuit education in America and Cristo Rey schools and research literature on Jesuit education.

**Findings**

Cristo Rey schools are very successful in supporting marginalised young people into higher education. Around half of the young people move on to study at a partner university. As part of the funding stream for attending the school, the young people are expected to work one day a week on a corporate placement (which provides 60% of the fees). Part of the work placement is the provision of a designated one-to-one mentor and there are many examples of rich, relational dynamics being forged between the young person and the mentor. While the Cristo Rey schools successfully promote greater opportunities for these marginalised young people, there are searching social justice questions about the Cristo Rey model of schooling. This research team has categorised them as follows: the (inevitable) engagement with capitalism; the expectation that school pupils will work for their education; tensions in the two-tier system in Jesuit schools in America that includes private schooling and public schooling and a class and cultural dissonance between the young people and the rest of the school community. These complex findings present some serious challenges for the claims that these schools follow a Christian preferential option for the poor.

**Poverty Experienced by Students in Higher Education in Scotland****Lindsay Gibson, University of Glasgow****Evelyn McLaren, University of Glasgow****Stephen McKinney, University of Glasgow**  
**Email: Stephen.mckinney@glasgow.ac.uk****Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion**Aims**

There is very limited research on the impact of poverty on students in further and higher education in the UK. This research sought to begin to redress this gap in research and focussed on the poverty experienced by students in Higher Education, including an undergraduate initial teacher education (ITE) degree programme in a Scottish university.

**Methods**

An extensive literature review revealed the key themes of poverty in higher education in America are the cost of higher education; housing insecurity; the demands of part time work and food insecurity. These key themes were applied to the limited research literature in the UK and there was, overall, a high level of consonance. One of the major identified exceptions is the poverty experienced by students on a Scottish undergraduate ITE programme. This was revealed by mixed methods research. First, survey responses from 218 students (41%) on years one to four (and the optional fifth year at Masters' level) on an initial teacher education (ITE) programme (total n= 532). Second, follow-up interviews with ten student volunteers.

**Main Findings**

The main findings indicate that there are high levels of poverty experienced by many students in Higher Education in Scotland and the rest of the UK. One of the key questions focusses on the interventions that can support these students and what types of interventions are appropriate for different student cohorts. The paper concludes by providing examples of successful interventions at local levels.

## Exploring Religious Education in Scottish Schools through a Festival of Learning Professional Learning Event

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**Keywords:** Religious Education, Professional Learning, Curriculum, Collaboration

**Theme:** Curriculum

Religious Education (RE) is a distinct curricular area and should, legally, be delivered to all learners across the primary and secondary education stages in Scotland. National reports and ongoing research have, however, continually recognised gaps in provision and issues with quality (Scholes, 2022; Robertson *et al.*, 2017; Education Scotland, 2014). This paper aims to share the learning from a collaborative research project between the Scottish Teachers Association of Religious and Moral Education (STARME) and Queen Margaret University, that seeks to improve the extent and quality of RE provision.

This paper focuses on STARME's Festival of Learning (FoL) event, held in May 2024. The event featured keynote addresses from the Cabinet Secretary of Education and Skills and an expert practitioner, fourteen presentations from teachers, academics, representatives from organisations interested in RE, and exhibitions from companies, groups, and agencies connected to the subject in various ways. Via analysis of a qualitative evaluation survey (currently with thirty-six responses), responsive interviews with four participants from the day of the event and analysis of focus groups, this paper will offer an evaluation of the event and what was learned about RE provision from it.

The paper will highlight RE practitioners' motivations for and preferences regarding professional learning opportunities and draw out their views on the event's potential impact on practice. Moreover, it will connect with the recent scholarship by further analysing the challenges facing RE provision and ways to secure and improve RE in Scotland's schools.

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**'We can't get it right for the children until we get the parents sorted': exploring practitioners' perceptions of family learning in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** early learning and childcare, family learning curriculum, educational policy, workforce conditions

**Theme:** Policy and Education/Curriculum

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, family learning was already under-researched in Scotland, particularly within Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). Whilst more recent research on family learning remains scant (cf. Crew, 2020; Arnott and Teichert, 2022; Macleod and Tett, 2022), most conclude family learning practice as a means to address social cohesion and improve educational outcomes (Fitzpatrick, 2024).

Concurrently, patterns of ELC provision have altered the implementation of 1140 hours of free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds, and eligible 2-year-olds (Scottish Government, 2024). However, the degree to which these changes have affected family learning practices is unknown. This paper reports on the findings of a small-scale mixed methods research study examining ELC practitioners' experiences of implementing family learning in a landscape of sector change.

A purposive sample of BA Childhood Practice students, working as senior positions within the ELC sector, were surveyed via a self-selected online questionnaire and follow-up in-depth interviews about their current understandings, competences and practices of family learning. Data from questionnaires and interviews were then analysed according to a sociomaterial methodology which applies vignettes (Ritchie et al. 2023). Tentative findings suggest particular understandings of 'quality' family learning practice dominate in different ELC spaces, despite renewed Government guidance (Scottish Government, 2018).

The persistence of these definitions 'as spatially practised' reflects the increasingly complex task of managing competing priorities, where resources are diminishing for senior ELC practitioners. Thus, potential findings will be valuable to practitioners and policymakers alike, inferring on how to reorientate stakeholders' needs amidst policy ambition.

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**Dealing with different perspectives in digital citizenship education****Svava Pétursdóttir, University of Iceland****Email: svavap@hi.is****Theme:** Digital Learning**Keywords:** digital citizenship education, curricula, teaching materials, competences

Curricula needs to constantly change in a changing world. Digital citizenship education (DCE) has not been prevalent in Icelandic curricula but an evaluation of a large scale 1:1 tablet project highlighted the need for clear guidelines for DCE and teaching materials.

In this paper policy documents and definitions from the Council of Europe (CoE), Common sense (CS) teaching materials, proposed national curricula and attitudes of teachers are compared. The aim of the comparison is to map what teachers thought important competences for compulsory school children to develop over the course of their 10 year schooling with to develop a framework for school curriculum teachers would find relevant and useful.

Teacher attitudes were collected in two workshops with 25 teachers, focus group interviews and a questionnaire to teachers trialing translated CS teaching materials. Results show that teachers and the CS materials are focused on information literacy, security issues and practical skills to learn and socialize online, whereas CoE guidelines have a broader view including citizen rights and responsibilities, social empathy and consumer awareness. DCE in the proposed national curriculum has a strong emphasis on avoiding dangers, but more constructive competence criteria on digital and social skills can be found in some subject areas and general competencies required of students. This means that there is some discrepancy between teacher views and available teaching materials on the one hand and the expert views presented in CoE guidelines making developing comprehensive and practical frameworks difficult to prepare and present to teachers.

**Noticing with videos in teaching practice****Svava Pétursdóttir, University of Iceland****Email: svavap@hi.is****Berglind Gísladóttir, University of Iceland****Email: berglindg@hi.is****Keywords:** teacher education, video recordings, teaching practice, reflection**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The aim of the research is to explore effective ways of utilizing video as an instructional tool in teacher education and its potential to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real classroom situations and teaching practices.

Student teachers in their final year of study video recorded themselves teaching a class during field practice. Following the recording, students observed and analysed their recordings in pairs and wrote a reflection of what they noticed and learned about their teaching practice. The reflections were analysed identifying main topics of what caught students' attention and what learning and opportunities students noticed to improve and develop their practice.

Results show that the use of video recordings can be beneficial for student reflection and development of their teaching practice. Students saw the strengths and opportunities to improve their practice, both their own and their peers. The most common things students noticed was their classroom management; their interactions with the children, assisting them, classroom discussions and correcting off task behaviour. Many wrote about how effective or ineffective their planning was while also recognising when they had to be responsive and amend planned tasks and instructions. The student teachers notice more things they themselves need to improve, where partners noticed positive aspects from the recordings. Many students mention it being uncomfortable both to be recorded and having to watch but recognised the usefulness of the exercise for their development and learning, indicating that this method is useful in teacher education.

## Exploring Preservice Mathematics Teachers' Perceptions and Responses to Student Mathematical Errors: An Analysis of Error Management Approaches

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**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

This study aimed to explore how preservice mathematics teachers (PTs) perceive the handling of student mathematical errors and to understand their responses when solving problems. The goal was to better prepare PTs to recognize, articulate, and reflect on error management, thus increasing their awareness of how to leverage students' errors in the classroom.

A total of 65 PTs participated voluntarily. They were given a task based on the PISA 2022 (2023) mathematics item, Triangular Pattern, where they analysed a problem and evaluated a claim regarding the percentage of blue triangles in the pattern. PTs then created scripts to simulate classroom scenarios, demonstrating their approaches to error correction. Eight participants were excluded from the analysis due to their failure in constructing a scenario. Data analysis included qualitative coding for response types, handling student errors, teaching phases, and whether corrections came from teachers or students. Two researchers independently coded the scripts, achieving an 88% inter-rater reliability.

The findings highlighted that a notable proportion of PTs ( $n=22$ , 16.4%) helped to correct errors by frequently asking 'why' questions, engaging in class discussions, and often allowing peer corrections. A similar number of PTs ( $n=21$ , 15.7%) focused on incorrect aspects of errors, using teacher-led corrections after stimulating class discussion. Another group of PTs ( $n=14$ , 10.4%) encouraged student initiative, where students corrected errors within class discussions before teacher intervention. These outcomes suggest that exposing PTs to a range of error-handling strategies can foster adaptability and flexibility, underscoring the value of incorporating such practices into teacher preparation programs. *Keywords:* error management, preservice mathematics teachers, student mathematical errors, teaching strategies

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**Challenges encountered when pursuing 'mastersness': understanding Master's students' learning experiences through the lens of relational pedagogy****Xiaomeng Tian, University of Dundee****Email: xtian001@dundee.ac.uk****Keywords:** Learning experiences, marketisation, Masters study, pedagogical relationships**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Postgraduate taught (PGT) sector in the UK has long been recognised as an under researched area. This is partly because of the assumption that PGT students are 'experts' in learning, who may not require the same level of supports as undergraduates do. Such assumption has become increasingly untenable in the face of an increasingly diverse student body, which is a result of marketisation and massification of higher education.

Against this background, this paper aims to explore 1-year full-time on-campus Master's students' preparedness of their studies and the factors that may facilitate or hinder their learning. The findings discussed in this paper are derived from my PhD study which adopted a qualitative multiple case study design. The data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews with 19 full-time MSc students in three disciplinary areas at one research-intensive university in the UK.

This paper reports three themes: students' preparedness for Masters study, the features of ideal pedagogical relationships at Master's level, and the factors that facilitate or constrain the development of positive pedagogical relationships. By discussing the findings in light of Nel Noddings' works on pedagogical caring, the practical implications of this paper are discussed, which aim to encourage education practitioners to further develop their educational thinking and practice regarding how to facilitate Master's students' learning in an increasingly challenging context.

**Student perspectives of Model United Nations (MUN) in relation to Global Citizenship Education (GCE)****Yuemiao Ma, University of Edinburgh****Email address: [yuemiao.ma@gmail.com](mailto:yuemiao.ma@gmail.com)****Keywords:** Model United Nations (MUN), global citizenship education, ethnographic case study, secondary school**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Model United Nations (MUN) is a global simulation activity founded alongside the United Nations (UN) in 1945. It allows young people to act as country diplomats, debate international issues, and try to seek consensus. While MUN is praised for fostering global citizenship knowledge, skills, and values, there are concerns it may reinforce educational inequalities and power imbalances, affecting how knowledge and power are distributed within MUN. Additionally, most research on MUN focuses on university settings, with limited studies on secondary schools.

As part of my PhD research on (Global) Citizenship Education embedded in MUN activities in China, this paper examines secondary school students' experiences in particular. I conducted an ethnographic case study, spending over six months observing a MUN club at a Chinese secondary school. This included weekly observations of club activities, focusing on student interactions with other students and teachers, and ten semi-structured interviews with students. Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to identify themes from the data.

My findings show that many students take a pragmatic approach to MUN, seeking knowledge and skills for future studies and careers. This pragmatism is influenced by how teachers and the school portray MUN, and by the broader Chinese context that values quick, tangible outcomes. However, some Global Citizenship values, like humanity and global interconnectedness, receive less emphasis in MUN classes. Despite this, students still develop these values through participation in MUN conferences, which they highly value. This disparity between students' experiences and the ambitions of teachers and the club suggests that GCE programs could benefit from being more student-centered, though structural barriers may pose challenges.

**Exploring effective curriculum design for learner wellbeing in the Further, Adult and Community Education sector in Ireland: Practitioners' views on 'educator agency'****Finola McCarthy, University College Cork****Email: fmccarthy@ucc.ie****Keywords:** Curriculum design, adult education, educator agency**Theme:** Curriculum

This paper aims to critically explore adult educator agency in a changing Further Education and Training system in Ireland. Specifically, it explores practitioners' views on what adult 'educator agency' might look like and how it could transform policy and practice in the area of curriculum design for learner wellbeing. Drawn from focus groups the concept of 'educator agency' is adapted from Priestly et al's (2015) work on 'teacher agency' and this is critiqued in my presentation. What the research demonstrates is the sense of loss of agency of the participants largely attributed to systemic changes over the past twenty years. Further discussions focus on how this finding of a loss of agency impacts notions of an a) 'effective' and b) curriculum 'design' for adult learner wellbeing. Key to this emergent theme was the use of the terms 'effective' and 'design' in the research question and this paper will critically explore the idea of the 'effective adult education practitioner.' The presentation concludes with a discussion of what adult educator agency might make possible for policy and practice in curriculum design for learner wellbeing in the sector.

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**Texts that Teach Critical Hope****Julie McAdam, University of Glasgow****Email: Julie.e.mcadam@glasgow.ac.uk****Keywords:** Anthropocene, children's literature, critical hope, transformation**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

This paper begins by acknowledging Head's work on defining the Anthropocene as an epoch of uncertainty and rapid change that impacts on how young people live, think and work in this world (2005: 313). It asks how children's literature can convey messages of critical hope, that could provide a means of helping young people make sense of the world in all its complexity.

It provides an overview of how critical hope is understood as being ontologically rooted in a desire to educationally embark on a journey that peruses future possibilities. Then it discusses how this framing of hope provides a means to 'think within, through and beyond the texts' (Short, 2017: 4) in a method known as critical content analysis. This method has been applied to a corpus of 40 European picturebooks published since 2010 whose catalogues entries mention hope. The findings show the ways in which 'hope in practice' is manifested in the texts via resources, networks and relationships, and alternative forms of knowledge/being. The paper concludes with a discussion of some of the reoccurring themes, which are often connected to past wars and crisis within the natural world; asking whether such texts can offer educators tools to frame and discuss the past as a means of offering future solutions for epistemic uncertainty (Head, 2015: 216).

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**Generative AI and Scottish Education: Insights from Practitioners****Maggie Mroczkowski, Scottish Qualifications Authority****Email: [maggie.mroczkowski@sqa.org.uk](mailto:maggie.mroczkowski@sqa.org.uk)****Jamie Lawson, Scottish Qualifications Authority****Email: [jamie.lawson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jamie.lawson@sqa.org.uk)****Keywords:** Generative AI, consultation, attitudes, ethics**Theme:** Digital Learning

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Scotland's national awarding body, is taking an evidence-based approach to the issue of Generative AI (GenAI) use in Scottish education. To support this broad objective, we launched a two-phase practitioner consultation, to explore the attitudes, hopes and concerns of Scotland's educational practitioners surrounding GenAI. In this presentation, we will discuss the results from the first phase of that consultation contextualised against SQA's current position on AI use in assessment, and our intentions to take a responsive, evidence-based stance moving forward.

More than 500 education practitioners across Scotland, including teachers, lecturers and training providers, took part in an online survey between November and December 2023. The survey contained both closed and open-ended questions.

Survey participants had a generally positive view of GenAI, signalling enthusiasm for the technology's potential to transform various aspects of teaching and learning, and assessment. Participants nevertheless communicated caution surrounding its ethical use by learners. While some participants called for a ban on the use of AI by Scottish learners, others took a more optimistic view, calling for SQA – and other bodies in the sector – to look for ways to formalise AI into the education and assessment landscapes. Key among suggestions made by these participants was the overhauling of current assessment practices to ensure their continuing functionality in the new educational world where 'AI is here to stay'.

**The stories we collaborate and build trust by: Insights from emergent, youth-centred research-practice collaboration with four public schools in the Western Cape, South Africa**

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**Keywords:** collaborative knowledge discovery, research-practice collaboration, youth-centred research, South Africa

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

This paper draws together insights from the narration and interpretation of four youth-centred research-practice collaborations (RPC) with public schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. The RPCs, which centred the experiences of young people and engaged them as key collaborators, emerged as part of the author's doctoral fieldwork in the first half of 2023. Methodologically, the RPCs, are anchored in a tradition of research-practice partnerships and related collaborative research strategies. They are project-specific, research and developmental programmes of work, whereby the researcher is embedded in collaborating organisations and facilitates an enabling space for collaborative knowledge discovery with other collaborators by working on a jointly prioritised activity, in this case prototyping a developmental intervention for students in transitional grades.

The schools embedded the intervention in their timetables which meant that school leaders and staff were also key collaborators. The over 200 students who contributed to the process were guided through a series of activities that facilitated reflection on how their unfolding stories relate to questions of identity, purpose, and their interplay with learning. Students, school leaders and staff shared verbal and written feedback that shaped the ongoing optimisation of the intervention for each school context. Their feedback was triangulated with the author's fieldwork notes as part of a narrative analysis of the collaborative process. This paper grapples with the convergence of these different narratives about a shared collaborative knowledge discovery process and considers how learning about how stories can be harnessed more intentionally as enabling, collaborative technologies may inform future research.

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**Rural perspectives: How rural school and district leaders view the present and future of education****Robert Mitchell, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs****E-mail: rmitchel@uccs.edu****Evelyn Adams, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs****E-mail: eadams2@uccs.edu****Kriselda Craven, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs****E-mail: kcraven2@uccs.edu****Keywords:** Educational leadership, rural education, policy perceptions**Theme:** Policy and education

Rural schools in the United States are numerous and continue to be vital institutions in the towns and villages where they reside. As rural schools remain the focal point of many rural communities, the school principals and superintendents are often seen as community leaders and as individuals in control of a vital community resource. In America, rural school leaders frequently have decades of experience in public education and, as a result, have a unique perspective on the current state of education, as well as the future schools and learning.

Using data from a survey of more than 100 school and school district leaders in one American state, it has been possible to understand this population's perception about what is going right in contemporary education, and more immediate concerns. Through the utilization of a constructivist lens, and basing the study in existing scholarship (Alexander & Doddington, 2010; Wastiau et al., 2013), it was possible to quantify these opinions and viewpoints and position them within a larger frame of education policies and challenges to schools, students, and teachers.

Findings from this study demonstrate that, while these school leaders have great optimism in their own schools, they are quite concerned about the future of education and how well students are being prepared for a post-secondary vocation or education. Further, there are various facets of contemporary education that seem to be largely dismissed such as the status of LGBTQ+ students in rural schools and the challenges associated with students with unstable homes or homelessness.

**The dogmatic image of assessment: Speculative pedagogies from a disjointed moment in educational planning****Michael Malt-Cullen, University of Glasgow****Email: michael.malt@glasgow.ac.uk****Elizabeth Nelson, University of Glasgow****Email: elizabeth.nelson@glasgow.ac.uk****Keywords:** Assessment, co-creation, speculative pedagogy, student engagement**Theme:** Curriculum

We are increasingly asked to engage students in constructing assessment practices, but what does this actually mean? Through an autoethnography of a pedagogical encounter, we use theory to create a framework of understanding for including students in assessment co-creation and offer some speculative pedagogies for practising this inclusion.

In this pedagogical encounter, we asked students to reflect on the course ILOs to decide how the ILOs would be demonstrated for a portfolio assignment. The response we got, however, was visceral confusion (amusement, anger, and frustration). Our students wanted to participate but had never been asked to co-create their assessments.

Drawing on Deleuze (1994) to analyse our experiences as educators of this pedagogical encounter, we highlight educational pasts, presents, and futures as sites of repetition that produce students' ability to imagine education differently. We view this encounter as an intrusion from outside standard pedagogical practice (Jackson, 2017) forcing us to consider the impact of students' educational histories. Our ability to encourage student co-construction of assessments is currently constrained. Through reimagining this encounter, we offer some speculative pedagogies, opening up spaces for students to participate in co-constructing their education and providing tools to do so.



# Short Presentations

## **Short-001**

### **Eggs and Potatoes. Recipes for reflection, and relationships for Generation Z**

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**Keywords:** gen Z, constructs, reflection, relationship-based

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Being In touch with their emotions and extremely online has influenced both the expectations and preferred learning methods of Generation Z students and has implications for faculty in adapting to teach reflection and relationship-based practices.

This paper aims to explore the interconnection between the personal constructs of the current generation of higher education students and its impact upon personal and critical reflection.

Applying Kelly's personal construct theory, on a digital platform, a group of first year undergraduate students participated in a laddering exercise exploring their personal constructs relating to their learning experience and expectations of study. Having identified the themes or beliefs through which they interpret the world and their own lives this was utilised to further develop knowledge and skills across their personal, academic, and professional relationships.

The research showed a positive reception to the exercise. Participants were surprised by their personal constructs, associated thoughts, and emotions. The majority found it assisted them in their learning and that they would be confident in applying this in practice.

The world in which Generation Z have been raised has been fraught with political tension and societal instability. This has impacted upon both their own personal constructs and preferred methods of learning. The results of this research contributes to fostering a contemporary learning environment when seeking to teach reflection and relationship-based practice across a number of subjects.

### Short-003

#### Modifying Photovoice To Facilitate Co-Research With Racially Victimised Youth

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**Keywords:** Photovoice, co-research, youth, victimisation

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

Understanding cultures of coping and support amongst young people facing racist peer victimisation can provide key insights into strategy selection processes and coping efficacy (Sapouna, de Amicis and Vezzali, 2022), contributing to the development of culturally conscious and actively anti-racist practices with Scottish youth. Involving young people who have experienced racist peer victimisation meaningfully through this research aims to value their voices as data creators, co-analysts, and disseminators, positioning them as co-researchers as opposed to participants (Lundy, McEvoy and Byrne, 2011; Mand, 2012; Collier, 2019; Martin et al., 2019).

*'...to disrupt the marginalization of communities we need research that is done by those communities and is for their purposes...'* (Martin et al., 2019, p.303)

Participatory and Multi-Method research at the core, Photovoice typically produces data through photography and subsequent focus group narration (Wang and Burris, 1997). Application of this methodology through Latz's (2017) protocol has been modified to promote multi-modal approaches to data production, aiming to disrupt traditional participant researcher power dynamics and acknowledge the multimodal literacy of children and young people today (Margolis and Pauwels, 2011; Ansell et al., 2012). Advocated for by Morrow (2008), the implementation of multiple creative and diverse data production methods (inc. illustration, sculpture, poetry) with young people and children can minimise an over-reliance on one method as well as foster a rights based approach in which 'children have the right to express themselves in any way they wish – not limited to the verbal expressions used by adults' (UNICEF, 1989, article 13).

**Short-004**

**Curriculum for Excellence: Whose 'Excellence' is it Anyway?**

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**Keywords:** curriculum, empty signifier, excellence, political economy

**Theme:** Curriculum

With the promise of revolutionising the Scottish educational landscape Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) set out to provide a holistic, student-centred approach to learning, emphasising breadth, depth, and flexibility (Education Scotland, 2011). Yet, beneath its surface rhetoric of inclusivity, equity, and excellence lies a complex web of ideologies, power dynamics, and 'visibilities and invisibilities' (Santora, 2014; Paraskeva, 2016) that warrant critical examination. CfE has been exposed to frequent criticism regarding the lack of theoretical underpinning, which has culminated in some academics identifying CfE as atheoretical (Davis & Edwards, 2001; Priestley, 2010; Priestley & Humes, 2010; Priestley, 2011; Day & Bryce, 2013; Priestley & Minty, 2013). This 'atheoretical nerve' reflects a dominant current trend in education and curriculum affairs – national and internationally – which promotes the cult of positivism and anti-intellectualism (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 2011; Darder, 2012; Paraskeva, 2013), reinforcing an oppressing 'banking pedagogical model' (Freire, 1970). This qualitative study employs textual analysis and autobiographical research methods combined with a critical lens as this paper is situated within a purpose of 'giving voice' to those working from within education and examining systemic practices for the purpose of empowering and promoting change (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994 and Casey, 1993). Therefore, this literature-based thesis through the lens of the Four Capacities (Scottish Executive, 2004) will examine 'excellence' as an empty signifier and how it supports political economy within the educational context, and how decolonial perspectives could be coupled with CfE to develop a socially just curriculum.

## Short-005

### The continuing impacts of the pandemic on teaching, learning and assessment

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**Keywords:** pandemic, impact, teaching, learning

**Theme:** Assessment and evaluation

#### **Aims**

This short presentation summarises the views of learners and practitioners on the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching, learning and assessment. This data was gathered through SQA's wide-ranging and large-scale Evaluation of the 2023 Approach to the Assessment of Graded National Courses.

#### **Methods**

This comprehensive research incorporated mixed methods. The first stage involved large-scale surveys; responses were received from around 3,400 learners and 1,200 practitioners. The surveys were then followed by a series of in-depth interviews with small numbers of learners and practitioners.

#### **Main Findings**

The research shows that both learners and practitioners believe that the experience of the pandemic has negatively affected teaching and learning in a range of ways and the after-effects of the pandemic are still widely perceived to be impacting teaching, learning and assessment.

Practitioners, in particular, highlighted that compared to their predecessors prior to the pandemic, learners are less resilient, have lower levels of focus, and have less-developed foundational skills and knowledge. This apparent change in learner attitude and performance, combined with declining attendance rates, has resulted in what many practitioners believe to be learners who find external assessment more stressful and who are less prepared for National Qualifications than earlier cohorts.

#### **Conclusions**

These research findings provide the system with information on how the pandemic has affected and continues to affect learning, teaching and assessment in Scotland. Moreover, the research also raises questions over how the system should best react to such findings.

## Short-006

### Investigating LGBT Adults' Experiences of formal and informal Sex Education in Scotland and China

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**Keywords:** LGBT, Sex education, Scotland and China

For much of the last decade, governments have wrestled with the prevalence of LGBT issues in educational settings (e.g., Scottish Government, 2021). Educational policy has followed suit as legislation moves towards progressive ideology, growing equality and a better understanding of marginalised groups. In Scotland, there are policy and curricular requirements to teach Relationships, Sexual Health, and Parenthood Education (RSHPPE) within Personal and Social Education (PSE) classes (e.g., Scottish Government, 2014). However, the effectiveness and inclusion of school-based sex education have been questioned, especially for LGBT people (Wetzel & Sanchez, 2024). In China, the national government first introduced a national curriculum on sex education in 2001 (Liu, 2022), but there is still a lack of policies and guidance in Chinese schools on addressing the needs of LGBT young people (e.g., Wei & Liu, 2019). So, does school-based sex education address well for LGBT students? Where can LGBT people get information about sex apart from school? Therefore, it's important to understand if LGBT people feel the sex education they received at school gave sufficient information and if other sources impact their experiences.

This research project uses an exploratory, qualitative approach to investigate LGBT adults' experiences of formal and informal sex education in Scotland and China. Data is collected via individual interviews from 20 young adults aged 18-26. To explore the impacts and consequences of formal and informal sex education within the LGBT community and discover any possible links to challenges experienced by LGBT people in adult life. In my short presentation, I will share my research findings and explore the complexities of addressing LGBT students' needs.

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## Short-007

**The Uncertain Teacher: using self-study and What's the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) to explore the role of the teacher and teacher professionalism in policy and practice**

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**Keywords:** self-study, WPR (What's the Problem Represented to Be?), teacher professionalism, teacher identity

**Theme:** Policy and Education

The need to provide children and young people with an education that prepares them for life in the 21st century is widely acknowledged in the global policy landscape (UNESCO, 2024; Benade, 2017). In Scotland, narratives of uncertainty and calls for teachers to be adaptable and creative in response have been present within the education policy landscape since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence in 2004 and were highlighted again recently in the National Discussion on Scottish Education. Despite acknowledgement of uncertainty in policy narratives, there continues to be a reliance on performative measures, such as international league tables and competitive testing (Connelly, 2013), making it challenging for teachers to respond to uncertainty in creative and agentic ways.

Using the methodology of self-study combined with an analysis of policy using the framework, What's the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) (Bacchi, 2009), this research aims to examine how policy produces problems and how I respond to such problems. The simultaneous acceptance and denial of uncertainty across the policy landscape, which I have identified as the 'problem', has illuminated tensions in my practice. For example, the desire to be creative and the need to be in control. Analysis of these tensions has challenged several long-held assumptions about practices I habitually adopt, lending support to Ball and Olmedo's (2013) contention that to respond to external expectations, such as those contained in policy, we must also be willing to challenge the expectations we have of ourselves.

## **Short-008**

### **Redefining ocean literacy; need for a new framework and more accurate assessment**

**Bridget Burger and Auður Pálsdóttir, University of Iceland**

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

The purpose of this research is to examine the current definition of ocean literacy, to identify its limitations, and make recommendations for a revised definition.

In the field of Ocean Literacy, the ultimate goal is to achieve sustainability of ocean resources through education that fosters an understanding of one's influence on the ocean, and the ocean's influence on people (Cava, 2005). An ocean-literate person understands the essential principles and fundamental concepts about the functioning of the ocean; can communicate about the ocean in a meaningful way; and is able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources (NOAA, 2013).

This definition fundamentally opposes the view that the world is fragile—it implies that a meaningful and sustainable relationship with nature is possible, yet it fails to describe how citizens can strike this balance.

In a systematic review of the literature from 2014-2024, a keyword analysis was performed. Three key findings emerge: 1) a more robust, inclusive definition is needed; 2) a more holistic framework is needed; 3) novel measurement tools are needed to accurately measure ocean literacy efforts.

In this presentation, we will discuss how a revised definition, with an emphasis on citizenship and collective effort, in regional or localized contexts, could provide the missing pieces for a more robust framework, and more accurate assessment. These findings are relevant for marine scientists, educators, social scientists, policy-makers and others seeking to achieve the UN SDGs in the Ocean Decade 2021-2030, and beyond.



## Short-010

**Connecting Communities and collective identities: Promoting belonging, inclusion strengthening relationships and cultivating partnerships through physical activity intervention, to support pupil well-being and engagement in secondary education**

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**Keywords:** Relationships, Inclusion, attendance, communities, identify, belonging, wellbeing, parental engagement, mental wellbeing, physical activity, connections, belonging, and identity

**Theme:** Community education and learning

### **Aim**

This study explored the impact of a 10-week physical activity intervention on the engagement and attendance of 11-15-year-old pupils with poor school attendance. It included fitness exercises and stress management techniques to improve well-being, emotional regulation, and educational outcomes. With around 10 participant's selected based on attendance, this study also aimed to enhance school relationships and develop a sense of belonging.

### **Significance to the wider community**

This research addressed pupil engagement and attendance, focusing on how physical activity interventions can improve outcomes for pupils with low attendance. The study highlights the importance of collaboration between schools, local organisations, and families in building stronger, more cohesive communities.

### **Impact on Practice**

This study's findings could influence educational practices by emphasising the importance of nurturing relationships and fostering belonging within communities. If effective, the physical activity intervention could become a model for other schools to enhance attendance, pupil engagement, and community partnerships.

### **Methodology**

A mixed-method approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection to assess the impact of a physical activity intervention on pupils' sense of belonging and school attendance. Methods included one-on-one interviews with pupils and tracking attendance through the school's monitoring system. Parents participated in interviews about their child's behaviour and the intervention's effectiveness. Interviews were recorded for analysis. Additionally, 40-50 minute focus group discussions with a campus police officer, community development representative, and researchers explored the intervention's impact on pupils' sense of belonging to the community.

## Short-012

### Mobile-assisted language learning and L2 Learners' Motivation

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**Keywords:** MALL, mobile devices, L2MSS, and social media

**Theme:** Digital Learning

The surge in web-based resources has spurred a rise in mobile device utilisation for educational purposes, particularly in mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). In Taiwan, the government has designated English as a second official language to expedite Taiwanese assimilation into the global community. In line with this initiative, schools have been granted substantial funding and assistance to cultivate mobile learning ecosystems, fostering the transition toward a bilingual nation by 2030.

In addition to harnessing the potential of mobile technology to achieve these national goals, there is a growing focus on researching the effectiveness of MALL in attaining language education targets at the national level. However, empirical studies remain limited, primarily focusing on language performance or standardised tests while neglecting the impact on learners' experiences, learning patterns, and motivation. Moreover, there is a lack of engagement in studies of the political dynamics surrounding MALL, despite recognising the potential influence.

To address these gaps, this study investigates the relationship between MALL and second language learners' motivation in secondary schools, using technology acceptance model (TAM) and the L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS). Employing mixed methods approach, including online surveys, interviews, and co-creation workshops, it investigates learners' perceptions, experiences, and the use of mobile devices, aiming to uncover future learning possibilities.

This presentation discusses current findings and the profound impact of language education programs in the digital age. Study insights hold the potential to inform and shape language education practices worldwide, including Scotland, where the integration of digital technologies in education is an ongoing priority.

## Short-013

### **Finding Answers Within: Exploring Contextually Relevant Learner-Centred Models in Nepali Primary Schools**

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**Keywords:** Learner-Centred Education, Contextual Pedagogical Practices, Contextual Realities

**Theme:** Policy and Education

#### **Aim**

Even though pedagogical practices are intertwined with the larger society and community (Alexander, 2008), there seems to be a lack of engagement in understanding the cultural context in which schools operate in Nepal. The study aims to explore and understand the experiences of teachers and learners in Nepali primary schools. It seeks to understand how their contexts shape both the teachers and learners, experiences and practices while engaging in the teaching learning processes. It looks to locate or identify contextually appropriate pedagogical practices that may or may not be aligned with Learner-Centred Education (LCE) minimum standards (Schweisfurth, 2013).

#### **Methods**

The study used a Comparative Case Study (CCS) (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2017) as a research design. The study took place in three different primary schools across Nepal. I collaborated with a total of 25 primary school teachers across the three schools and children from age six to thirteen in these schools. Data were generated through semi-structured and unstructured interviews both with teachers and students (individually and in groups), participant observation during lessons and in school. Conversations with children through creative approaches such as story-telling and drawings.

#### **Preliminary Results and Conclusion**

Through the presentation, I will highlight some of the key preliminary findings of the study. These include the deep friendship shared by learners with each-other, the teacher-student relationship and some of the innovative pedagogical practices in resource constrained contexts. I aim to highlight how these practices are culturally grounded in their specific contextual realities.

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## Short-014

### The role of age, sex and sector in Higher National qualification's positive attainment gap

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**Keywords.** Further education, deprivation, attainment gap, Higher National qualifications

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

#### **Background**

Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA)'s Higher National qualifications (HNs) were designed in partnership with colleges, universities and industry to provide practical skills and theoretical knowledge. There are roughly 20,000 HN certifications every year, creating pathways onto employment and higher education. SQA previously found, unlike many other educational outcomes (Scottish Government, 2023), there was a greater proportion of HN certifications from most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas (i.e. a positive gap) (SQA, 2015).

#### **Aim**

This project aimed to investigate the long-term trend (2009-2021) in how HN certification varies by deprivation.

#### **Method**

The attainment gap was calculated as the difference in proportion of certifications from the most and least deprived areas according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Adopting an intersectional approach, we explored how the gap differed by qualification sector, gender, and age, using descriptive statistics.

#### **Main Findings**

HN certifications continue to be most often from the most deprived areas. This differs greatly from university populations where students are most often from less deprived areas (HESA, 2023). Over this 12-year period the difference size of the positive gap has increased. The gap was largest for sectors such as Engineering and Fashion & Textiles, older learners and female learners. We also found potential interactions between age, sector, gender and the attainment gap. The attainment gap by deprivation is a priority area for the Scottish Government, and this research supports the key role that HNs can play in reaching out to learners from all socio-economic backgrounds.

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Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2023, Who is Studying HE? <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he>

**Short-017**

**Precarity, Primary Schools and Pupil Wellbeing**

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**Keywords:** Precarity, Mental health and wellbeing, primary schools, social justice

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Precarious employment is now an increasingly common reality for workers in Scotland. The detrimental impact of such employment on the mental health and wellbeing (MHWB) of workers and their families is well documented. However, little is known of how these issues affect schools. This paper focuses on Scottish primary schools' awareness of precarity and their response to pupils' MHWB needs.

Drawing upon the findings from a mixed methods study involving pupils and staff from four Scottish primary schools, I first sought to establish the level of awareness of precarity. Then, following Antonovsky's salutogenic approach, the means by which schools might improve the promotion of pupils' mental wellbeing were also examined. Analysis of the findings reveals little awareness in schools of precarious employment as posing a risk factor for their children's MHWB. School staff tended to frame carers in relatively simplistic, discrete strata: professional, employed, unemployed.

Most staff report that the prevalence and severity of MHWB issues amongst pupils has increased and see greater numbers of staff as key to meeting pupils' needs. However, pupils describe a desire for more immediate, modest and contextual improvements in their school's response. This paper argues that a more nuanced and informed understanding of employment and its effects on MHWB is necessary in order to adapt to the changes brought about by fifty years of neoliberal policies. This may be achieved by enhancing initial teacher education around MHWB. I conclude by suggesting that 'small wins' in improving MHWB may be obtained by consulting pupils, in a process that also bolsters the school's sense of democracy and social justice.

## Short-018

### **Preparing Teachers for Social Justice in the Classroom: A Study of Policies, Teachers, and Teacher Education Programs**

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**Keywords:** Teacher education, social justice, educational equity, primary education

This research will explore how early career primary school teachers in the Midwest states of Kansas and Missouri of the United States are being prepared in their teacher education programs on topics and themes of social justice and educational equity to support their diversifying student body. This will be done by interviewing teachers that have recently completed their teacher education programs and interviewing teacher educators regarding the standards, policies, and themes that are used to inform their curriculums in their teacher education programs.

These interviews will encourage teachers and teacher educators to reflect on their experiences in courses and course discussion throughout their teacher education programmes, how they feel their program prepared them to teach and engage with social justice practices and themes in mind.

To further contextualise and critically review the policy narratives that help shape the teacher education programs, this research will then use documentary analysis to interpret and discuss how the state standards of the Midwestern states of Kansas and Missouri, and their teacher education programs incorporate and interact with the inclusion of social justice teaching, training, and support for its teachers and its students. This research hopes to provide a space for critical engagement with how Midwest teacher education programmes and state standards interact with social justice education and how early career teachers can make sense of related issues in diverse contexts.

# Posters

**P002**

## **Comparing Inclusive Education in Scotland and Turkey**

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**Keywords:** inclusive education, comparative education, Scotland, Turkey

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Comparative education research has traditionally aimed to reform, improve, and do better (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014). Some see the main feature of traditional comparative education as the colonial dominance of the field and as a 'modernity project' of the West (Takayama, Sriprakash & Connel, 2017; Silova, 2019). Even though this perspective and the nature of comparative education bring some epistemological and methodological problems to the field, "learning from the experience of others" (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014), the contribution of developing epistemic diversity make comparative education valuable and necessary (Xu, 2022). Considering this knowledge, the study aims to share an outline of the research that seeks mutual benefit and enlightenment from comparative research to examine the current inclusive education policies and practices in Scotland and Turkey.

This study will adopt a phenomenological qualitative research design, a comprehensive approach that will provide a deep understanding and insight into the participant's views regarding the definition and implementation of inclusive education in their context. Participants will be selected through purposive and snowball sampling approaches, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. The study will focus on teachers working in inclusive settings in Turkey and Scotland, conducting semi-structured interviews to explore their views about inclusive education. Thematic qualitative data analysis will be used to analyse the data, ensuring a rigorous and systematic approach.

The study will use Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as a framework and will analyse inclusive education at all levels in Turkey and Scotland to reveal how the definition of inclusive education has evolved and how inclusive education operationalises concerning both countries' social, historical, and cultural factors.



**P003**

**Humanizing Policy: A Photovoice Case Study Depicting the Evolution of COVID-19 Emergency Paid Leave From the Viewpoint of a Community College HR Employee**

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**Theme:** Policy and Education

This study investigates the evolution of emergency paid leave policies in Colorado's higher education sector amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplaces Act of 2020 (HFWA). Through qualitative methods, including case study design and semi-structured interviews, the research explores the experiences of a Human Resources (HR) professional in Colorado Community Colleges by implementing a new integrating theoretical framework, PSROM, consisting of Photovoice and the Systems Research Organizing Model (SROM).

The study combines individual narratives with systemic dynamics to comprehensively understand the effects of leave policies. Photovoice enables HR professionals to visually depict their experiences, while the SROM provides a structured approach to analyze policy changes and outcomes. This framework approach not only amplifies and humanizes the voices of HR professionals but also offers insights into the systemic implications of policy implementation. In the context of the conference theme, "Education in a Fragile World: Past, Present, Future," this research reflects on how past policies were implemented during a period of global instability, assesses their present impact on employee well-being and organizational resilience, and provides insights for future policy development. By informing policy development and implementation, the study seeks to enhance the support systems available to higher education employees, ultimately fostering a healthier and more resilient workforce.

Understanding and improving leave policies empower higher education employees to utilize them effectively, fostering a supportive environment where individuals can prioritize their well-being and family needs during emergencies. This research not only contributes to educational knowledge and practice but also aligns with the conference's goal of exploring how education can thrive amidst instability and global insecurity.

**P005**

## **The Impact of Additional Support Needs (ASN) Labels on Children and Young People in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** Additional Support Needs, Labelling, Children and Young People, Education, Self-perceptions

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### **Aims**

This research explores the impact of Additional Support Needs (ASN) labels on children and young people (CYP) in Scotland. The study aims to understand the implications of ASN labelling from the perspectives of parents/carers, student teachers, and the learners themselves. By engaging with these diverse stakeholders, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive view of how ASN labels affect educational experiences, identities, and support mechanisms for CYP who identified as having ASN.

### **Methods**

Employing a qualitative methodology, this study uses semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth insights from participants. The recruitment process involves collaborating with youth groups, charities, third-sector organizations, and universities to ensure a diverse and representative sample. The participant groups include 10 CYP identified as having ASN, 10 parents/carers, and 10 student teachers from Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and the protection of participant anonymity, are prioritized throughout the research process.

### **Main Findings**

Preliminary findings (in line with the existing literature) suggest that ASN labels significantly influence the self-perception and educational experiences of CYP. These labels can lead to both positive outcomes, such as tailored support and resources, and negative consequences, including stigmatization, exclusion and lowered expectations. Parents and carers often experience mixed feelings about ASN labels, recognizing the necessity of support while being concerned about potential negative impacts on their children's self-esteem and societal perceptions. Student teachers, on the other hand, express a need for more comprehensive training to effectively support ASN-labelled students in inclusive educational settings.

This research aims to contribute valuable insights into the experiences of CYP with ASN labels, informing policy and practice to enhance support provision and foster a more inclusive educational environment.

**P007**

## **Navigating ethical complexity when doing research with young children**

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**Keywords:** ethics, research, children, participation

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

The UNCRC (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act is a significant legislative step in realising children's rights. However, Together (2023) highlights the implementation gap between law, policy and practice. Among differing strategies (e.g. legislation, policy, training), implementing children's rights in early childhood through research is required (UN Committee, 2005). Yet, many adults grapple to realise children's rights in practice (e.g. Wright et al., 2023; Coppock and Gillett-Swan, 2016; Woodhead, 2010). Also, young children's perspectives are often limiting (e.g. Kauhanen et al., 2022; Eurochild, 2023). Parental views are obtained on their behalf (e.g. EYS, 2023; Tisdall et al., 2023; Egan et al., 2021). Yet, children's perspectives can offer valuable insights in improving practice (Wright, 2023; Ponizovsky-Bergelson et al., 2019).

Drawing on my current doctoral research, the poster will present the methodological approach used to support the realisation of young children's rights in the research process. My research explores young children's experiences of being healthy and how art-based and participatory research methods enable young children's right to participation. Conducting research *with* young children (3-6 year olds), I utilise ethnography informed methodology (Shah, 2017; Pink, 2015). While the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017) is well known to enable children to take part in research through the use of multi-method, there is a need for the researcher to adapt to children's circumstances (Blaisdell, 2012). Applying a critical lens to adult researcher, I adopt ethical mindfulness and reflexivity to navigate the challenges of power dynamics in research. Challenging the orthodox methods, I propose scope for novel practices, with findings forthcoming.

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**P008**

## **Outdoor Learning in Sustainable Education**

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**Keywords:** sustainable education, outdoor learning, higher education, curriculum design

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

Previous research regarding outdoor and adventure programs has proved the positive impacts of the activities on the participants such as self-concept, self-esteem, pro-social behavior, and improved levels of well-being (Gills and Speelman, 2008; Stott, Allison, Felter and Beames, 2015, Cottrell and Cottrell, 2020). Outdoor adventure activities are seen to enhance learning due to the interaction with nature as a result of the interactions that are cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors.

There is also large body of research that indicates spending time in natural settings is good for human mental and physical wellbeing (Kellert, 2005). The relationship between oceans and human health is further complicated by the increasing pressure on the marine environment from human activities such as fishing and tourism, along with the growing impact of global climate change (White et al.2020; Rocher et al. 2020 and Lloret, et al., 2021). However, people in urban areas are spending less time outdoors, children are seen to be moving indoors during their vital growth and development stages. Outdoor learning can contribute to environmental education, the links with sustainable development and global awareness are less apparent.

Nevertheless, I believe outdoor learning can play a critical role in this process. The outdoors is an extremely powerful focus for learning through direct experience using the hand, heart and head. It places young people in real situations and it encourages them to take responsibility and reflect on their actions. HE institutions are there to prepare students for employment whereas ESD programs should focus on preparing students for the unknown (Leal Filho and Pace, 2016). This could include learning experiences that develop critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration skills and contextual learning skills (Ilisko, et al. 2014). Hence the collaboration of sustainable and outdoor education would be vital for future students and should be included in teacher education.

P009

## Empowering Science Learning in Scotland: Integrating IoT for Curriculum Alignment and Innovation

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**Keywords:** Curriculum Alignment, Digital Education, Internet of Things (IoT), Science Education

**Theme:** Digital Learning

The integration of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies into education offers a transformative opportunity to enrich science education curricula (Abichandani et al., 2022; Yilmaz & Ozdemir, 2023). This study explores the adaptation and integration of IoT-enhanced learning tools in science education, focusing on their potential to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Using a comprehensive content analysis approach, we investigate the compatibility of a prototype IoT learning tool with current science curriculum standards in Scotland. The study includes a detailed review of educational frameworks, lesson plans and learning outcomes to assess how IoT tools can be effectively integrated into existing curricula.

The initial findings of this study indicate that IoT-enhanced tools can align well with Scottish education standards and significantly support interactive and experiential learning by providing real-time data and hands-on experiences. The study identifies key areas where IoT integration can improve student engagement and understanding, especially for complex science concepts. It also provides recommendations to educators and curriculum developers on best practices for integrating IoT technologies into science education.

The research highlights the significance of professional development for teachers to effectively use IoT learning tools and suggests strategies for overcoming potential implementation challenges. By aligning IoT tools with curriculum requirements, this study aims to pave the way for more innovative and effective science teaching methods.

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**P010**

**Looking back: Mother Earth is in a precarious position. Taking stock: Nothing, nothing at all, can be taken for granted**

**Allyson Macdonald and Benjamin Aidoo, University of Iceland**

**Keywords:** Sustainability, contemporary and historic markers

**Aim**

My overall goal is to develop a profile of tasks and values in promoting learning for sustainability education (SE). We will start with a pilot project, with several steps, involving about 4-6 doctoral students. The objectives are to increase the analytical and presentation skills of doctoral students when faced with different or unfamiliar topics.

**Method**

First, the group will recode interviews taken in 2020 with professionals on their perspectives of sustainability and applying this to water as a resource. This activity will provide *contemporary markers* (indicators) on the tasks awaiting sustainability.

Second, the students analyse texts on topics of sustainability that have been important since the 1960s. The text in this pilot study will be Rachel Carson's (*Silent spring*, 1962). *Historical markers* are themes found across educative artefacts available to the general public.

Third, the group returns to the contemporary markers and discuss how the two sets are linked. What has been abandoned? What is still viable? What have we learnt? Water use will be an example.

**Result**

The results are presented in matrix form, mapping themes of contemporary thinking against the longevity and utility of the tasks and values evident in the historical dimension. Clearly some ideas live longer than others and sometimes incorporate several ideas in one.

P013

**Challenges in Early Childhood Education in Impoverished Areas of China: Teacher Qualifications, Attrition, and Policy Intervention Strategies**

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**Keywords:** Professional Qualifications and Development, Teacher Career Support, Education Quality and Inequality, Professional Support Structures

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

In the current society, the importance of early education teachers' resources is becoming increasingly obvious, because they are not only the direct implementers of early childhood enlightenment education, but also the key factors influencing children's future development. Therefore, research on teacher resources is not only a reflection on the current state of education, but also an outlook on the future development of education (Pan, 2016). Despite the successive policies introduced by the Chinese government to improve the level of teachers in impoverished areas, early education in impoverished areas still faces major challenges such as high teacher turnover and a shortage of highly qualified teachers (Li, 2020). These challenges not only hinder the improvement of education quality, but also exacerbate the inequality of education resources (Liu, 2023). This research aims to investigate and describe the challenges of recruiting highly qualified early education teachers in poor areas of China through a theoretical exploration based on an extended literature review methodology, focusing on 26 relevant papers based on the past decade, as well as to explore the specific reasons for the high attrition of early education teachers in these regions and to propose strategies and policy interventions to improve the quality and equity of education. It also provides insights for the next step in empirical research.

The research findings show that limited professional development, poor working conditions, inadequate social support, low personal well-being, and heavy family responsibilities combine to contribute to the high teacher turnover in impoverished areas. Meanwhile, challenges faced by poor areas in recruiting high-quality early childhood teachers include low salary, limited career advancement opportunities, poor working environment, and insufficient welfare benefits, which undermine the ability of these areas to attract high-quality teachers.

In response, the following policy and strategy recommendations are put forward. Firstly, the government and education departments can improve the salaries and benefits of early education teachers in poor areas. Furthermore, local education departments and schools can provide these teachers with regular professional training and clear career advancement paths. In addition, schools can improve the working environment. Moreover, raising public awareness of the importance of the profession of kindergarten teachers in impoverished areas. The combined implementation of these measures can increase the attractiveness of poverty-stricken areas to high-quality teachers and improve the quality of education in poor areas.

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# Roundtable

**RT001**

**Contemporary challenges for researching ethics in education**

**This roundtable will be hosted by the Co-Conveners of the recently established SERA Network: Ethics in Education**

**Aileen Kennedy**  
**Alison Mitchell**

**Keywords:** Ethics, research, contemporary challenges

**Theme:** The focus of this roundtable intentionally cuts across all eight strands and could fit coherently within any one of them

As we navigate global challenges of climate change, poverty, war, Artificial Intelligence and social injustice, we are compelled to consider what is plausible, moral, and permissible, according to ethical codes to which we hold ourselves accountable. *Ethics* is thus a critical concept for us to wrestle with in education. It is of growing significance nationally and globally, as a discipline to be taught and as a philosophical determinant of practice for educators, education researchers and policymakers. If we render current generations responsible for a sustainable global future, we must consider how moral and ethical responsibility is understood, practiced, taught and researched across our education systems.

This roundtable will provide a space to consider the research implications of some of the most pressing ethical challenges of our time for education, including, for example:

- Teaching ethics in schools and universities
- Educational responses for ethical futures in response to global challenges
- Ethical procedures in research
- Ethical dilemmas of 21<sup>st</sup> century educational leadership
- Ethics in assessment practices
- Ethics of AI in education
- Ethical accountability for school practitioners

All stakeholders in education face ethical challenges, and researching them will require collaboration, interdisciplinary thinking and innovate approaches. We therefore intend this roundtable to act as an ideas lab for both future ethics-related research activity and for planning the activities of the Ethics in Education Network.

**RT002**

**Navigating the simultaneous acceptance and denial of uncertainty within education policy**

**Organiser: Alison Adams, University of Edinburgh**

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**Facilitators:**

**Alison Adams, University of Edinburgh**

**Zoe Robertson, University of Edinburgh**

**Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh**

**Keywords:** education, policy, uncertainty, self-study, WPR (What's the Problem Represented to Be?)

**Theme:** Policy and Education

**Rationale/Background**

The need to prepare learners for an uncertain and unpredictable future has emerged as a key message from Scotland's National Discussion on Education (Scottish Government, 2023), alongside a growing recognition that this requires teachers to be adaptable, creative, and resilient. Despite acknowledgement of uncertainty in policy narratives, there continues to be a reliance on performative measures, such as international league tables and competitive testing (Connelly, 2013) which arguably undermine how creative and adaptable teachers can be. This simultaneous acceptance and denial of uncertainty creates tension for teachers as they navigate and negotiate conflicting policy expectations (Kelchtermans, 2018).

**Aims and theme to be discussed**

This roundtable emerges from the first author's doctoral research which combines policy analysis using WPR and self-study. This research explores the policy context within education in Scotland and how it influences teacher's professional practice. Through initial analysis the simultaneity of acceptance and denial of uncertainty within policy emerged as a key finding. Therefore, the focus of this roundtable is to engage in discussion with educational stakeholders to further interrogate this finding. Central to self-study is interaction and making findings public (La Boskey). Therefore, it is hoped that the perspectives offered by participants may support and/or challenge the researcher's interpretations.

**Method**

A brief summary of the research will be provided and then the following topics will be reflected on in a carousel/conversation café approach:

- In what ways can you (or not) see the simultaneity of acceptance and denial of uncertainty within education?
- How do you think about and/or respond to uncertainty in your professional practice?

**RT003**

**A childcare workforce fit for a fragile world**

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**Keywords:** Childcare workforce, qualifications, workforce diversification, leadership education

**Theme:** Professional and vocational learning

**Theme for discussion**

Building on the success of our roundtable at last year's SERA conference, we again invite participants from across the education sector – students, academic colleagues, employer representatives, professional partners – to reflect collectively on the past, present and future of childhood practice qualifications in Scotland.

Following successive workforce reviews, the focus of childhood practice degrees was initially to enhance leadership capacity across the children and young people's non-compulsory care and education workforce. Research has shown repeatedly that children's outcomes are enhanced through access to a highly qualified workforce (OECD, 2021). While vocational, work-based training has recognised benefits for many (Wingrave and McMahan, 2016), is there now potential for additional, direct-entry routes via pre-service degree-level qualifications?

As the sector continues to grow and develop, with degree-holding leaders now the norm, this roundtable will explore the ways in which degree-level childhood practice qualifications might best meet the challenges of our 'fragile world' through promotion of a diverse workforce.

**Key questions for discussion:**

1. Is there now a need for Childhood Practice degrees to incorporate a direct entry route?
2. Should any new route have a new name for differentiation?
3. What might be the challenges of implementing degree-level qualifications at all levels of practice?
4. What other qualification routes might create new opportunities to diversify the workforce?

**RT004**

**SERA Teacher Education Network (SERA TEN)**

**Pre-service Teachers and Teacher Education - Agency and transformational possibilities**

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**Anna Robb, University of Dundee**

**Ramsey Affifi, University of Edinburgh**

**Keywords:** ecology, agency, change agents, transformation

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational learning

#### **Rationale and/or theoretical background**

In recent years, we have seen increasing emphasis on the importance of agency in teaching and the ways in which teachers themselves can become change agents but what do these mean within TE programmes? Linked to these ideas of empowerment in the profession, is the potential for transformational change through the influence of teachers and their commitment to social justice and inclusion. The rhetoric is enthusiastic, but we believe there is a need to unpack these concepts more fully and to challenge what lies behind these for Teacher Educators and Preservice Teachers.

Work by Priestley et. al., (2016), with experienced teachers, looked at agency and curriculum development, and as a result they developed their ideas on agency to encompass the ecology of the teacher which acknowledges agency as something which may be achieved through an interplay of individual capacity and environmental conditions. They highlight the need to consider the structures, cultures and relationships which help to shape the ecology of the professional and in so doing, challenge or enable teacher agency. However, this work engaged with experienced teachers. Does this help us to envision the nature of the empowering ecology of preservice teachers? To what extent is agency, at this early stage of professional development, achievable and how can we lay a foundation for new teachers as transformational change agents?

#### **Aims and methods of the proposed activity?**

In this panel and round table event, we aim to provide an impetus for reflection, discussion and consideration of ways forward in relation to these key concepts – ecology, agency, change agents and transformational teaching and learning.

- Panel members will provide a short reflective provocation.
- Participants will then move into small round table groups to reflect on and discuss.
- A short plenary at the end will help to pull outcomes together and will suggest ways forward.

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**RT005**

**Cultivating care and compassion in higher education online**

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**Keywords:** relational practice, ethics of care, compassionate pedagogy, blended/distance learning

**Theme:** Digital Learning/Social Justice and Inclusion

This round table aims to explore understandings and perceptions of how relational practice (including conceptions of care and compassion) is enacted in higher education online.

Online teaching has been argued to provide the capacity to enable global educational equity. However, in addition to resource and access issues, the affective and identity-related dimensions of online teaching can challenge students and staff alike, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed (Coker et al., 2023; Gourlay, et al. 2021).

Theorists have argued that the widely recognised potential of online pedagogy to increase educational equity and build stronger communities remains inadequately realised for now (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Beginning with a brief summary of themes from the presenters' literature review (forthcoming) focusing on extant studies since 2020 relating to relational practice in higher education online, this round table will engage participants in discussion focusing on:

- Why care and compassion in online higher education matter.
- Theories/strategies for enhancing these dimensions of practice.
- Participants' relevant experiences and learning.

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**RT006**

**Exploring Health and Wellbeing within Teacher Education**

**Round Table Organiser/Presenters**

**SERA Health and Wellbeing Research in Education Network and supported by The Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE)**

**Shirley Gray, University of Edinburgh**  
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**Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh**  
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**Keywords:** Curriculum, research, practice, health and wellbeing (HWB)

**Theme:** Curriculum

**Rationale/Background**

Around the world, educational settings are increasingly responsible for supporting and nurturing children and young people's health and wellbeing – as well as developing their skills and knowledge for health and wellbeing. This responsibility is felt acutely in Scotland, where supporting the HWB of young people in schools is the 'responsibility of all'. The extent of this directive is influencing the research landscape in Scotland, where there is a growing interest from teachers, teacher educators, academics, policy makers and other stakeholders for conducting and engaging with HWB research.

**Aims and theme to be discussed**

This round table follows on from the SCDE and Education Scotland self-evaluation for ITE symposium in 2021 that focused on the theme of HWB. The aim of this round table is to revisit this important aspect of teacher education and engage in further professional dialogue three years on. The round table will focus on the context of teacher education to establish what HWB is understood to be, the ways in which it is being researched and how it features within teacher education curricula.

**Method**

As a stimulus for discussion the round table will discuss the following three aspects:

HWB – what do we mean?

Research into HWB.

HWB within teacher education curricula.

There will be a prompt from a teacher educator as a stimulus to start the discussion. Through the discussion implications for research and practice will be considered. Key points from the discussion will be collated and then reflected on by SCDE and the network to inform planning for future events and projects.

# **Symposia**

**S001**

**Making Curriculum Making Happen in Scottish Education– Stirling Centre for Research into Curriculum Making Symposium**

**Symposium organiser: Stuart Farmer, Institute of Physics**

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**Chair and Discussant: Joe Smith, University of Stirling**

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**Purpose and Outline**

This symposium will showcase the work of Associate Fellows at The Stirling Centre for Research into Curriculum Making (SCRCM). This new centre develops and undertakes original research into curriculum making, engages in knowledge exchange with policy makers and practitioners to develop the curriculum across education systems, and disseminates research through face-to-face events and webinars.

A foundational principle of the centre is the idea that curricula do not just exist in policy documents or professional discourses, but that they are actively constructed throughout the system in multiple sites of activity within education systems. This means that curricular are social practices and that they need to be understood as such. This symposium draws on this philosophy by offering papers on the question of curriculum making from a range of perspectives (social sites) including national strategy, teachers professional learning, and the practicalities of curriculum in schools.

**Presenters and titles**

- Joe Smith – Chair’s introduction – What is the Stirling Centre for Research into Curriculum Making? What does it have to contribute to Scottish Education? Joe Smith is Depute Director of the Stirling Centre for Research into Curriculum Making and an established researcher in the field of curriculum studies.
- Jane Arthur - How might Curriculum Making be enabled at a system level? Jane Arthur is a Senior Education Officer within Education Services, Glasgow with a keen interest in interdisciplinary learning and the importance of learner and teacher agency in curriculum making.
- Stuart Farmer – What do teachers need to know to make curriculum? Stuart Farmer is Learning and Skills Manager at the Institute of Physics Scotland. He has research interests in the links between teacher knowledge, professional learning and curriculum making.
- Joe Smith – Discussant’s Summary

**Paper 1**

**How might Curriculum Making be enabled at a system level?**

**Jane Arthur**

It could be argued that Scotland’s recent flurry of consultations and reports on education and assessment (Scottish Government, 2022, 2023a, 2023b), reflect the fact that there is growing international concern that educational systems across the globe need to change. There is increasing recognition that traditional, disciplinary based structures and approaches are not adequately preparing young people to face the many diverse and complex challenges of today’s world and allow them to survive and thrive (Rincon-Gallardo, 2020). In fact, many scholars have been contending this

for years (Morin, 1999, Mehta, et al., 2012). In a report for UNESCO in 1999, for example, Morin wrote,

Humans are physical, biological, psychological, cultural, social, historical beings. This complex unity of human nature has been so thoroughly disintegrated by education divided into disciplines, that we can no longer learn what human being means. This awareness should be restored so that every person, wherever [they] might be, can become aware of both [their] complex identity and shared identity with all other human beings. (1999:2). Biesta, G.J.J. (2004). Education, accountability, and the ethical demand; can the democratic potential of accountability be regained? *Educational Theory*, 54, 233-250.

*Interdisciplinary Learning: a study of practice within Secondary Schools in Glasgow* was conducted by Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow which addresses the issue of academic and practitioner collaboration to better understand how interdisciplinary learning (IDL) can be implemented successfully in the secondary sector. The aim of the research was for academics and practitioners to work collaboratively to gain an insight into the ways these secondary schools had planned, implemented, evaluated and assessed the impact of IDL.

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## Paper 2

### What do teachers need to know to make curriculum?

Stuart Farmer

It is half a century since Stenhouse stated “*all curriculum development must rest on teacher development*” (1975). More recently in Scotland, it is unfortunate that this has largely been forgotten or not prioritised. The inadequate framework provided by Curriculum for Excellence and lack of professional support for curriculum-making has left time poor teachers (OECD, 2021) poorly placed to develop and implement coherent local curricula. This session will draw upon research into the development of a knowledge framework for teachers of physics and physics teacher educators, based on Rowland’s Knowledge Quartet (2013), and research into the misalignment of policy and practice for the professional learning of teachers in Scotland (Farmer and Childs, 2022; Farmer, 2024). Findings show that transformative, enquiry-based professional learning occurs rarely in Scotland and good-quality subject-specific professional learning focussed on curriculum-making and improving the instructional core in classrooms, which is much sought after by teachers, is rarely available. As Scotland once again finds itself on the cusp of significant curriculum reform, this session will explore what might be done to support teachers become more effective curriculum-makers to help ensure our young people experience more coherent and effective educational experiences which allows them

to develop a broad knowledge of the world around them and the skills and attitudes to function effectively in society.

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**S002**

**Addressing Educational Disadvantage to create a more just society in Northern Ireland**

**Symposium Organiser: Noel Purdy**

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**Chair: Noel Purdy**

**Discussant: Stephen J. McKinney**

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**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

**Purpose of Symposium and Relationship between Papers**

The Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU) at Stranmillis University College was established in 2018. Over the past 5 years CREU has led numerous funded research projects which have explored how education can be a vehicle for societal transformation, championing collaboration between the academy and the community and striving to enhance learning opportunities for children irrespective of their ability or social background.

This symposium draws on three such studies, two of which were conducted in Northern Ireland itself, the other in the Republic of Ireland. The distinct studies each highlight particular structural and systemic barriers and opportunities as we seek to address educational disadvantage and transition towards a more socially just society. Such barriers often thwart efforts to use education to its full transformative potential to liberate and empower (Freire), resulting in inertia and frustration at the lack of progress.

Nonetheless the symposium also presents more imaginative opportunities and innovative programmes of change which have the potential to reduce barriers, to broaden the reach of research, and to provide enhanced learning opportunities for all learners of all ages.

The symposium highlights how a corpus of research work in one research centre can contribute towards the eliciting of critical insights into lived experiences of educational disadvantage, but can also highlight the potential of innovative solutions to complex social and educational problems.

The three papers are as follows:

- Paper 1: 'Winners and Losers?' Examining the links between academic selection and educational disadvantage in Northern Ireland (presenter: Noel Purdy)
- Paper 2: 'The Role of the Early Years in tackling Educational Disadvantage: an Irish Example' (presenter: Glenda Walsh)
- Paper 3: 'THRiVE: reflections on a community-academic learning partnership to address educational disadvantage' (presenter: Karen Orr)

## **Paper 1**

### **‘Winners and Losers?’ Examining the links between academic selection and educational disadvantage in Northern Ireland**

**Noel Purdy, Stranmillis University College**

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**Keywords:** academic selection; educational disadvantage

This first paper addresses one of the most contested educational issues of the past 25 years in Northern Ireland: academic selection (Gallagher & Smith, 2000; Gardner & Cowan, 2005; Jerrim & Simms, 2019; Purdy et al., 2021; Harris et al., 2021; Hughes & Loader, 2022).

The paper draws on evidence from two recent CREU projects: *Testing Times* (funded by the Nuffield Foundation) and *Transfer Talks* (funded by the Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland). Both projects examined the impact of the non-testing year of post-primary transfer when transfer tests were postponed and later cancelled as a result of public health restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, grammar schools had to develop alternative admissions criteria. The paper examines the impact of the non-testing year, first, in terms of educational disadvantage by examining the social composition (using DE data sets) of the cohort of children who entered grammar schools by means of the alternative admissions criteria in September 2021 (*Testing Times*), and second, in terms of the lived experiences of that year, based on interviews with children, their parents and school leaders (primary, grammar and non-grammar) in the *Transfer Talks* study. The results highlight a challenging and often stressful time where 10 and 11-year old children (and their parents) found themselves unwittingly at the centre of an unprecedented set of circumstances.

The paper addresses how the cancellation of the transfer tests during the 2020-21 academic year and academic selection in Northern Ireland more generally impact on issues of educational disadvantage, equity and social justice.

## **Paper 2**

### **The Role of the Early Years in Tackling Educational Disadvantage: an Irish Example**

**Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College**

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**Keywords:** early childhood education, fair start, young children, innovation

Decades of international evidence have clearly shown that children’s early experiences have a profound and lasting impact on their future learning and development (OECD, 2022). During the first years of life, the environments we create and the experiences we provide for young children and their families affect not just the developing brain, but have a big impact on life outcomes and help to shape our society (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2020, Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, 2021). Children growing up in poverty do less well (compared to their more affluent peers) across a range of early learning outcomes: cognitive and physical skills; social and emotional development and school readiness (Oppenheim & Milton, 2021).

Investment in high quality Early Years provision can make a difference and can go some way to improve the life chances of disadvantaged children (Campbell et al, 2018, Taggart et al, 2015). In the context of Ireland, one such example is the Early Childhood Care and Education programme, a key aim of which is to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers. Drawing on the findings of an independent review of the ECCE programme, this presentation will

outline what is currently working well in terms of combatting disadvantage and what creative and innovative solutions are still required in order to ensure all children receive the fair start they deserve.

### **Paper 3**

#### **THRiVE: reflections on a community-academic learning partnership to address educational disadvantage**

**Karen Orr, Stranmillis University College**

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**Keywords:** education, outcomes, collaboration, whole-community

The education disadvantage attainment gap begins at conception (Oppenheim & Milton, 2021), and continues to widen throughout a child's educational journey (EEF, 2017), leaving disadvantaged children further from opportunity (see Fitzpatrick et al., 2023) and ultimately experiencing lesser 'life chances', social mobility and poorer health and wellbeing (BMA, 2017; OECD, 2022; Moriarty et al., 2017; Purdy et al., 2021). Recent efforts to equalise the disadvantage attainment gap in NI (£913 million via Targeting Social Need funding) have done little to 'level the playing field' (NIAO, 2021). This, coupled with the current exacerbating political/economic challenges, points to an immediate need for *social innovation, imagination and collaboration* if we are to encourage equity in education access, enjoyment and outcomes, and the use of *education as a vehicle for more just societies*.

One such example of social innovation, collaboration and collective impact is evidenced in the community-academic Learning Partnership (LP) between the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU) and THRiVE (Barnardo's). THRiVE is a collaboration of local parents, schools, statutory (PHA, NHSCT, DE, DoJ, DfC, and DfE) and voluntary organisations, working to help the children/young people (CYP) in the Rathcoole/Monkstown communities (NI) to THRiVE. This LP represents a move away from research as 'outside experts' being 'done onto' communities towards an innovative approach aiming to 'gang up' collectively on the challenges faced by those living furthest from opportunity. It is guided by several core principles, e.g., collective impact, collaborative funding, place-based approaches, and the community-driven agenda of improving the outcomes of CYP locally and beyond by influencing policy and practice using evidence-informed practices.

This presentation describes the ongoing LP in action, highlighting: learning gained; next steps; and mechanisms for informing cross-departmental (e.g., health and education) systems level change.



**S003**

**Voice and influence in Scottish education policy: Whose interests? Whose power? Whose system?**

**Organisers**

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**Discussant: Walter Humes, University of Stirling**

**Theme:** Policy and Education

**Outline**

The Scottish education system is subject to ongoing reform, as part of a drive towards continuous improvement and a desire to compete on an international stage. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) plays a significant role in shaping the direction of this reform, most notably through two influential reports.

*Improving Schools in Scotland* (OECD, 2015) recommended enhanced partnership working to strengthen the system's capacity to address local needs and to increase coherent operations system-wide, resulting in the creation of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs). *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future* (OECD, 2021) recommended a review of the structure and functions of key components of the education system, resulting in a spate of reformatory preparations, including a 'National Discussion' (Scottish Government & COSLA, 2023). These global influences operate alongside local and national interests represented by an increasingly vast array of networks (Humes, 2020).

Each paper in this symposium uses critical discourse analysis to unpack 'influence' in education reform within three interlinked cases. Paper one examines the influence of teacher voice in the National Discussion. Paper two traces the rise (and fall) of the RICs. Paper three presents a critical analysis of the role of the OECD in Scottish education.

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## Paper 1

### Democratic policymaking: classroom teachers as political agents in the 'National Discussion'?

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Denise Mifsud, University of Bath

Frances Breslin Davda, University of Glasgow

**Keywords:** Policymaking; education reform; teacher voice; teacher agency

Launched on 21st September 2022 and running for 11 weeks, the National Discussion (ND) had the potential to be a landmark moment in Scottish education. The ND invited discussion on the future of Scottish education, offering a 'collective chance to pause, to reflect and contribute' (Campbell & Harris, 2022).

Internationally, and especially within Scotland, there is increasing awareness of the importance of involving teachers in policy design (OECD, 2021). However, little is known about the factors that enable or restrict this. Our paper examines teacher participation in the ND. In particular, what efforts were made to consult classroom teachers, were any efforts effective and what impact classroom teacher participation in the ND had.

Guided by Priestley, Biesta and Robinson's (2015) model of teacher agency, we seek to better understand classroom teachers' experiences of (non)participation during the ND and their engagement with wider education reform. We use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA; Fairclough, 2004) to analyse policy documents and social media in order to unpack the structural context of participation. An online qualitative survey and focus groups are also in progress to collect data directly from classroom teachers, which will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to explore perceptions of political agency.

Although analysis is ongoing, initial findings suggest that classroom teacher participation, and consequently political agency, were restricted by policy design and wider policy architecture. We conclude by identifying factors to better support teachers as political agents in education reform.

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## Paper 2

### Regional Improvement Collaboratives: The Rise and Fall

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**Keywords:** meso-level, leadership, collaboration, partnership

Following the emergence of the Northern Alliance in 2015, originally conceived in response to a recruitment and retention issue, and in response to the *Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective* (OECD, 2015) report, which suggested a strengthened meso level through collaboration and partnership working, six Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) were conceived and in place by 2018. The first interim report (2019) suggested that there was significant early progress made in establishing local governance, leadership and buy-in across the RICs. This was deemed so successful that the proposed Education Bill to drive school empowerment was put on hold. The second interim review of the RICs, carried out in 2021, suggested there was a high level of confidence in governance and partnership working, as RICs had enabled new and enhanced ways of collaboration creating a significant cultural shift. By June 2023, data had been gathered for the third interim review. However, in November of that year, the Cabinet Secretary confirmed that for the next academic year, the Scottish Government will taper funding for the RICs, repurposing this funding to better support teachers in classrooms. The third interim report was published in January 2024.

In light of this rise and fall of the RICs, the research presented here draws on a Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2004) of the reviews of the RICs and other supporting documents and will share initial thoughts around the perceived efficacy of collaboration and partnership working achieved by the RICs as an aspiration of education reform.

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### Paper 3

#### Foresight, insight and hindsight: Unpicking perceptions of the OECD's role in Scottish education reform

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**Keywords:** education reform, policy, discourse, influence

As an intergovernmental organisation with supranational power, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) exerts influence not only on education policy development and action in the present but also on the future, anticipating, framing and shaping discourses and actions that have a long reach both geographically and temporally (Robertson, 2022; Robertson & Beech, 2023).

In Scotland, where substantial education reform is underway, the OECD's role has been significant in bringing us to the present point (Campbell, 2023). The OECD undertook a review of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, marking ten years since its inception and highlighted both strengths and challenges associated with its implementation (OECD, 2021). Subsequent reports commissioned by the Scottish Government to consider the OECD's findings have demanded a wholesale reappraisal of Scottish education and, notably, exhibit a swell of learner-focused discourse (Harris & Campbell, 2023; Muir, 2022).

Drawing on a corpus of social media and mainstream media commentary on education reform in Scotland, the research presented here aims to understand and critique perceptions of the OECD's influence on education reform in Scotland through critical discourse analysis (Mullet, 2018). Findings suggest both positive and deficit associations with the rhetoric of education reform, contributing to a complex picture of the social reality within which reform will be enacted.

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**S004**

**A holistic understanding of primary-secondary school transitions**

**Organiser: Divya Jindal-Snape, University of Dundee**

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**Chairperson: Lynsey Burke, University of Dundee**

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**Discussant: Qudsia Kalsoom, University of Dundee**

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**Symposium presenters:**

**Divya Jindal-Snape**

**Calum MacGillivray**

**Charlotte Bagnall**

**Elizabeth F.S. Hannah**

Every year millions of children around the world start secondary school or equivalent. Therefore, the significance of getting their transitions right internationally cannot be overstated. The overall aim of this symposium is to provide evidence-based insights to enhance primary-secondary school transitions policy and practice.

To achieve this aim, we will provide holistic insights into (a) what is happening for children during primary-secondary transitions, by undertaking secondary analysis of a large dataset, (b) how can we robustly measure their emotional wellbeing during primary-secondary transitions to inform school interventions that can support them, by discussing the co-creation of the first scale to assess children's emotional wellbeing in the context of primary-secondary school transitions, and finally, (c) an overview of one such intervention, namely, a study that used drama conventions as a pedagogical approach to facilitate children's primary-secondary transitions.

Jindal-Snape's (2016, 2023) Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions (MMT) Theory underpins the three studies. MMT Theory takes a complex view of transitions where they are dynamic, incorporating multiple contexts (e.g., home, community, school) and multiple domains (e.g., physical, educational, psychological, social, cultural). It proposes that each child experiences multiple transitions and that their transitions can trigger transitions for significant others. Conversely, significant others' will be experiencing their own transitions, and these transitions will trigger and/or have an impact on that child's transitions.

## **Paper 1**

### **Understanding children's primary-secondary school transitions experiences and factors associated with them**

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**Keywords:** primary-secondary transitions, longitudinal dataset, secondary analysis, Growing Up in Scotland (GUS)

Recent research suggests that primary-secondary school transitions can be problematic, with a negative impact on academic outcomes, attitudes towards certain subjects, subject-specific self-efficacy scores, psychological wellbeing. However, few studies have analysed robust, longitudinal datasets with large sample sizes. To fill these gaps, we undertook secondary analysis of a large, longitudinal dataset collected for the study Growing Up in Scotland (GUS). The study aimed to understand children's positive and negative primary-secondary transition experiences and the factors that can lead to these experiences. The analysis focused on data from 2,559 children, recruited in 2005 when they were aged 10 months, and their parents/carers who provided data on all items used to assess transition experiences. Data analysed was collected through face-to-face interviews at two time points: the penultimate year of primary school and the first year of secondary school. To assess transitions experiences, indicators from previous literature, recorded at both time points, were used to construct a measure to indicate positive, moderate, or negative experiences. Then bivariate analyses were conducted to assess factors associated with different transitions experiences.

The findings suggested a complex picture of children's transitions experiences and factors that lead to them, which confirmed some findings of previous research, but also contradicted many. For example, it was the first large-scale, contemporaneous, longitudinal study that was able to indicate that only 22% of children experienced a negative transition, compared with 36% of children who experienced a positive transition, and 42% of children, a moderately positive transition experience.

## **Paper 2**

### **Design and validation of the Primary-Secondary School Transitions Emotional Wellbeing Scale (P-S WELLS)**

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**Co-authors: Emily Banwell<sup>1</sup>, Divya Jindal-Snape<sup>2</sup>, Carla Mason<sup>1</sup>, Margaratia Panayiotou<sup>1</sup> and Pamela Qualter<sup>1</sup>**

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**Keywords:** primary-secondary school transitions, emotional wellbeing, scale development, children, protocol, Delphi method, co-production

Primary-secondary school transitions are a critical period for children, that poses heightened risk for the development of poor emotional wellbeing and mental health. However, the corpus of scales used to assess primary-secondary school transitions and emotional wellbeing during this time have considerable limitations, and critically there is no existing scale which comprehensively measures children's emotional wellbeing *in the context of* primary-secondary school transitions. This contextual

measure is needed to holistically assess children's emotional experiences during this critical juncture and has significant consequences for identifying and supporting children.

To overcome this gap, we have designed the first robust, sensitive, and standardised accessible scale, to longitudinally assess children's emotional wellbeing in the context of primary-secondary school transitions, which is named the *Primary-Secondary School Transitions Emotional Wellbeing Scale (P-S WELLS)*.

*P-S WELLS* has been developed following a multi-informant, mixed-methods model of scale development. Items were developed combining deductive and inductive methods from (a) focus groups with children; (b) a UK wide survey, aggregating expert opinion from educational practice, policy and research; and (c) our international systematic literature review (Bagnall & Jindal-Snape, 2023). The measure's items were developed and finalised using the Delphi method, cognitive interviews (with children and teachers), and readability tests.

*P-S WELLS* will be validated through longitudinal psychometric assessment and longitudinal validation on two discrete samples, across two transition periods, in the first instance.

*P-S WELLS* and its development will be novel in its approach (e.g. asks children about their feelings towards the changes they are negotiating in context); and its longitudinal design and operationalisation.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Using drama as an intervention during primary-secondary school transitions: A case study from one local authority in Scotland**

**Elizabeth F.S. Hannah, University of Dundee**

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**Co-authors: William Barlow<sup>2</sup>, Divya Jindal-Snape<sup>1</sup>, Tony Goode<sup>3</sup>, Tricia Tooman<sup>2</sup>**

**Affiliations: <sup>1</sup> University of Dundee, <sup>2</sup> University of Aberdeen, <sup>3</sup> Out of the Blue**

**Keywords:** primary-secondary school transitions, drama, intervention, case study

Transitions from primary to secondary school are a significant time for children and their families. There is some evidence that the adoption of a drama-based approach during primary-secondary transitions develops children's wellbeing, social skills, agency, and motivation. Drama facilitates children's learning about abstract concepts, such as transitions, through the application of a socially constructed model of learning. However, there has been limited research on the use of drama to facilitate primary-secondary transitions. The aim of this study was to investigate children's experience of drama as a pedagogical approach and the impact of this method in facilitating children's transitions from primary to secondary school. The study was conducted in two schools in one cluster in a local authority in Scotland. Children (n= 71) from 3 classes participated in four drama workshops, informed by Jindal-Snape's Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions theory and structured using Neelands and Goode's Drama Conventions. Children completed an online mixed methods questionnaire following the final workshop. Findings from the quantitative data, using Likert scale ratings, indicated that children were positive about using drama as a learning approach. The intervention resulted in children having improved knowledge and understanding of their own and others' transitions, and more confidence and sense of agency. However, children did not feel that the workshops enabled them to rehearse approaches to negotiating the transition to secondary school. Findings from the qualitative data highlighted the range of experiences and perceived impact. It is planned to undertake further research to build on the learning from this study.

**S005**

**Engaging with new digital technologies: embracing uncertainty and creating inroads into future practice**

**Chair and discussant: Lavinia Hirsu, University of Glasgow**  
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**Theme:** Digital Learning

### **Symposium outline**

How do teachers build knowledge of new digital technologies and practice? How do they upgrade pedagogy with limited resources or an uncertain landscape of developments within the digital tech industry? Part of the SERA Digital Education Network, this symposium aims to promote the integration of emergent digital technologies through collaborative learning, experimentation and direct experiences. The presentations offer three different contexts where teachers were invited to explore the potential for teaching and learning with Augmented Reality, data literacy and Gen AI. The presentations capture the same challenge: teachers' need for support to navigate a complex and changing learning environment in the company of new digital devices, applications, and software. Fast evolving technologies (e.g., XR (extended reality), Generative AI) call for innovative pedagogies, reflections on existing approaches to learning, and the re-evaluation of learner-educator relationships. To engage with these technologies, teachers need resources, preparation and agility to upgrade their pedagogies before the technologies have reached a high level of maturity or the learning environments are digitally equipped. The presenters in the symposium agree that the future of teaching and learning starts with the current "work in progress", amidst ethical concerns and tech fears but boldly wrestling with new pedagogical possibilities.

### **Symposium presenters**

- Stavros Nikou, University of Strathclyde
- Serdar Abaci, University of Edinburgh
- Gabriella Rodolico, University of Glasgow
- Leon Robinson, University of Glasgow

### **Paper 1**

**Augmented Reality in Scottish Primary schools: Work in progress**  
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**Keywords:** Augmented Reality, Primary school pupils

Augmented Reality (AR) is an emerging technology that incorporates virtual components in real environments. While AR has the potential to enhance teaching and learning, its use in the classroom is still rather limited. The current ASPE-funded project aims to discuss findings from an ongoing project on the use of AR in Scottish primary classrooms. Main aims of the project are to build capacity among primary teachers to become creators of AR educational resources and to support and enhance primary pupils' learning through AR-assisted lessons. Primary pupils, with the help of their teachers, are engaging in collaboratively creating AR experiences and interacting with AR resources. The project aims to explore teachers' and pupils' experiences while engaging with AR and the impact of AR on pupil's learning. The study follows a mixed methods design with semi-structured interviews and surveys to be the main data collection instruments. Content analysis will be conducted for the qualitative data and descriptive and inferential statistics for the quantitative data. Preliminary findings



indicate a positive impact of the AR-supported lessons on the cognitive and affective aspects of the educational process. Particular aspects in relation to the AR-supported collaborative learning will be sought. Study findings deemed important for designing teachers' continuous professional development in AR and also for developing AR-supported teaching interventions in the primary classroom.

## **Paper 2**

### **Building Teachers' Confidence and Competence in Teaching Data Literacy through Knowledge Creating Communities**

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**Keywords:** Teachers, Professional learning, Data literacy, Knowledge creating community

Data literacy is increasingly important to enable school-aged learners to make sense of a data-rich world. Educating teachers about how to develop their learners' data literacy is of high priority. As part of a government-funded project, 15 primary and 14 secondary teachers from 42 schools in South East Scotland participated in two four-day data literacy courses (one for primary teachers and one for secondary teachers), which are defined as Knowledge Creating Communities (KCC). This paper presents a qualitative analysis of the development of confidence and competence in teaching data literacy among teachers who are members of two KCCs. For the present study, nine primary teachers and 11 secondary teachers took part in two focus group interviews. This study focused on how KCC as a professional learning model can best support the development of teachers' data literacy and pedagogy. Successful factors of the KCC were peer discussion and reflection on practice within a supportive environment, respect and reciprocity between teachers and university staff; input from experts in data, and access to high-quality educational resources including pre-prepared datasets.

## **Paper 3**

### **Exploring Generative AI in Education through experiences, discussions, and ethical considerations**

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**Keywords:** Generative AI, Education, Ethical Considerations, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Recent studies on Generative AI in education have highlighted its potential benefits such as fostering self-regulated learning, creating personalized learning environments, and enhancing student engagement and accessibility (Kong & Yang, 2024; Sharma et al., 2024). Specific case studies demonstrate positive pedagogical implications of Generative AI across disciplines such as language learning, computer science, and mathematics (Blake, 2024). However, Generative AI also presents several limitations, including the inability to replace the human interaction essential in social work education (Stone, 2023). It also introduces ethical concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the impact on intellectual critical thinking (Yu et al., 2024).

We created a four-hour online course designed specifically for educators. This course aims to enhance understanding of Generative AI's role in education through practical examples and discussions. It focuses on promoting a constructive dialogue on ethical issues and exploring the potential impacts of Generative AI on students' learning experiences.

Through interactive discussions, the use of multimodal examples including ChatGPT, and forum discussions, participants and tutors were able to develop and reflect on their insights into the

multifaceted aspects of Generative AI in education. Additionally, they examined the ethical considerations associated with its use and analysed its potential impact on enhancing the learning experiences of students, including literacy and lesson planning.

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**S006**

**Experiences and challenges in decolonising the curriculum: What we learnt and where should we go now**

**Chair: Michèle Vincent, University of Glasgow**

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**Discussant: Leyla De Amicis, University of Glasgow**

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Recently, 'Decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy' in academia has drawn much attention. Comprehensive literature has focused on decolonising meaning(s), actualising colonisation and challenges of decolonising curricula, which are linked to geographical, disciplinary, institutional and/or stakeholder contexts.

Following the University of Glasgow's *Understanding Racism, Transforming University Culture* report (2021-22), a 'decolonising the curriculum' strand was built into the University's 2021-2025 Learning and Teaching Strategy. In addition, the report recommended the creation of a Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice. This symposium will explore the experiences of scholars from different disciplines who are part of this Community of Practice.

The first paper will focus on the views of students from minoritised ethnic groups on how psychology curricula could be further decolonised. The second paper will report the experiences and views of staff and students from the School of Mathematics and Statistics regarding inclusive curricula and historical knowledge in STEM. The third contribution will explain the 'The Pluriversity Podcast' initiative which gave voice to students, academics, and practitioners within and outwith academia, to enhance decolonising thinking and practices.

A discussion will promote interdisciplinary dialogues on decolonising curricula and pedagogy, considering the development of a potential discipline of decolonial studies.

#### **Paper 1**

**How to decolonise your curriculum: using students as partners**

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**Keywords:** Decolonising Education, Learning, Teaching

#### **Aim**

Decolonising education in practice is challenging. Research demonstrates that educators are unsure about how to actively facilitate this or are concerned about making mistakes. To address this, we turned to the students themselves in an effort to understand how students from the global majority experience their curriculum, and gain insight into what an inclusive curriculum should look like. The present study aimed to investigate the extent to which students of colour studying psychology at the University of Glasgow experience their curriculum to be inclusive, and what they consider to be the challenges and benefits of creating a more inclusive and equitable curriculum.

## **Methods**

This study asked students from minoritised ethnic groups their views about their teaching content in a qualitative study to address where issues in psychology curricula might lie, and how teaching staff may address them. Ten psychology students from minoritised ethnic groups were recruited in two focus groups to uncover how the psychology curriculum at the University of Glasgow is experienced.

## **Main findings**

Thematic Analysis revealed two core themes: students' awareness of systemic issues that have historically prevented change and lowered their expectations for meaningful change, and second, students' acknowledgement of staff efforts (positive or otherwise) to decolonise. This last theme also had two sub-themes which highlighted superficiality among some changes and lack of representation within the curriculum.

## **Conclusion**

We discuss the results in the context of teaching and learning strategies in relation to psychology and wider teaching practice, with guidance for next steps.

## **Paper 2**

### **Inspiring students by understanding the past: grasping the history of mathematics and statistics**

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**Keywords:** STEM, Decolonising the Curriculum, historical knowledge, staff and students

## **Aims**

Our project set out to understand if a decolonisation framework would be appropriate to the mathematical sciences and what it means to decolonise a discipline perceived to be rooted in objectivity. We discuss the fundamental need to understand the history of a discipline, how knowledge was created and by who, and how these can inspire students in their learning.

## **Method**

Through an online anonymous survey, we drew upon the experiences of staff and students from the School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Glasgow, to explore key concepts in decolonising STEM and acknowledging the historical entanglements of STEM developments with colonial legacies. We followed up with discussion groups with staff.

## **Findings**

The survey revealed a complex landscape, with differing levels of agreement regarding the inclusivity of curricula and attitudes towards history and decolonisation efforts. While there is expressed support for diversity and inclusion initiatives, the enthusiasm for decolonisation was mixed. Particularly, 35% of staff and 33% of students disagreed that they would be interested more history within the taught curriculum. During follow up discussion groups, the perception that "we are not historians" was made, and instead we should focus on how we teach instead of what we teach.

## **Conclusions**

We challenge this common perception by questioning why some students don't engage with mathematics, or why some people believe 'they are not good at maths'. We postulate that understanding knowledge construction provides insights and meaning into the subject for students and address the disconnect between abstract concepts and the people who developed them.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Podcasts as a medium to decolonise the curriculum**

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**Keywords:** Decolonising the Curriculum, Podcasts, Dialogue

#### **Aim**

Dialogue has a key role in decolonising thinking and practices that can lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of pluriversal knowledges. Importantly, decolonising education is a global initiative, and the aim of the University of Glasgow's Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice is to bring together voices from a wide range of actors from across the education sector, both nationally and internationally.

#### **Method**

One way to achieve this aim is through podcasts, which have the potential to create a space for dialogue that transcends boundaries and borders. Podcasts are also in line with decolonising practices and pedagogies by being inclusive, accessible, subjective, authentic and through their intersectional approach. In this symposium, we present The Pluriversity Podcast, which was co-created by the co-leads of the University of Glasgow's Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice, and which involved students, academics, and colleagues from professional services from diverse backgrounds.

#### **Findings**

The Pluriversity Podcast has established a necessary and fruitful dialogue between a plurality of voices, namely those of students, academics, and practitioners within and outwith academia.

#### **Conclusions**

As part of the symposium, we will reflect on the lessons we have learned, particularly on how to ensure that the dialogue continues and leads to concrete actions despite the barriers we face.

S007

**“Yes, we listen to children’s voices!”: Exploring what truly listening entails**

**Organiser & Chairperson/Discussant: Zinnia Mevawalla, University of Strathclyde**

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Within a climate of celebration following the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scott’s law in January 2024, this symposium brings together three papers exploring similarities and differences in what listening to children might involve. We reflect on questions we have been asking ourselves as researchers and practitioners working across different age groups (early education/care and primary school) and countries (Scotland and India). Some of these questions touch upon - What different ways of listening do we use? Do these methods allow us to truly listen to children’s voices? What are the dominant discourses around listening and how can we challenge them to genuinely promote children’s rights to freely express themselves, be heard, and be included in decision-making? As the pieces of a jigsaw, our studies using different but complementary approaches involving creative, play-based, and ethnographic methods will shed light on what truly listening (should) entail. In a constantly changing and increasingly fragile world, we hope that our reflections will prompt discussions on how listening with all our senses to children’s actions, feelings, words, and silences can lead to a more equitable future.

#### **Paper 1**

**Meeting Halfway: Voices of Children and Educators on Raising Critical Consciousness of Caste Oppression in Primary Schools in India**

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**Keywords:** critical consciousness, social justice, co-researching with children, creative and arts-based methods

This paper aims to initiate a pedagogical dialogue by bringing together the voices of children and primary educators on raising critical consciousness of caste oppression across two school contexts in New Delhi, India. Research shows that prejudice based on race, disability, gender, and caste are often silenced for children as matters not concerning them (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009). However, studies highlight how listening to children’s inquiries about sensitive social issues and supporting them to explore, reflect, and act against unfairness is crucial to disrupting oppressive practices (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2010). Drawing on the theory of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1973) and a child rights-based approach (UNCRC, 1989), this paper discusses children’s inquiries, reflections, agency, and actions towards raising critical awareness of caste oppression. This study utilised an action research design with participatory methods of co-researching with children on issues of caste oppression in one of the two schools (Ryu, 2022); alongside classroom observations, interviews and informal conversations with teachers across both school contexts in New Delhi, India. The findings of this research emphasise the significance of employing a multimodal approach incorporating creative, play, and arts-based methods (e.g., child-led interviews, drawings, puppets, zine and map-making) to facilitate true listening to children. The research shows that sensitively tuning into children’s

embodied experiences of caste oppression can build critical understandings. Implications for further research, policy and practice will be unpacked through reflections on the research process i.e., ethical dilemmas, negotiations with schools/teachers, co-research with children, and the researcher's ongoing reflexive/reflective self-talk.

## **Paper 2**

**'Walk alongside me...' - Exploring the potentialities of children's freedom to lead their own play/learning across the early level, in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** Slow Pedagogy/research, Early Childhood, Froebel, Unhurried

This research seeks to explore the potentialities of children's freedom to lead their own play/learning across the early level, in Scotland. Slow Pedagogy (Clark, 2023) and the Froebelian principles served as the conceptual foundation for this exploration. In the neoliberal culture that sees education 'as a running race' (Clark, 2023), Slow Pedagogy can offer a foundation for challenging **current discourses**. A previous study (Papaspyropoulou & McNair, forthcoming), which drew upon practitioners' and policymakers' views on the hurried nature of children's lives and the value of an unhurried approach, served as a stimulus to explore a slower research approach. After attending an hour-long presentation on 'Slow Pedagogy' participants (N=80) were invited to respond to two open-ended questions, analysed through thematic analysis. One of the prevailing themes indicated that children are 'hurried'/interrupted during their play, learning, engagement; whereas an 'unhurried' approach allows play to flourish as adults follow the child's pace. Drawing on this finding, unhurriedly listening to children's *actions, emotions and words* (RtA, 2020) is central to this study. An interpretivist approach drawing upon data gathered through mobility mapping, alongside ethnographic fieldnotes and unstructured walking conversations, would allow the researcher 'to step back, to "see" the child in a way that respects their uniqueness' (Dunlop, Burns and McNair, 2021, 140). The findings aspire to provide an insight into children's lived-experiences while leading their own learning through play in ECEC, and thereafter, in their transition to primary school. This paper aims to share the personal/professional journey that informed this methodological approach.

## **Paper 3**

**A multimodal approach for exploring *with* autistic learners their physical activity experiences in mainstream primary schools in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** autistic children's voices, physical activity, creative research methods, school-based research

Physical Activity (PA) can be challenging for autistic children due to motor difficulties and sensory processing differences resulting in significantly lower PA levels (Srinivasan, Pescatello, and Bhat, 2014), and higher rates of sedentary behaviour and obesity (Bardid et al., 2019; Healy et al., 2018) compared to their typically developing peers. School-based programmes supporting autistic children

are often based on teachers' and researchers' understanding and knowledge of autistic children's needs, strengths, and interests. The aim of this study is to invite autistic students in reflective conversations around their PA experiences in the mainstream school context. Such conversations explore aspects including what the children like/dislike about PE, interactions with PA spaces (such as the sports hall, corridors, and playgrounds) along with preferred ways of being physically active and what activities, games, and sports they wish to take part.

This study uses a flexible multimodal approach including observations, walking interviews, photo elicitation, drawing, and LEGO® building to enable all autistic children, both speaking and minimally speaking, attending Language and Communication Resource (LCR) bases in mainstream primary schools within greater Glasgow to share their lived experiences.

Emerging findings suggest that a multimodal approach which is responsive and attuned to each student's mode of communication is vital for engaging in rich discussions with autistic learners about their embodied experiences. Drawing upon these preliminary findings, this paper aspires to spark conversations on using all our senses to 'listen' to autistic children's voices and silences.



**S008**

**The Playful Researchers: Adopting a playful approach to research design and ethics**

**Organiser: Lynsey Burke, University of Dundee**  
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**Chairperson: Charlotte Bagnall, University of Manchester**  
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**Discussant: Elizabeth F.S. Hannah, University of Dundee**  
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**Symposium presenters: Lynsey Burke, Divya Jindal-Snape, Susan Whyte, Mhairi Wallace**

**Theme: Innovative Research Methods**

The purpose of this symposium is to shine the spotlight on ways to align research design and ethics with developmentally appropriate practice. For children aged 0 – 8 years, it is widely accepted and recognised that developmentally appropriate practice means ‘play’. Play is a valuable pedagogical approach, which promotes children’s social, emotional and physical development. Play also affords children the opportunity to express themselves and communicate through Reggio’s ‘Hundred Languages’. Despite this, traditional and commonplace data collection methods with young children tend to be adult-led (e.g., interviews, focus groups), and provide little opportunity for children to have a voice in how and when they would like to share their views.

In response to this tension between data collection methods and knowledge about how young children like to communicate, ‘The Playful Researchers’ group at the University of Dundee was formed to design and promote research studies which are developmentally appropriate. The Playful Researchers will share three interrelated papers, each representing a different stage of the research process - ethics, methodology and findings - and each underpinned by a ‘playful approach’. Throughout each paper, we will also share how we have engaged reflexively with the playful research methodology, and will examine the influence our previous experience as early childhood educators may have had on our role as researchers.

The first presentation shares the Playful Research Ethics Framework, which highlights a playful appropriate approach to ethical considerations when conducting research with young children. The second presentation highlights children’s preferences regarding different playful data collection methods. Finally, the third presentation shares findings from a study which incorporated playful multi-methods to capture children’s views of their play spaces.

**Paper 1**

**The Playful Research Ethics Framework (PREF): Ethical research with young children**  
**Lynsey Burke, University of Dundee**  
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**Keywords:** playful, ethics, young children, early childhood education, developmentally appropriate practice

In this presentation, we will discuss the development of the Playful Research Ethics Framework (PREF). There are various important, ethical codes of conduct and guidelines which need to be acknowledged and considered when engaging in research with young children (e.g., guidelines from EECERA, ERIC, BERA,

SERA) and the PREF was designed to complement these existing ethical frameworks, not replace them. The development of our PREF was founded upon eleven core principles (such as informed and ongoing consent, welfare of the participant and appropriate interpretation of data). Upon these principles, we have constructed a model to guide and support researchers when conducting research with young children throughout four stages of the research design; prior to the research study, during the initial ethics session with children, continuing throughout the research study and after the data collection. Suggestions and supports are offered within this developmentally appropriate framework, for instance the use of child-friendly language, visual aids, puppets, songs, drama, Makaton symbols and discussions as well as attention to any cues of disengagement. There will also be a reflexive discussion of how the researchers' background experience and beliefs also strongly influenced this framework.

## **Paper 2**

### **Listening to young children's voices: Aligning data collection methods with developmentally appropriate practice**

**Lynsey Burke**

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**Divya Jindal-Snape, University of Dundee**

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**Keywords:** children's voices, playful approach, early childhood education, primary school, PREF

Few studies have effectively listened to children's voices on matters important to them and have asked children how they would like to be listened to. This study used a playful approach to listen to and amplify children's voices and views about play spaces in their primary school. The research questions considered were:

- How can a playful approach be used to listen to children's voices about what children would like their new play space to look like?
- Why did children choose particular resources to communicate their thoughts about those spaces?

Forty-two primary school children (ages 5–6 years) chose which method/s they would like to engage with to share their voices from blocks, clay, drawings, percussion instruments and loose parts storytelling. In line with our Playful Research Ethics Framework (PREF) and our own positionality as researchers, interactive ethics sessions were delivered using puppets, music and Makaton, and on-going assent was monitored. This presentation will focus on the clay and blocks data; children's favourite and preferred methods to listen to their voices. Rich data were collected through artefacts, photographs and conversations. The findings suggest that incorporating a playful approach and providing multiple ateliers and resources to choose from, can ensure children's voices can be heard and amplified. We believe this study makes several original contributions, namely, designing a Playful Research Ethics Framework, aligning the research design of multiple ateliers with free-flow play and including a large sample size. This study also highlighted children's agency within the research process as children chose *how* and *when* their voices should be heard, and invited children to share their preferences for being listened to in future.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Using multiple, play-based data collection methods to capture and amplify children's voices about their play spaces**

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**Co-authors: Lynsey Burke, Divya Jindal-Snape, Angela Lindsay, Megan McKenzie, Brenda Keatch**

**Keywords:** spaces, children's voices, creative methods, play, visual methods, PREF

This presentation will reflect on the playful data collection methods used to capture young children's voices about their play spaces in one Scottish primary school. 45 children (ages 5-7 years) participated, choosing from a range of creative methods (e.g., InPhoTours, drawing, mapping) to share their voices. The 'Playful Research Ethics Framework', was put into action at all stages of this research project, with this research aimed at achieving children's ongoing informed assent. Four themes were identified: (a) the 'whole child' in the space, (b) space and relationships, (c) function of space, and (d) impact (or lack) of children's voices about space. Children expressed differences in ownership, creativity and imagination in indoor and outdoor spaces. Further, despite perceiving there to be a lack of agency, children were willing to share their voices. There are implications for both practice and research in terms of adults willing to effectively listen to children's voices and acting on them and consideration of reflexive dilemmas and challenges which can arise through researcher positionality. This study makes original and significant contributions which have the potential to impact research and practice with young children internationally.

S009

**Expanding the border of our doctoral students' learning community: Polyvocal self-study**

**Organiser: Megumi Nishida, University of Iceland**

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**Chair: Robert Campbell, St Mary's University Twickenham**

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**Discussant: Stephen Day, University of West of Scotland**

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**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The symposium consists of two presentations and one interactive session to explore the past, present, and future of the doctoral students' learning community. Doing a doctoral study can be a lonely journey for many of us as we feel isolated from a university. During the pandemic, the online writing community was formed, expanded its geographical boundary, and became inclusive for any doctoral students in the global context. The purpose of this symposium is to critically analyse the development of the doctoral students' learning community. We aim to share our findings to empower other doctoral students around the world to create their own learning communities. The over-arching question we ask is: How did we reflect on our past and present as the doctoral students' learning community to enhance our future collaboration? Polyvocal self-study is our methodological frame to analyse the values of diversity in a community with creative methods. We employ narrative to illuminate our experiences within the community and its effect on their professional practice. The first presentation excavates the community learning experiences as 'past'. The second presentation addresses a doctoral student's community participation process as 'present'. The final session collectively explores the future of the community.

**Keywords:** Doctoral students' learning community, polyvocal self-study, creative methods, mutual support

**Paper 1**

**Analysing our writing community development from conference presentations: The past**

**SVANAHAF group (Soffía Valdimarsdóttir, Ásta Möller Sívertsen, Ruth Jörgensdóttir Rauterberg, Megumi Nishida, Anna Wozniczka, Guðlaug Erlendsdóttir)**

**Keywords:** doctoral students' supporting community, self-study, collaborative inquiry

The purpose of the first presentation is to collaboratively reflect on our SVANAHAF group experiences during our doctoral studies. The study aims to suggest our collective value of forming the doctoral students' supporting community. SVANAHAF group was first organised by two doctoral supervisors at our university to enhance mutual support among supervisors and students. Their idea inspired doctoral students to unite and tackle challenges as a group. Naturally, the SVANAHAF group and the online writing community were merged. For this presentation, our focus is on SVANAHAF activities. We have been presenting our experiences at conferences since 2022. Collaborative self-study framed our study that enabled us to recognise our individual/collective growth while reflecting on our activities. The data included conference proposals, slides, handouts, photos, and individual reflective journals. As an analysis process, we first created the matrix to organize contents of five conference presentations we took part in. Second, we discussed each presentation and took notes of our reflections. Third, we shared our reflections to excavate our learning moments. Finally, we wrote collaborative narrative about how our individual and collaborative learning experience influenced the progress of our doctoral dissertation writing. The findings revealed that our conference experiences varied, but we appreciated mutual support. Each of us gained not only confidence, but also learned to show vulnerability to respect diversity and enhance mutual support. We

experienced our writing community as an empowering learning space which gave us motivation, support and resources to grow as confident writers.

## **Paper 2**

### **Developing Collaborative Self-study Research an unfettering experience: The present**

**Robert Campbell, St Mary's University Twickenham**

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**Keywords:** Self-study, professional development, reflexivity

As part of my doctorate, I attended self-study presentations at the annual American Education Research Association (AERA) conference in 2024. One critical moment was attending presentations led by founding members of the SVANAHAF online writing community and a subsequent invitation to participate. Membership in such a community proves emancipatory to my doctoral research and ongoing interest in self-study research.

In England, the significant increase in international preservice teachers from former colonies prompts me to examine my practice as a teacher educator afresh. Given a focus on decolonising the curriculum, I feel compelled to investigate how I acknowledge the trauma of my colonial heritage. This paper investigates how my membership of SVANAHAF acts as a critical incident that fuels and facilitates research into my practice. With the guidance of peers in the online writing community, I am now beginning to embark on new collaborative self-study research. In this presentation, I use email conversations with collaborators, my reflections, and planning documents as data collection points to investigate the power and agency afforded by this doctoral writing community. These data sets highlight how the numerous voices in our online writing community prompt me to interrogate my beliefs. Moreover, ongoing conversations problematise my actions as a white teacher educator who glorifies a Eurocentric curriculum for teacher education. By presenting a story, situated in the present, I hope to disseminate the unfettering power offered by regularly meeting as a writing community.

## **Paper 3**

### **Looking forward, musing within our community to set the direction: The future**

**Soffía Valdimarsdóttir, Ásta Möller Sívertsen, Jónína Sæmundsdóttir, Ruth Jörgensdóttir Rauterberg, Megumi Nishida, Robert Campbell**

**Keywords:** diversity, doctoral students' learning community, self-study, concept mapping

The final part is an arts-inspired interactive session with presenters and the audience. The purpose of this session is to collaboratively reflect on our experiences from the writing group to contextualise the past and present of our online writing community. We aim to propose new knowledge we will generate at the end of the session and encourage all participants to bring their learning results from the symposium participation back to their field to improve their practice. At the venue, we first introduce the concept of polyvocality to share the theoretical frame of the doctoral students' community. Based on the previous two presentations, we will create a collective concept map to explore and reflect on our learning experiences. The collective mapping process will be video recorded if the participants allow us to do so. The purpose of concept mapping is to stimulate our collective dialogue. When the concept map is ready, we discuss the values and benefits of our learning experience with the online writing community. Our collaborative dialogue will enable us to explore our path toward the future as a community of doctoral students. The video recording will be saved and used for the online writing group members to analyse and develop for our next conference presentation.

**S010**

## **Visions for, in and through Initial Teacher Education**

**This symposium is supported by the SERA Teacher Education Network**

### **Organisers:**

**Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh**

**Aileen Kennedy, University of Glasgow**

**Chairperson/Discussant: TBC**

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

### **Outline**

The UNESCO (2024) Global Report on teachers informs us that while teachers “play a key role in shaping the future” we are facing a global shortage of teachers. The International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, calls for increased international efforts to empower, recruit, train, and support teachers. This symposium considers the role of teacher education in empowering and supporting student teachers as they transition into schools. In so doing we explore the link between purposes and actions which like theory and practice has historically been problematic in teacher education (Korthagen, 2010). Through the papers that make up this symposium we explore the concept of *vision* as facilitating a connection between educational purposes and actions. Vision is an image of what we hope to achieve through teacher education, and for education within schools and the wider community (Hammerness, 2006). The first paper will discuss developing vision *for* teacher education, the second paper will discuss developing vision *in* teacher education and the final paper will discuss developing vision *through* teacher education. The final discussion will prompt us to consider the ways in which vision may help us to empower and support teachers.

### **Symposium Presenters:**

- Paper 1 – Aileen Kennedy, University of Glasgow & ML White, University of Edinburgh
- Paper 2 – Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh
- Paper 3 – Khadija Mohammed, University of the West of Scotland

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## **Paper 1**

### **Developing and enacting a vision for transformative learning and teaching**

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**Keywords:** transformative learning and teaching, initial teacher education, vision

### **Aims**

This paper explores the development and enactment of a new initial teacher education programme designed with a very explicit vision in mind: putting social justice front and centre and preparing teachers to work across the primary/secondary transition phase through enactment of a transformative learning pedagogical approach. It considers who the programme appeals to, how the messaging of a radically different programme has been received by stakeholders, how graduates of the programme reflect on the initial vision and its appeal two or three years into their careers, and the extent to which that vision still shapes their work as teachers.

### **Methods**

The paper draws on self-study reflections from programme leaders, critical discourse analysis of publicly available documents (e.g. newspaper reports) and semi-structured interviews with graduates of the programme.

### **Findings**

Findings demonstrate that the development of a programme with a very explicit vision – perhaps inevitably – invites a range of reactions, and that despite Government appeals for innovation in teacher education as a means of addressing major national challenges, programmes with radical visions face serious barriers in a conservative education system. The findings in this particular case also refute M. Kennedy's (2006) contention that teacher educators' collective visions, which are often what might be described as 'progressive' in their orientation, tend to fail to enable teacher candidates to deal with the realities of practice.

## **Paper 2**

### **Developing Vision within teacher education**

**Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh**

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**Paul McMillan, Jan McCall, Murray Craig, Karen Munro, University of Edinburgh**

**Keywords:** teacher education, vision

### **Aims**

This paper focuses on the 'Vision and Voices' project: a longitudinal study tracking the enactment of vision across a 4-year undergraduate initial teacher education programme. Vision-making has been explicitly threaded through each year of the programme; the Vision and Voices project has explored the experiences of teacher educators and student teachers engaging in this process. The main aim of

this study has been to understand how vision making could empower and support student teachers as they transition into school contexts.

### **Methods**

This study adopted a qualitative, interpretivist approach to investigate the experiences and perspectives of teacher educators and student teachers on vision making. Data were gathered using focus group interviews, a total of 8 interviews with 37 students (8-10 students from each year group) and 4 individual, semi-structured interviews with 4 teacher educators. The data were analysed inductively to generate themes, summarising the data.

### **Findings**

The initial findings showed benefits and challenges for student teachers during the vision-making process. That is, understanding diversity and fostering the sharing of visions were considerations for students in the early years while uncertainties about the future were central in later years. For the teacher educators, while there was a degree of overlap in their overarching visions (e.g., social justice, active learning, relationality of their teaching), there was diversity in how each of them engaged with vision making in their practice with student teachers. Making connections to the past and future raises implications for how ITE programmes engage students in vision making.

### **Paper 3**

**'I worry about saying the wrong thing... '- Racial Justice Educators: Developing Vision through Teacher Education**

**Khadija Mohammed, University of the West of Scotland**

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**Keywords:** Racial justice, teacher education, anti-racism

### **Aims**

In Scotland, racial crime remains the most reported hate crime with a total 3,145 charges relating to race crime reported in 2022-23 (COPFS, 2023). This pervasiveness of racism requires us to prioritise racial equity in preparing the next generation of teachers. In 2023, a National Anti-Racism Framework was published to support all Scottish ITE institutions committed to interrogating the systemic racism in their institutions (SCDE, 2023). This paper examines the work of one ITE institution in the West of Scotland, in their work to prepare race cognisant, anti-racist teachers.

### **Methods**

Framed in Critical race Theory, this paper draws on qualitative research conducted with student teachers from one ITE institution in the West of Scotland. Focus groups enabled their responses to be analysed, in order to explore their assumptions and biases, personal racial and social identities and consider the impact these have on professional ethics and practice.

### **Findings**

The findings indicate that student teachers lacked an understanding of how race impacts in school settings every day. They reported not feeling confident to act against racism and actively promote racial justice. Students reported a lack of awareness around decolonised and anti-racist curriculum approaches. There is a need to develop critical anti-racist pedagogies to disrupt, challenge and make visible the invisible racism in existing scholarship, learning, and teaching, and pedagogic practices in teacher education.



**S011**

**School leadership in Scotland: understanding the landscape and leading change in a fragile world**

**Chair: Romina Madrid Miranda, University of Stirling**

**Discussant: TBC**

Over the past three decades, global educational reforms seen as part of the global movement described by Sahlberg (2023) as the Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM), have increased decentralization and accountability pressures, emphasizing school leadership as key to improving student outcomes. Scotland has responded to these by developing policies, standards, and development programs for headteachers. However, new societal challenges, including the post-pandemic landscape, technological advances, political instability, displacement, and climate change, complicate headteachers' efforts to lead and support teachers effectively. Recent significant reforms in Scottish education propose substantial changes to the future of education. These initiatives address public and political concerns over declining standards in international assessments like PISA. This dynamic policy environment places immense pressure on Scottish headteachers to adapt and respond.

This symposium contributes to this challenging but promissory scenario by presenting new questions, tensions, and dilemmas. It synthesises research findings and discusses how schools, as adaptive social systems, sit at the nexus of policies, communities and society. The first paper reflects on headteachers as policy actors. The second examines how Scottish leaders navigate challenges and ambiguity. The third explores enhancing leaders' agency through preparation. Through an exploration of policy, headteachers' perspectives, and school leader preparation programs, we highlight both challenges and opportunities for enacting leadership. We also examine the role of professional learning and development for leaders within the system.

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**Paper 1**

**Headteachers as Policy Actors in Times of Complex and Rapid Change**

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**Keywords:** policy; headteachers; reform; leadership

**Aims**

Education in Scotland finds itself in a perpetual cycle of review and reform, grappling with the complexities of an ever-evolving world. Head Teachers navigate a constantly shifting landscape of educational policy changes driven by political agendas. The recent period of significant reform signals substantial proposed alterations to qualifications (Hayward, 2023), following a comprehensive examination of the education system (Muir, 2022), and a national discussion on a future vision for Scottish education (Campbell and Harris, 2023). These initiatives were prompted by successive OECD reviews (2007, 2015, 2021), commissioned in response to public and political concerns regarding declining 'standards' in Scottish schools, as indicated by the country's ranking in international assessments such as PISA (OECD, 2023). This dynamic policy environment places immense pressure on Scottish Head Teachers to adapt and respond. Guiding their school communities through such

significant challenges and changes demands a high level of professional expertise to translate a complex policy landscape into actionable and sustainable educational improvements.

### **Methods**

Utilising critical discourse analysis, this paper aims to raise pertinent questions for future research to better comprehend the current policy engagement of Scottish Head Teachers and the factors that facilitate or impede their participation in the policy-making process.

### **Findings**

Despite the pivotal role of Head Teachers in implementing policy changes, their agency as policy influencers is often constrained by contractual obligations, heavy workloads, and limited engagement in key policy networks.

### **Paper 2**

#### **Successful school leadership in Scotland: A journey to sustainable improvement**

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**Keywords:** school leadership, school improvement, agency, change

### **Aims**

As the professional and organisational challenges facing Scottish school leaders become increasingly complex, their role features high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty in achieving desired outcomes for all. This study highlights the perceptions and actions of school leaders, the persistent challenges leaders face, and their response to such challenges by focusing on cultivating personal and professional sense of agency. It focuses upon the need to acknowledge and understand the complex interplay between individuals and groups, actions, contexts, environments, and cultures where processes of interaction shape leadership practices. This research was guided by a systems-centred approach which investigated the ways in which successful leadership practices contribute to school improvement processes, conditions, and cultures.

### **Methods**

Using a combination of multi-perspective data, an online staff survey and documentary information, this mixed methods research provides in-depth and insightful examples of headteachers' leadership practices and further investigates relevant perspectives of various key stakeholders in their schools. The focus was on their leadership practices and how their leadership influences the structures, cultures, and the standards in performance of the school.

### **Findings**

Findings from this study provide insight on how successful school leaders consider their entire school a complex system with interconnected parts and build social infrastructures to be established as learning ecosystems. The active role of personal and professional values, collective responsibility and a sense of ownership and commitment to meaningful collaboration were acknowledged in decisions about which strategies to apply, how they should be combined, applied, and changed over time.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Professional learning for empowerment: a qualitative study of the *Into Headship*, Headteacher (School Principal) preparation programme in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** professional learning, empowerment, headteacher preparation

#### **Aims**

This paper explores the concept of empowerment and presents the original and significant findings of a research project which explored the lived experiences of aspiring headteachers (school principals), undertaking masters level professional learning through the *Into Headship* programme in Scotland. The aim of the research was to consider the ways in which the agency of participants had been impacted. This paper will focus specifically on what participants said about empowerment.

#### **Methods**

This study used a qualitative approach involving one national cohort of *Into Headship* participants from three different Scottish universities. An online questionnaire was sent to all students and the responses were thematically analysed using the Braun and Clarke (2013) model. The themes which were determined then formed the basis for follow up interview questions with a smaller, representative sample. The answers were again analysed and categorised using an ecological model of agency (Priestley *et al.*, 2015).

#### **Findings**

The findings highlight a number of key themes in terms of developing professional identity and increasing a sense of empowerment while also casting a spotlight on some of the tensions in the system around accountability and performativity. It is concluded that *Into Headship* impacted positively on the agency of participants in a range of ways and participants reported that they felt more able to make informed decisions which aligned closely with their personal and professional values as a result of their engagement with *Into Headship*. These findings should be of interest to practitioners and those involved in school leadership preparation and educational system level strategic planning.

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**S012**

**Poverty and Education Network Symposium 2  
New Research and Insights on the impact of poverty on education**

**Chair: Stephen McKinney, University of Glasgow  
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**Discussant: Louise Campbell, University of Dundee  
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This symposium (and the companion symposium) is focused on new and emerging research and insights on the impact of poverty on education. Members of the SERA Poverty and Education Network continue to engage in research into many different aspects of the impact of poverty on school education. As a network we specifically focus on new research findings and insights for our two symposia. Further, we continue to have a special emphasis on the more hidden, or less well-known, aspects of poverty and education. These are sometimes highlighted in the media but usually in an ephemeral and superficial way. Arguably, one of the responsibilities of academic research is to identify and systematically explore forms of 'hidden' poverty and the short term and long-term impact of poverty on education.

The four papers in this symposium address live issues and areas of ongoing research. In paper one Scottish Government researchers address the relationship between socio-economic background and attainment in the PISA dataset. They use the Economic, Social and Cultural Index (or ESCS) constructed from the PISA student questionnaire responses. In paper two Katie Hunter, Alastair Wilson and Sue Ellis present findings on the results of adult 'reading mentors' supporting children, aged 6-8 years, from economically disadvantaged families. Paper three aims to highlight the purpose and value of Film and Screen education within the Expressive Arts curriculum and its potential to promote social justice for children and young people nationwide. The final paper provides an overview of school clothing costs and support available in Scotland and suggests alternative ways to make school clothing more affordable.

**Paper 1**

**What can PISA data tell us about the impact of socio-economic background on attainment and wellbeing?**

**Keith Dryburgh, Scottish Government  
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**Keywords:** international evidence, poverty, attainment, wellbeing

**Aims**

PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment) is the largest comparative educational survey in the world, including 81 countries/economies and almost 600,000 school students in PISA 2022. PISA assesses the ability of 15-year-olds to apply their skills and knowledge in Reading, Maths and Science, on a three-year cycle. This is complemented by a student questionnaire which asks participants about their wellbeing, their views on school, their educational beliefs, and their homelife.

**Methods**

Scotland has taken part in PISA since 2000, covering eight cycles of assessments. In PISA 2022, over 3,000 students from 117 schools participated in a computer-based assessment in their schools. The

high-level findings of the PISA assessments were published in Scotland and internationally in December 2023.

### **Main findings**

The PISA 2022 report showed that Scotland's scores in Maths and Reading had decreased, while the scores for Science were similar to 2018. Across the participating countries, most saw the same pattern, likely to be related to the impact of the pandemic on education.

PISA uses student questionnaire responses to construct socio-economic background (using the Economic, Social and Cultural Index or ESCS). The ESCS index can be applied to any measure in the PISA dataset, including historical and comparative data, which allows analysis of relationship between socio-economic background and attainment, wellbeing, homelife, and experiences of school. Analysis of the data shows clear gaps in attainment and beliefs by socio-economic background, including a stronger relationship between background and attainment in Maths in PISA 2022.

### **Paper 2**

#### **Reading Mentors in School: lessons for policy and practice**

**Katie Hunter, Alastair Wilson and Sue Ellis**

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**Keywords:** literacy, reading, mentoring

Studies of the Science of Reading (SOR) and allied “what works” approaches indicate problems with a narrow focus on cognitive, experimental research into literacy teaching and learning. Research suggests that SOR marginalises evidence about the impact of local implementation contexts and the role economic, social and cultural capital play in literacy learning. It frames literacy as a series of taught skills rather than as a competency developed through use and application.

This paper reports on case studies of three schools that chose to connect young readers (aged 6-8 years) from economically disadvantaged families to adult ‘reading mentors’. This ‘intergenerational mentoring’ requires the adults to facilitate the children’s reading interests. The child may select books to read to the adult or for them to read together. Tangential conversations are encouraged, and adults are tasked with discovering which other books and topics the child enjoys.

The data consists of 20 mentor volunteer interviews, 10 written reflective accounts from mentors and 4 interviews with school staff. Interviews were analysed to understand the policy context and knowledge-flows within the school, the relationships that developed between the volunteer mentors with both the children and the teacher.

The results show that mentoring offered different, more competency-based literacy-learning opportunities to children with implications for their reading engagement, identity as readers, and their wider knowledge of the world. It illustrates why insights into the realities of children’s lives are an important part of the literacy curriculum and highlights the policy challenges inherent in making dynamic place-based approaches to literacy education work.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Getting real with reel: Integrating Film and Screen Education into the Expressive Arts**

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**Keywords:** film and screen education, creation, communication, visual literacy

The incorporation of Film and Screen within the Expressive Arts curriculum marks a significant step towards inclusivity in arts education in Scotland. While film literacy has long been championed, mainly through disciplines like Media Studies, Film and Screen's inclusion within the Expressive Arts curriculum clearly signals its role in content creation, critical literacy, and fostering creativity in children and young people. Its rich form of verbal, written and physical communication can engage learners of different abilities and positively impact attainment.

This paper aims to provide a concise overview of Film and Screen education, highlighting its purpose and value within the Expressive Arts curriculum and its potential to promote social justice for children and young people nationwide. Specifically, it explores how Film and Screen education can be a potent tool for addressing socio-economic disparities and dismantling barriers to educational achievement, particularly for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The paper will also draw on the practical applications of Film and Screen education in disadvantaged areas in Scotland, including its role in initiatives such as the Transforming Care Programme. It will demonstrate how Film and Screen education can enhance academic outcomes and foster social and emotional development, providing pathways for success for learners facing economic challenges. By showcasing the transformative impact of Film and Screen education on diverse groups of learners, this paper seeks to demonstrate the subject's reach for empowering all learners.

### **Paper 4**

#### **Making school clothing more affordable with better access to the school clothing grant**

**Rachel Shanks, University of Aberdeen**

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**Keywords:** dress code, school clothing, school uniform

The aims of this paper are firstly to provide an overview of school clothing costs and support available in Scotland and secondly to suggest alternative ways to make school clothing more affordable. This paper is based on research combining analysis of school handbooks and websites, and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests sent to local authorities (n=32). The FOI requests have focused on school clothing grant and were sent to local authorities in 2022, 2023 and 2024. This paper focuses on the FOI responses and a case study of one local authority's primary and secondary schools undertaken in 2024.

The main findings are that a majority of local authorities (n=18) have always paid the national minimum amount of grant and less than half make automatic payment of the grant (n=12). Local authorities pay out less in grant than the Scottish Government budgets for. No local authority collects information on the Scottish Government's 6 priority family groups to see if they are under-represented in applications for the grant. In the case study of one local authority, a minority of schools

do not comply with their legal duty under to provide a handbook on their website. Primary schools are more likely than secondary schools to provide information about their local authority's school clothing grant. School handbooks are often several years old with out-of-date information in relation to the amount of the grant and the application process. It can be concluded that school clothing grant is not a priority for local authorities or schools.

**S013**

**Poverty and Education Network Symposium 1  
New Research and Insights on the impact of poverty on education**

**Chair**

**John H. McKendrick, Glasgow Caledonian University**

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**Discussant: Jakob Billmayer, Malmö University**

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This symposium (and the companion symposium) is focused on new and emerging research and insights on the impact of poverty on education. Members of the SERA Poverty and Education Network continue to engage in research into many different aspects of the impact of poverty on school education. As a network we specifically focus on new research findings and insights for our two symposia. Further, we continue to have a special emphasis on the more hidden, or less well-known, aspects of poverty and education. These are sometimes highlighted in the media but usually in an ephemeral and superficial way. Arguably, one of the responsibilities of academic research is to identify and systematically explore forms of 'hidden' poverty and the short term and long-term impact of poverty on education.

The first (joint) paper aims to provide a brief critical overview of the key challenges and opportunities currently facing the education system in Northern Ireland, with particular reference to educational disadvantage. This is evidenced through recently published research from the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU). The paper highlights the commonalities but also the peculiarities of the Northern Irish context and proposes a number of implications for research, policy and practice. Paper two critically reflects on the work of a team of researchers at the University of Glasgow who adopted a research practice partnership approach (RPP) to work collaboratively with Scottish local authority partners to develop a networked learning system (NLS) to tackle educational equity. Paper three investigates the professional learning of probationer teachers who undertake practitioner enquiry that foregrounds pupil voice in their classrooms. Paper four focusses on the poverty experienced by students on an undergraduate initial teacher education (ITE) degree programme in a Scottish university. This begins to address the gap in research on the poverty experienced by students in Further and Higher education.

**Paper 1**

**Educational Disadvantage in Northern Ireland: Key Challenges**

**Noel Purdy, Glenda Walsh and Karen Orr, Stranmillis University College**

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**Keywords:** disadvantage, early years, community, attainment

This joint paper aims to provide a brief critical overview of the key challenges and opportunities currently facing the education system in Northern Ireland, with particular reference to educational disadvantage, as evidenced through recently published research from the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU).

The paper draws on a range of reports authored by the CREU team over a four year period from May 2020 to May 2024 and includes a range of methodologies, including purely quantitative studies such as two online parental surveys of home-schooling experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic (Walsh



et al., 2020; Purdy et al., 2021), an examination of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young children's play, social interaction and wellbeing (Walsh et al., 2021) and an analysis of the social composition of the year 8 cohort who transferred to post-primary school under alternative non-testing admissions criteria in 2021 (Purdy et al., 2023); purely qualitative studies such as the phase 1 report of an innovative learning partnership between CREU and THRiVE - a collaboration of local parents, schools, community groups and statutory and voluntary organisations working to promote educational opportunity in a working class Protestant community (Orr et al., 2023); and mixed-methods studies such as an examination of the Role of Home-School Community Liaison (Walsh et al., 2022), an exploration of the lived experiences of children transferring to post-primary school during the pandemic (Purdy et al., 2024) and the final report and action plan of the NI Executive's expert panel on educational underachievement in Northern Ireland (Purdy et al., 2021).

The paper highlights the commonalities but also the peculiarities of the Northern Irish context and proposes a number of implications for research, policy and practice.

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## **Paper 2**

### **Developing equitable education systems: Aspirations and challenges**

**Kevin Lowden, Stuart Hall, Chris Chapman and Mel Ainscow**

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**Keywords:** Networked Learning Systems, Research Practice Partnerships, educational equity

#### **Aims**

The presentation critically reflects on the work of a team of researchers at the University of Glasgow who adopted a research practice partnership approach (RPP) to work collaboratively with Scottish local authority partners to develop a networked learning system (NLS) to tackle educational equity. This project facilitated Dundee City's Every Dundee Learner Matters (EDLM) educational strategy. The paper presents key findings but also considers learning that has implications for sustaining equitable educational systems at scale.

#### **Methods**

Main methods included scoping and contextual analysis; observations; social network analysis; interviews and focus groups; analysis of statistical evidence and critical reflection of teacher generated evidence from their collaborative inquiry activity.

#### **Main findings**

The research findings highlight the potential of a particular model of RPP that involved 'embedded' academics working with partners to facilitate a NLS that influences culture, policies and practices at all levels to promote educational equity. The approach has positively impacted on professional culture and classroom practice and is beginning to demonstrate positive developments in learner outcomes. The findings reveal the value of design features informed by relevant concepts and research that recognise the importance of inquiry, collaborative professional learning and shifting traditional leadership arrangements (e.g., Ainscow and Chapman 2022; Ainscow et al, 2016; Fullan, 2013; Hadfield and Jopling, 2011; Harris et al 2017).

The paper cautions that, despite progress, these developments are perhaps vulnerable to power dynamics and complex social and contextual factors, including national policies, pressures and funding. Schools are as part of a wider complex ecosystem of equity (e.g., Greenwood et al, 2001; Ferreira, 2019). In addition, the persistent challenge of poverty-related factors that influence learner achievement and wellbeing emphasises the importance of cross-service partnership working across the City to engage and support families.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Foregrounding pupil voice within practitioner enquiry: Experiences of probationer teachers located in schools with varying proportions of pupils living in poverty**

**Archie Graham<sup>\*a</sup>, Lindsay MacDougall<sup>a</sup>, Peter Mtika<sup>a</sup>, Dean Robson<sup>a</sup>, Kirsten Darling-Mcquistan<sup>b</sup>,  
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**Keywords:** practitioner enquiry, probationer teacher, pupil voice, poverty

#### **Aim**

Recent global instabilities have worsened the effects of poverty on the education of children and young people (CYP). In the current situation, getting to know CYP better is paramount. By listening to and drawing upon their voices, teachers can co-create inclusive pedagogies, enabling the CYP to express their views and participate in decisions concerning their school lives.

In Scotland, the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) provides probationer teachers with guaranteed employment for one year. As part of the TIS, the probationer teachers undertake practitioner enquiry projects. This study investigates the professional learning of probationer teachers who undertake practitioner enquiry that foregrounds pupil voice in their classrooms.

#### **Method**

A cross-case study was adopted to examine professional learning of probationer teachers who undertook their practitioner enquiry foregrounding pupil voice in schools with varying proportions of pupils living in poverty. Interview data were collected from seven probationer teachers situated in three primary and four secondary schools.

#### **Findings**

The findings highlight problems of practice identified by the probationer teachers for their practitioner enquiry projects and the ways in which they interpreted and operationalised pupil voice. The professional learning elicited centred on challenging assumptions, changing classroom practices and future intentions.

### **Paper 4**

#### **Poverty Experienced by Students on an ITE programme in Scotland**

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**Keywords:** Poverty, Higher Education, ITE, Scotland

#### **Aims**

There is very limited research on the impact of poverty on students in further and higher education in the UK. This research sought to begin to redress this gap in research and focussed on the poverty experienced by students on an undergraduate initial teacher education (ITE) degree programme in a Scottish university.

#### **Methods**

An extensive literature review revealed the key themes of poverty in higher education: cost of higher education; housing insecurity; the demands of part time work and food insecurity. For the research, a mixed methods approach was taken. The design for this study comprised two sequential strands. The first strand involved an electronic survey that collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The

survey was distributed to all students enrolled on an ITE programme at undergraduate level in a Scottish university from years one for four and the optional fifth year at Masters' level (total n= 532). The survey was distributed in November 2023. There were responses from 218 students (41%). Ten student volunteers were interviewed in the follow-up qualitative strand.

### **Main Findings**

The main findings are indicative of the uniqueness and demands of an ITE programme. The main forms of poverty experienced by this sample of students did not completely correspond with the key themes identified from the literature but instead reflected the needs of a professional programme. The forms of poverty experienced by the ITE students included: clothing (21%), transport costs (20%), fuel (18%), food (16%), household fuel (15%) and housing costs (12%). This raises questions about how best to support these students as they negotiate the costs of living and costs of engaging with the teaching profession.

S015

### Learning through collaborative self-study

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Chairperson/Discussant: Kirsten Darling-Mcquistan and Paul McMillan, University of Edinburgh

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

As an approach to educational research self-study generates and makes public the knowledge of teaching and learning about teaching (Loughran, 2004). It supports an interplay between practice and research which has the potential to empower educators to produce and use evidence to inform practice. For teachers and teacher educators engaging in self-study it is an empowering way of examining and learning about practice focusing both on teaching, and pupils' and students' learning. Self-study offers a way of inquiring into ways of becoming in practice through contemplation of personal beliefs, values, and positions that shape who we are, our actions and interactions (Fletcher, 2020). A defining feature of self-study research is a focus on, "practice, but at the intersection of self and other"; central to interrogating the "intersection" between self and practice is collaboration with others (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 15). In recent years there has been increased interest in collaborative self-study (Butler and Bullock, 2022). Building on this work, we consider the collaborative nature of self-study, how it develops and is enacted, challenges and tensions, and how practice and identity develop through collaboration. The two presentations indicate how the affordances of collaborative self-study can serve different educational research needs to enrich professional work.

#### Symposium Presenters:

- Paper 1 – Svanborg R. Jónsdóttir and Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir (University of Iceland)
- Paper 2 – Nicola Carse (University of Edinburgh), Khadija Mohammed (University of the West of Scotland), Aileen Kennedy (University of Glasgow), Melina Valdelievre (Education Scotland), Dawn Garbett, University of Auckland

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## **Paper 1**

### **Becoming teacher educators: A co-autoethnographic self-study of two teacher educators**

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**Keywords:** Teacher education, Self-study, autoethnography, collaboration

Strengthening the quality of teacher education through teaching and research is an essential aspiration for teacher educators. The purpose of this research was to highlight the importance that teacher educators constantly develop their professionalism researching their practice. The goal of this self-study is to shed a light on how we two teacher educators transitioned from grade schoolteachers to become teacher educators. The research question leading this study was: What characterizes our collective journeys and development as researchers and teacher educators?

Applying the methodology of self-study in teacher education allowed us to explore our beliefs about the nature of teaching to help us understand and conceptualize what is happening in our practice and why. We applied autoethnographical methods to scrutinize personal experience and to describe and critique culture and practice. The data in our autoethnographical self-study comes from multiple retrospective sources. Data includes critical reflections, transcribed interviews with each other, recordings of conversations, discussion notes and reflective dialogues. We look back to our teaching in grade school for nearly 30 years and gathered extensive data from over ten years of collaboration in teacher education.

Findings indicate critical moments and periods from our teaching, and we identified how these experiences connect with educational policies. We recognized actions that showed guiding and conflicting ideologies, inclusion and exclusion, and tendencies towards transmission against student engagement. We argue that our collaborative self-study afforded us a significant resource and approach to guide us in our journeys in becoming teacher educators.

## **Paper 2**

### **A Collaborative Self-study of policy building racial literacy across the education system**

**Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh**

**Khadija Mohammed, University of the West of Scotland**

**Aileen Kennedy, University of Glasgow**

**Melina Valdelievre, Education Scotland**

**Dawn Garbett, University of Auckland**

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**Keywords:** self-study, collaboration, policy, racial literacy

As (first four named) co-authors, we have each engaged with developing and enacting policy to support the building of racial literacy in teacher education in Scotland in a range of ways. Here we report on a collaborative self-study designed to capture the complex and multi-layered ways in which we have interacted with and influenced policy development focused on building racial literacy. A self-study approach has enabled us to examine our experiences and practices from inside a policy space where process, programmes and politics collide (McConnell, 2010; Lambert and O'Connor, 2018). Reflecting La Boskey's (2004) features of self-study, the research for this paper was self-initiated,

focused, interactive, and qualitative in nature. We each came to the research with individual identities and experiences within the anti-racism policy space but to understand the space more deeply and analytically required interaction. Therefore, we came together, with each of our unique identities and experiences, to engage in a collaborative self-study (Carse et al., 2022). We adopted a qualitative approach which involved writing a series of three vignettes and engaging in recorded conversations using the vignettes as a stimulus. The focus of each vignette and conversation was as follows:

1. Positioning ourselves within the policy space – who am I
2. Mapping the policy space (identifying process, programmes and politics)
3. Sharing our experiences and practice from within the policy space

Analysis is not yet complete, but we envisage focusing our reporting of findings on methodological considerations for the collaborative nature of self-study: how our collaboration developed, affordances and challenges to collaboration and identity development.

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**S016**

**Reconceptualising Transitions: Past, Present and Future**

**Chairperson: Aline-Wendy Dunlop**

**Presenters: Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Marion Burns and Kirsten Moore**

**Discussant: Liz Latto**

**Theme: Policy and Education**

**Names and affiliations:**

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**Outline**

This self-organised symposium of three papers is based on three research studies which captured the experiences of children, parents and practitioners in both early learning and primary school settings during the transition to school process. Review of transitions studies shows a variety of ontologies, epistemologies, research methodologies and methods: our three studies used mixed methods, case study and nominal group technique (NGT) respectively. We question transition as an event, and consider transitions processes which both shift and continually cause shifts in being and becoming. We draw on Kirkegaard (2000) to question the concepts of past, present and future, rather we embrace his definition of time as 'an infinite succession' as part of our recognition that transitions are inherent as a way of life. Each author leads on one presentation, but each contribute to all three papers. We embrace what Kierkegaard (2000:152) called 'temporality' to conclude that in transitions work with young children the focus must be on the present time, but taking account of past time and of future time, to ensure we are both child-centred and world-centred (Biesta, 2022).

**Paper 1**

**'Past: What happened to 50 years of Transitions Research?'**

**Marion Burns, Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Kirsten Moore**

**Keywords:** past, transitions policy and guidance, recontextualise, reconceptualise

In this theoretical paper the past, present and possible futures of transitions research are each considered. This fragile world is in a constant state of flux. Technological and digital change, pandemic, war, famine, climate change and poverty are each instrumental in movements of peoples globally. Everywhere children are caught up in these changes. Investing in children's education and care has moved beyond visions of a public good, to a hope and dependency on present generations of children to 'get us out of here'. It is hoped that education will provide the needed answers: but here too education is fraught with systems imposed transitions which combine as a brake on change. In our view transitions research, policy and practices are at a crossroad, and so this symposium seeks to consider which path to take.



Thinking developmentally, contextually and culturally it is obvious that transitions are part of life: are necessary to human development and inherent to contemporary society. As the most politically under represented group in society (Dunlop, Peters and Kagan, 2024), young children's lives are fast changing, developmentally crucial, with children surprising in their capacity to exert agency in their lives.

We take the position that not only do transitions matter, but so too does transitions research and policy: it is time that the exponentially growing field of transitions research finds its impact. We need to break convention, recontextualize transitions, and reconceptualise transitions research by combining a child-centred and a world-centred *perspective*.

## **Paper 2**

### **'Present: Child centred transitions, Contested Identities and Children's Agency in the here and now of transitions'**

**Kirsten Moore, Marion Burns, Aline-Wendy Dunlop**

**Keywords:** identity, child centred transitions, narratives, agency

Turning to the present, Moore used Nominal group technique to explore child and adult voices (central in the generation of qualitative and quantitative data). Taking a child-centred approach to the transition to school a single question was asked 'what matters most to children in the transition to school?' Findings confirm continuity in pedagogy and communication between pre-school, school and the home environment, should be strengthened to effectively support transitions to school. The key emerging themes included identity, friendships and independence.

Burns' qualitative case study employed thematic analysis to show children starting school experience a change in their identity; from autonomous expert within familiar nursery play spaces (Education Scotland, 2020) to a 'power-less' being where current curriculum guidance, The Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004) is enacted through 'educational play' (Wood and Chesworth, 2021) creating the conditions for contested identities to emerge. The study found that, conceptually, children over time reinvent themselves, drawing on 'their natural and everyday practices of communication and ways of being' (Duncan, 2021:116.)

Our third study (Dunlop, 2024), used a hybridised ecological logic model to recontextualise transitions as tools for change. The resulting integrated reconceptualising approach to research found a good transition is possible but is not available to all children. Positive proximal processes underpin successful school journeys, but the dominant focus on literacy and numeracy as proxies for school success let many children down: relational processes within competent systems fostered vital agency for rounded socio-bio-ecological experiences of schooling.

## **Paper 3**

### **'Reconceptualising Early Childhood Transitions for the Future'**

**Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Kirsten Moore, Marion Burns**

**Keywords:** reconceptualise, possibilities, fragility, complexity

Thinking of the future generates a re-imagining of transitions in education which is explicated as 'Transitions Reconceptualised'. The reconceptualising movement in early childhood faces towards hopes and possibilities for children, and away from trends in the wider fields of policy and practices that privilege certain forms of knowledge or sets of beliefs or conceptions of best practice. At the same

time reconceptualists promote the use of qualitative research methods including personal narrative and theory juxtaposition. In reviewing our own studies, and what we know about transitions in education we have found that enquiry into transitions has continued to yield up a need to address educational transitions in policy and in practices. We look to policy frameworks and approaches such as the *Scottish Early Childhood Transitions Position Statement* (Strathclyde, 2019) and *Realising the Ambition 'Being Me'* (Education Scotland, 2020) to enhance children's educational transitions in an increasingly complex and *fragile world*. Looking to the future, researchers could embrace a more interactive transactional way of thinking about transitions over time to support study design and method; educators and policy makers should strive for pedagogical consistency; find innovative ways of capturing and sharing children's transition narratives by adopting a shared theoretical perspective. Currently in Scotland there are important shifts in early childhood pedagogy and practice. We tackle why, despite these shifts, research hasn't led to sufficient change, and why transitions efforts too often rely on checklists rather than sharing children's strengths, funds of knowledge and funds of identity. We reconceptualise children's transitions as both child-centred and world-centred.

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**S017**

**Relational pedagogies: Shifting towards more response-able and relational praxis in education**

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**Chair/discussant: Marion Burns**

**Theme: Innovative Research Methods**

**Outline**

The challenges facing education globally in this time of increasing uncertainty and complexity are well documented. This symposium brings together three papers which explore how a more relational pedagogical approach to these challenges has the potential to generate new knowledges, working~with the complexity and entanglement of human/non-human entities with/in education.

This symposium begins with what might act as an introduction to some of the posthuman, feminist materialist (PHFM) theories which underpin much of the thinking behind more relational pedagogies and praxis. The second paper uses Barad's (2007) 'spacetimemattering' to present an example of how such theories offer new insights to age old issues. Finally, this symposium concludes with a paper exploring how relational theories can be used to challenge dominant discourses within academia, pushing back against the creep of metricised, neoliberal logic.

Taken together, these three papers provide not only sound, theoretical arguments for adopting a more relational approach to pedagogy and praxis, but by applying such theories to specific, situated contexts, offer insights to how these theories might work more widely and influence a new, generative approach to education which looks beyond the only-human.

**Symposium presenters: Liz Latto, Aline-Wendy Dunlop; Julie Ann Ovington**

**Paper 1**

**A Relational Approach to Early Learning and Childcare: Thinking Kinship in the Face of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Challenges**

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**Keywords:** relational, pedagogies, non/more-than-human, kinship

Educators across the world face the daunting challenge of educating children and young people under the shadow of accelerating climate change (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2019), increasing pressures operating within global, neoliberal markets (Roberts-Holmes & Moss, 2021) and the uncertainty of a world increasingly dependent on Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) (Braidotti, 2019).

Drawing on posthuman, feminist materialist (PHFM) theories which de-centre the human, this paper joins a growing chorus of voices calling for a (re)turn to a relational way of being and knowing with/in the world to address the existential challenges of the Anthropocene. PHFM theories look beyond the human as a single subject 'I,' conceptualizing all matter as agentic and acknowledging all bodies (human, non-human, more-than-human) as having agency and equal ontological status. Consequently, child/ren are in relation with educators who are not only/always human, calling for us

to enact relations of kinship with other entities we share the planet with (Haraway, 2016). This requires a commitment to learning along with children and others, being response-able for past/present/future actions. Enacting a generous and affirmative kinship which extends beyond the human, educators embrace the non and more-than-human as part of the relationality and entanglement of knowledge-making praxis which has social and climate justice at its core.

This paper highlights the opportunities which engaging with PHFM theories offers educators who have the response-ability to work with children and young people more relationally, learning to live more sustainably and in kinship *with* the human, the non-human and more-than-human of this world in continual being~becoming.

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## Paper 2

### **A longitudinal lens on relational pedagogy in the early years and its impact on children's lives from the age of 3-18**

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**Keywords:** transitions, reconceptualising, relational, pedagogies

Focusing on relational pedagogies and processes, this paper aims to surface the ways in which processes, objects, people and symbols intra-act and inter-act relationally during educational transitions. It draws from a reconceptualising transitions study (Dunlop, 2024) which used as context the 'Navigating Educational Journeys': a data-rich longitudinal exploratory-interpretive study of the transitions of a cohort of 150 children in Scottish Education from the ages of three to eighteen.

In such a long longitudinal study the hybridised socio-bio-ecological conceptual framework comes to the fore, underpinned by the researcher's ontology, epistemology, methodology and choice of method (including ethnographies, video and participation as method). Attending to proximal processes as a form of relational pedagogy and entanglement (Barad, 2007), this paper addresses learning from "the case" by juxtaposing proximal and distal processes to ask what the role of relational pedagogy is in transitions research and practices.

It was found that a good transition can be identified, is possible, but is not available to all school students. An innovative model of transitions as tools for change generated four principles (educator collaboration, family engagement, children's agency and competent systems) and four informing concepts: ('transitions know-how', 'transitions ease', 'transitions capital' and 'transitions networks') thus raising implications for educational architecture in terms of practice, policy and systems. This reconceptualization of transitions is reconsidered and reworked using a tyranny of time focus (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012, 2013) and Barad's lens of 'the 'past', the 'future' and 'spacetime-mattering' to bring us to the 'present'. (Barad, 2007).

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## Paper 3

### Challenging the status quo: Enacting ethics of care to develop meaning-full relationality in Higher Education

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**Keywords:** Ethics of care, Professional love, Pedagogy, Praxis

This presentation explores how 'relational ethics' (Noddings, 1988, p.218), entangled with pedagogical love (Page, 2018), has been enacted as a response-ability. Considering further the impact this has on developing a sense of self and engendering Alumni status so that the academic~student relationship can be translated, in the original sense, as '*one who is being nourished*'. Academia focuses on metrics and outcomes, jarring with the central tenants of progressive pedagogy (Taylor, 2021). Learning is becoming reducible to learning outcomes and achieving descriptive rubrics thus, evidencing outcome over process approaches. This is substantiated by the rise of university writing guides specifically explaining how students can achieve learning outcomes (*reflected in* University of Leicester, 2022; University of Bristol, 2020-2021; Winwood and Purvis, 2015). Yet the question remains to what extent this develops a sense of belonging or challenges the dominant academic/student binary. Students develop a sense of belonging in several domains, and although academic achievement is one of these many others are integral to engendering belonging. Such as creating relational environments where lived experiences and feelings are acknowledged and accepted, fostering a sense of connection with others, and developing a sense of self through relationship building (Ahn and Davies, 2014; Freeman et al., 2007; Tinto and Engstrom, 2008).

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# Workshops

**W001**

**Decolonising the curriculum: fostering praxis for equity and inclusion**

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**Marlies Kustatcher, University of Edinburgh**

**Anna Olson Rost, Manchester Metropolitan University**

**Omolabake Fakunle, University of Edinburgh**

**Keywords:** decolonising the curriculum, praxis, equity, inclusion

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

**Rationale and/or theoretical background**

Using our autumn 2024 edited collection of published work on decolonising the curriculum, this workshop will share on a range decolonial theories and interdisciplinary methodological approaches applied across partnerships of research, teaching and learning by expert early childhood practitioners, primary and secondary school teachers, further and higher education lecturers, educational consultants, teacher-educators, and experienced academic researchers from across the four United Kingdom nations of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and, through international comparative educational contexts and perspectives from the USA, Canada, Burundi, Trinidad & Tobago and South Africa.

**Aims and methods of the proposed activity**

This workshop will address a guiding question of the conference: *What role is there for shared knowledge, distribution of resources, interdisciplinarity, and partnership working?* Extracts from our edited collection on decolonising the curriculum will be used to engage participants directly in experience and subsequent reflection through critical questions for building on past knowledge of best practices in teaching and learning anti-racism, multicultural and intercultural education through praxis, and for offering new pathways for equitable and inclusive educational outcomes. The format of the workshop is as follows:

- 1) Introduction – 5 minutes (led by Dr Marlon Moncrieffe).
- 2) X3 15 minute roundtables:

Table 1: approaches in early childhood education and care, primary education. This will be facilitated by Dr Marlies Kustatcher.

Table 2: approaches in secondary and tertiary education. This will be facilitated by Dr Anna Olson Rost.

Table 3: approaches in higher education. This will be facilitated by Dr Omolabake Fakunle.

- 3) Plenary – 10 minutes (led by Dr Marlon Moncrieffe).



**W002**

**Environmental literacies for regenerative and sustainable futures**

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**Keywords:** Environmental literacies, sustainability, indigenous, arts-based inquiry

**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

Education for sustainability (Efs) within mainstream formal education in higher education institutions, schools and colleges rarely focuses on integrating indigenous and traditional environmental literacies (ITELs) into teaching and learning. It is also extremely rare within these spaces to find holistic material *and* spiritual approaches to Efs, with most of these approaches only existing within non-formal and informal educational spaces.

My research uses participatory arts-based approaches to explore ITELs, specifically human-nature relationships, to respond to contemporary sustainability challenges. Using a pluriversal theoretical framework my study intertwines deep ecology, eco-pedagogy and Islamic environmentalism to bridge Eastern and Western philosophy, creating new and important spaces of possibility, crucially needed in the field of Efs.

The proposed workshop will provide a brief introduction to common aspects of ITELs from around the world including those from the Celtic tradition. There will be space for reflective discussion and an opportunity for participants to share their connections to nature from their upbringing, culture, or tradition. The workshop will conclude with an arts-based activity prompting participants to '*paint what connects the human and non-human in nature*' into interconnected Celtic patterns, symbolising the interconnectedness of all life forms on earth.

The aim of the activity is to engage participants with ITELs and facilitate reflection on some of the deeper aspects of human-nature relationships, based on the premise that these relationships are the foundation towards building regenerative and sustainable futures.

**W003**

**Developing sustainable and inclusive approaches to online learning in sustainability to develop environmentally aware and sustainability-led Dundee graduates**

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**Keywords:** sustainability, higher education, online learning, sustainable curriculum

**Theme:** Curriculum

The University's Curriculum Design Principles outline graduate attributes that should be realised from a University of Dundee education as students embark on further study or more move into the world of work. This includes graduates being environmentally aware and sustainability led. To support this there is an ambition for all first-year students to complete a module/teaching on sustainability as well as see programme teams consider how their curriculum design can help develop these attributes. This is an approach that has been adopted in other UK universities with varying success largely because sustainability modules are often voluntary, over and above students' programme modules and they often see little student engagement and return on the development efforts.

The workshop will explore how teaching on sustainability and the online learning resources developed by the project team can be integrated into teaching and whether specific learning design and assessment blueprints/templates to scaffold learning can be co-designed by lecturers and students. The outputs of the workshop will further inform the final content and design of an online learning module/resources on sustainability, whilst the learning design blueprints have the potential to be piloted and evaluated in teaching programmes.

W004

**University-based teacher educators: past, present and ... future?**

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**Keywords:** University teacher educators, professional learning, dialogue, design thinking

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning/Policy and Education

Whilst university-based teacher educators (UTEs) occupy a vital role in the quality of teacher education, as a profession they remain neglected in Scotland and beyond. They occupy a “contested” space within the profession and experience variation in terms of identity-formation, research activity and professional learning (Kelchtermans, 2018, Doherty, 2020). The *present* in which UTEs operate in Scotland appears still to be influenced by the *past* when the teacher-educator role was sited outside the university; historical tensions have affected UTEs’ researcher-selves (Hulme and Sangster, 2013; Bain and Gray, 2018). The future for UTEs, internationally, is now recognised as being bound with global challenges relating to events and crises, that may require a rethinking of teacher education to design a curriculum that simultaneously addresses education for the present and future (Goodwin et al, 2023).

As an initial exploration we propose a design thinking workshop to understand more about the current role and experiences of UTEs in Scotland and the wider world. Using a design thinking methodology, we aim to create a dialogic and inclusive space that may allow us to unveil gaps in our current knowledge of UTE practices as well as empower the UTE community to address future challenges and uncertainty within our educational systems (Henriksen, Gretter and Richardson, 2018). The aim of this workshop is to arrive at a responsive understanding of what may be needed for UTEs to become educators for a future that is yet unknown.

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**W005**

## **Road-Mapping our Journeys: Who Are Early Career Researchers?**

### **Organisers:**

**SERA Early Career Researcher Network**

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**Keywords:** Early Career Researchers, SERA Network, Inclusion, Diversity

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

### **Rationale**

The ECR at SERA aims to create an inclusive and collaborative space for those who are in their early stages of their career. It is not only about developing the 'hard' academic skills within this space but also allowing individuals the opportunities to express and learn from the diverse backgrounds from which all ECRs come from (Thériault et al., 2022). With the celebration of SERA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year, our network believes that it would be a fantastic chance to celebrate the diverse backgrounds and experiences of ECRs.

### **Aims**

The workshop aims to provide a space for attendees to reflect on their own journey with the support of their peers. Throughout the year, the network has been creating conversations to discuss the journeys of scholars who are at various stages of their careers. What these show is the process of being a researcher is completely unique to individuals. They also emphasise that each journey is valid and should be shared with future ECRs to learn from (Merga and Mason, 2021). Therefore, this workshop provides a space for individuals to reflect on how their background has impacted their past, present, and future.

### **Methods**

Researchers and practitioners will be asked to create and share their own roadmap with those at the workshop. The network will have some researchers at this event, at different stages of their career, to talk about their journey. These creations can then be collated and shared through the network to encourage others to share their stories, showing the diverse background of the ECR members. It will be an inclusive, collaborative, and interactive workshop that includes reflection from the individuals.

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## W006

### Teachers as Agents of Change: a toolkit for teachers and schools addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Daisy Abbott<sup>a</sup>, Di Cantali<sup>b</sup>, Betsy King and Nataša Pantić<sup>c</sup>

a) Glasgow School of Art; b) University of Dundee; c) University of Edinburgh; d) Learning for Sustainability Scotland

**Keywords:** Equality / Education for All, Inclusivity, Inquiry learning, School development

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

This workshop will give participants the opportunity to engage with outputs from, and to become familiar with, the Agents of Change Toolkit (ACToolkit) knowledge exchange project. ACToolkit is freely available online.

An 18-month knowledge exchange project, including Scottish educators, researchers and game designers working together via online seminars and workshops, led to the development of the ACToolkit. This process was underpinned by complementary theories of change agency (Pantić, 2015; 2017; Pantić & Florian, 2015; van der Heijen *et al*, 2015) and game-based learning (Abbott, 2019; Gaule, 2014-15). A follow-up ESRC-funded impact acceleration award allowed the team to develop a series of case studies based on using the ACToolkit in practice across different educational settings.

ACToolkit focuses on change related to UN SDG4 (UNESCO, 2021) which will bring about inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for all. It provides an accessible, structured, engaging way of thinking through whole-school approaches which can be challenging to effect due to time pressures in busy educational settings, through guiding educators in making changes in existing self-evaluation and development activities including evaluating the impact of change in and on their communities. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to explore some of the serious games which accompany this process, engage with the case studies, and to consider how they may use the ACToolkit in their own setting to practically support the process of identifying and making changes in their inclusive and equitable approaches and practice.

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**W007**

**Self-reflecting on decolonising one own's learning and teaching: Could a self-assessment tool work?**

**Main Organiser: Leyla De Amicis, University of Glasgow**

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**Co-organisers: Michele Vincent, University of Glasgow**

**Colette Mair, University of Glasgow**

**Dustin Hussein, University of Strathclyde and University of Glasgow**

**Keywords:** self-assessment, decolonising curriculum, learning & teaching in HE, academic professional development

**Theme:** Curriculum/Social Justice and Inclusion

Decolonising curriculum and pedagogy has been a key priority for higher education, resulting in different approaches across disciplines and educational contexts (Shahjahan et al, 2022). Despite several experiences around the globe, what has also emerged is a resistance from some academics to change their learning and teaching for being more 'decolonised'. This might coincide with 'dominionization', such as 'the entrenched ownership of expertise that maintains westernised academic privilege over decolonisation efforts' (Kennedy, McGowan, & El -Hussein 2023:89). Other academics might be prone to change but also feel very insecure if their efforts are appropriate or good enough.

Gonzales-Lopez (2024) developed a self-reflection tool to 'decolonising oneself' when conducting research with indigenous populations. Other scholars have proposed different tools to self-reflect on decolonising some aspects of learning and teaching in academia.

To support academics to be more open and confident about decolonising curricula we propose a workshop in which we will present some potential self-assessment tools to decolonising learning and teaching. After introducing these instruments to the audience, we will discuss these in small groups and then in a general discussion, to highlight facilitators and barriers which can help to develop and adopt a self-assessment tool for decolonising one own's learning and teaching. Given the importance of decolonising academia for vulnerable populations and the academic environment, we hope to inform and be informed of how this process can be considered as one's academic professional development rather than a threat to their own expertise and social identities.

**W008**

**Coming together for teaching and learning about sustainability in Higher Education**

**Main Organiser: Leyla De Amicis, University of Glasgow**

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**Co-organisers:**

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**Jon-Erik Dahlin, Kings College London**

**Inge Sorensen, University of Glasgow**

**Wim Vanderbauwhede, University of Glasgow**

**Keywords:** sustainability, climate change action, learning & teaching in HE, students and academics

**Theme: Curriculum/Social Justice and Inclusion**

The UK Higher Education sector is committed to the UNs' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. However, sustainability is a broad concept, and climate change action can be implemented in several ways across disciplines in academics' teaching and learning. As a 'wicked problem', sustainability can be enhanced and better embedded in university staff and student professional and personal lives, considering an interdisciplinary approach.

Different steps might have been taken from different UK Universities, mapping sustainability in their courses of various subjects, focusing on content and strategies of teaching and learning. However, a framework or map of sustainability in teaching and learning in HE might be still 'work in progress'. This workshop aims to bring together the expertise and knowledge of university staff and students from different Universities to learn more about how they have included or wish to include sustainability in their learning and teaching of different disciplines. Systematic strategies for mapping sustainability across different Schools/Departments will be also shared and discussed.

The workshop will consist in staff and students sharing their experiences of sustainable teaching and learning in major areas of knowledge (arts and humanities, social sciences, life sciences and science and engineering). Small groups discussions will follow, to reflect on how changes to include sustainability in different subjects can be implemented more consistently.

A general discussion will highlight the future directions of interdisciplinary work on teaching and learning about sustainability in HE.

**W009**

**Maps, Signs and Timelines: Artefacts as Reflective Tools for Activist Educators**

**Ronald I Simbajon Banderlipe (McRhon), University of Strathclyde**

**Keywords:** Professional learning, activism, identity, artifacts

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

**Aims**

The aim of this workshop is to involve the participants into an on-going PhD study by creating artifacts on how activism might be conceptualised through the professional learning of educators and understand its potential as a transformative tool for their work.

**Theoretical Framing**

Epistemologically, this workshop takes a social constructivist approach appropriating the Giddens' Structuration Theory to understand how participants interact with structures in the education sector. Participants will be invited to create the following:

- For the first artefact, participants will be asked to draw a timeline. They will be requested to put their career journey, professional learning activities, and their activist activities up to date.
- For the second artefact, participants will be asked to draw a map where their activist actions manifests are taking place within or outside their workplaces. It is a free drawing activity with the aim to map where these forms of activism are happening in (or outside of) their universities take part.
- For the third artefact, participants will be asked to make their own sign from the blank signboard provided to them. Apart from the basic provisions – signboard, pens and markers, participants can write a statement; draw or stick items to represent their advocacy or identity OR their aspirations for what professional learning they need as educators.

Participants will be reflecting in small groups to discuss the artifacts created. At the end of the workshop, the researcher will seek consent to have the artefacts photographed and appended into a website the researcher will create for the PhD study.



**W010**

**Building a Better Future one brick at a time: the transformative potential of teacher education research**

**ML White, University of Edinburgh**

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**Theme:** Innovative Research Methods

The theme of "Education in a Fragile World: Past, Present, Future" calls for a critical examination of the role of education amidst global instability. This workshop proposes to explore the transformative potential of teacher education research using the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) methodology. Grounded in constructionist principles, the LSP methodology offers a playful and participatory framework for exploring complex issues and fostering connection.

In this workshop I take a critical posthumanist perspective to more fully account for the complexity, situatedness and tensions of teacher education research in a fragile world (Flores, 2020). Drawing on Papert's constructionist pedagogy, which demands 'that everything be understood by being constructed' (Papert and Harel, 1991, 3), participants will engage in hands-on exploration of LSP techniques, discovering its applications in diverse educational contexts.

The workshop will begin with an overview of the LSP methodology, providing participants with a foundation in its principles and techniques. Guantlett (2018) argues that through making things people engage with the world and create connections with each other and in this workshop we will embrace a relational and collaborative approach to knowledge production. Through interactive activities and guided reflections, participants will have the opportunity to experience firsthand the power of LSP as a tool for inquiry, collaboration and co-making (Haraway, 2016).

Small-group discussions will encourage participants to explore how this methodology can be adapted to their specific educational contexts, fostering creativity and innovation. Throughout the workshop, emphasis will be placed on the transformative potential role of teacher education research in driving educational change and promoting a more sustainable and inclusive world.

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**W011**

**Developing Personal Vision in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) 'It gives you the idea of the kind of teacher you want to be'**

**Murray Craig, Jan McCall, Karen Munro, Paul McMillan, Mike Jess, Nicola Carse, University of Edinburgh**

**Keywords:** Initial Teacher Education, Personal Vision, Curriculum, Professional Development Rationale and/or theoretical background

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

**Rationale and/or theoretical background**

The workshop focuses on the concept of teacher vision, namely a personal image of what teachers hope to achieve in their classroom, school, community and society (Hammerness, 2006). As a device, personal vision can both guide and motivate teachers in their negotiation of local and global challenges, and inform partnership working with stakeholders across and beyond education (Hara and Sherbine, 2018). Thus, creating one's own personal vision for the future, aligned with the ability to share this vision with others, is becoming an important attribute for both pre- as well as in-service practitioners as they engage in future-oriented discussions about the nature and purpose of their role and work (Shulman & Shulman, 2004).

**Aims and methods of the proposed activity**

As a result of the 'Vision & Voices' project, a longitudinal study focused on personal vision in ITE, vision making (as well as the enactment of it), has become an integral, recurrent feature on the 4-year undergraduate PETE programme at Moray House School of Education and Sport. Drawing on datasets from the project, the workshop maps the journey, sharing experiences of both teaching staff and student teachers, highlighting the processes, merits, and challenges of threading teacher vision through the ITE journey. After introducing the concept and subsequent context, the main body of the workshop will engage attendees in a series of individual, small and whole group reflective and discursive tasks focused on why, when and how personal vision might be promoted and developed on their respective ITE programmes and/or courses.

**References**

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W012

## AI in Education: What are the Practical Steps for Schools, Colleges, and Universities

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**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Personalized Learning, Educational Technology, AI Ethics

**Theme:** Digital Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming education by offering new ways to enhance learning and teaching (Holmes and Tuomi, 2022; Miao et al., 2021; Zhai et al. 2021,)), but it also brings forth issues that need to be addressed, such as ethics and assessment (Garrett et al. 2020, Zhang et al. 2021). This workshop will start with a brief presentation on the practical influences of AI across different aspects of education. There will then be opportunities for participants to explore how AI can enhance/limit learning and teaching across all educational levels. This session offers participants the opportunity to discuss and produce concrete examples and actionable strategies for effectively integrating AI into educational practices and for overcoming potential challenges.

The workshop aims to:

1. Provide an overview of AI's impact on education.
2. Engage participants in exploring practical AI applications.
3. Discuss challenges and develop actionable integration strategies.
4. Offer collaboration opportunities for future research.

### Workshop Structure

#### 1. Brief Presentation (10 minutes).

- Introduction to AI in education.
- Overview of AI implications in learning and teaching.

#### 2. Discussion (35 minutes): The following topics will be discussed at round tables and then shared with the entire group through Padlet or other digital or physical channels.

- **Opportunities and Challenges in Schools**

- How can AI personalize learning, assist in grading, and reduce administrative burdens? How have you used AI in these areas, and what results have you seen?
- What barriers exist? How can institutions overcome those?

- **Opportunities and Challenges in Further and Higher Education**

- How can AI support research, teaching and learning? Can you share examples from your experience?
- What challenges do institutions face, like technological disparities and curriculum updates, and how can they manage these?

- **AI and Assessment:**

- What methods have you used for AI in grading and feedback, and what outcomes have you observed?
- What ethical implications need consideration?
- What are the implications of AI in assessment?
- How do you think AI can be integrated into assessment effectively?

- **Educating Learners about Ethical AI Use**
  - How can institutions teach AI ethics and responsible use? What approaches have you taken, and what were the results?
3. Reflection and Action Planning (15 minutes).
- Reflect on discussions and identify actionable steps for AI integration.
  - Develop a collaborative action plan for implementing AI in institutions and research practices.

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**W013**

**Northern/Arctic pedagogy: methodological matters**

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**Keywords:** Arctic, Northern, pedagogy

**Theme:** Social justice and Inclusion

Since January 2022, a group of academics from across the Nordic region (i.e. from Greenland and the Faroe Islands, to Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland) Scotland and Canada have been exploring conceptions of pedagogy that hold resonance in and for 'the north'. This work has emerged from discussions, debates, and writing that seeks to rupture and contest hitherto Anglophonic interpretations of pedagogy, i.e., that pedagogy consists of the methods and practices of teaching. While the group does not disavow that teaching does things, to achieve things, with people, our starting point is that a 'methods approach' might, and has, result in the commodification of pedagogy towards preordained, centre-oriented approaches augmented in their dominance by the use of terms such as 'best-practice', or 'direct-teaching'.

Our work, funded by both the Scottish Government (SG) and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), seeks to elevate pedagogy-oriented conversations for the purposes of methodological interpretation. Rather than a focus on the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching, this emphasis shift foregrounds 'why' and 'to what ends' debates. Members of the group have their own definition for pedagogy, but what underpins our debates has been an acceptance that pedagogy is akin to 'being in and acting on the world, with and for others' (Adams, 2022). This orientation does not seek normativity, rather it describes a way of conceptualising pedagogy as a methodological matter, rather than a methods approach.

In this workshop, we intend to discuss this positioning with participants, for three ends:

1. To assist in (re)conceptualising pedagogy.
2. To enhance our understanding of the ways in which such conception/s for pedagogy might influence and support the work of those involved in education, broadly conceived.
3. To identify and extend membership of the New Northern and Arctic Pedagogies Group.

The workshop will include short presentations to position the interests of the group followed by questions and discussion with the audience. Specifically, we will ask participants to consider northern/Arctic pedagogy-related questions such as:

1. What might be Scotland's relationship to northern/Arctic pedagogy?
2. How do tensions such as centre/periphery/rural/remote frame such pedagogy?
3. How might such frames for Northern/Arctic pedagogy attend to such tensions?
4. Does the use of Northern/Arctic pedagogy stand in contest or support of continental interpretations?

5. What does it mean to be *northern/Arctic pedagogically active* and who can be so?
6. How might northern/Arctic pedagogy resist/disrupt hegemonic practices?
7. How does northern/Arctic pedagogy characterise education, *broadly conceived*?

# **Performance/ Arts based session**

Arts001

## The UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education and Scottish education

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**Keywords:** art education, philosophy for children, sustainable education, curriculum

**Theme:** Curriculum

### Rationale and/or theoretical background

In February 2024, UNESCO Member States adopted a new UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education (UNESCO, 2024). The document emphasises the role that arts and cultural education plays in contributing towards meeting the Sustainable Development goals, alongside supporting an individual to explore their place in the world and to communicate this in creative ways. A policy or a framework can only be considered successful however if it is translated into practice. Recent research would indicate that access to quality arts education in Scottish schools is varied and inconsistent (McKinnon, Schrag, and Blanche, 2022) as are primary teachers' confidence levels to teach the subjects (Japp et al., 2023; Robb, 2023; Robb, Jindal-Snape and Levy, 2021). The gap between policy and practice is therefore significant, and working towards the Strategic Goals of the Framework will be a challenge.

### Aims and methods of the proposed activity

Professional networks are viewed as a key aspect of professional learning in education and in arts education (Hargeaves and Fullan, 2012; Robb, 2023; Zimmerman, 2014). The aim of the workshop is to draw researchers and teaching professionals together to consider the future of arts education in Scotland and the steps that would need to be taken in order for the Strategic Goals of the Framework to be realised. The Framework will be introduced alongside a summary of the current state of play in terms of arts education in Scotland. This will then be followed by a discussion focused on the steps we need to take in Scotland to begin to work towards the Goal, using this to inspire the creation of individual paper lanterns to create a collective 3D art education manifesto for Scotland. The session will provide an opportunity for participants to expand their professional networks as well as contribute to a set of actions that can be taken forward by researchers and teaching professionals to raise the profile of arts education in Scotland, addressing the current gap between policy and practice.

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Zimmerman, E. (2014). 'Extending Thurber's and Zimmerman's models for developing feminist leadership in art education through collaboration, community building and creativity'. *Visual Inquiry: Learning & Teaching Art*, 2, 263-278.

**Indication about space:** ideally a workshop room with tables and sinks in it.

# Rapid Thesis

**Rapid001**

**Insights from historical research concerning Scottish technical and vocational education in the 1980s: building a curriculum to adapt to a changing world**

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**Keywords:** Technical and vocational education, Student centred learning, Enterprise learning, Child centred approaches

**Theme:** Curriculum

‘How might curriculum engage with a constantly changing and increasingly fragile world? To what extent might the curriculum support interdisciplinary learning and reflection on key themes of human development? What insights might be gleaned from different theoretical perspectives on curriculum? How might educational practitioners engage with the process of curriculum reform?’

This presentation will present findings from my doctoral thesis that align with the conference theme of how the curriculum can ‘engage with a constantly changing and increasingly fragile world.’ The aims of this presentation are to: - 1) Show how Scottish regional authorities ensured that the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) would help secondary schools tailor their curriculum to suit a changing world, a key change being that of deindustrialisation. 2) Demonstrate how student-centred and enterprise learning approaches to the curriculum were utilised to help develop desirable skills and attitudes in young people. The presentation will argue that the adoption of student centred and enterprise learning approaches by regional authorities helped encourage the development of several skills in young people, including adaptability to change and independent decision making. It will emphasise the importance of clear articulations of educational philosophies in encouraging educational practitioners to become involved in the reform of the secondary curriculum. It will demonstrate that, in the case of TVEI, student centred approaches to the curriculum were utilised to contribute towards the empowerment of young people. The presentation will draw on oral history testimony from former teachers and civil servants created for the purposes of the thesis research. It will reflect on the conference theme of ‘curriculum’ by considering the ways in which educational practitioners can engage with the process of educational reform. In conclusion, thorough consideration of the purpose of education reforms, pre-implementation, is vital in creating meaningful change to enhance the lives of young people.

**Rapid003**

**Curriculum for Excellence: Whose 'Excellence' is it Anyway?**

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**Keywords:** curriculum, empty signifier, excellence, political economy

**Theme:** Curriculum

Greene (1995) finds that educators must question policies and practices to ensure they build learning and teaching experiences for their young people. In doing so, educators will be able to enact the potential and possibilities of curriculum while ensuring that social justice and democracy play a key role in their practice. Therefore, my literature-based doctoral thesis sets out to critically examine Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to identify the contradictions within CfE that have led to accusations of atheoreticity (Davis & Edwards, 2001; Priestley, 2010; Priestley & Humes, 2010; Priestley, 2011; Day & Bryce, 2013; Priestley & Minty, 2013). Then, through the lens of the Four Capacities (Scottish Executive, 2004) this thesis will examine 'excellence' as an empty signifier, how it supports political economy within the educational context, and how decolonial perspectives could be coupled with CfE to develop a socially just curriculum. This qualitative study employs textual analysis and autobiographical research methods combined with a critical lens as this paper is situated within a purpose of 'giving voice' to those working from within education and examining systemic practices for the purpose of empowering and promoting change (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994 and Casey, 1993). Initial findings show that there is a 'hysterical Freudian absence' – as Murzban Jal (2023) would put it – of decolonial and anti-colonial perspectives within CfE, an alarming absence due to the current drastic demographic changes the nation is facing in which education and curriculum play a crucial role.

## Rapid005

### **"I do not think our teachers know what we do with it...": How gifted and talented pupils in key stage 3 in England respond to and use feedback to Achieve Mastery**

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**Keywords:** Feedback, Assessment, Agency, Voice

**Theme:** Assessment and Evaluation

Feedback is a crucial aspect of learning. However, there is limited research on how high-achieving pupils perceive and use it, particularly in secondary education (Winstone & Boud, 2020; Quinlan & Pitt, 2021). Furthermore, the importance of 'feedback literacy' and 'student agency' in English secondary school students has been overlooked (Ketonen et al., 2020). My recent doctoral study aimed to address this gap by examining high-achieving (Lead Learner) pupils' views and experiences of feedback in key stage three (KS3) at an English secondary school.

Through conversations and interviews with Lead Learners (n=12), this study captured their engagement with feedback and assessment in the school's KS3 Mastery Curriculum. The data was analysed using Corbin and Strauss' evolved grounded theory to create a substantive grounded theory titled: "Achieving Mastery (core category): self-managing our response to feedback (major process)." The findings show that Lead Learners, as savvy student agents, challenged feedback from teachers and peers, assessed how to respond, carried out mastery research, used learning resources, and established mastery networks.

These fundamental processes helped improve their feedback literacy. Prior research has primarily focused on higher education students, making the study's findings especially important as they highlight KS3 students' ability to self-manage feedback. To improve practice, teachers should collaborate with students to better understand and use feedback, invite students to challenge their feedback to create opportunities for them to ask questions, and adopt inclusive, student-centred learning activities to promote feedback literacy and foster student growth as independent, savvy agents.

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**Rapid006**

**Exploring Activist Teachers in Scotland: Actions, Identities and Professional Learning**

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**Keywords:** Professional learning, teacher activism, identity, teacher education

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

The aim of this PhD study is to define how teacher activism might be conceptualised through the professional learning of teachers and understand its potential as a transformative tool for teachers' work. The study departs from recognising the current data-centred, measurement-focused, and outcomes-oriented state of our education system into exploring what and how teachers become 'activist professionals'. The study supports Judyth Sachs' invitation that teacher activism, considered a broad and deeply embedded practice, invites revitalising teachers' work through "advising, issue and problem identification, spreading ideas, providing alternative perspectives, evaluating programmes and advocacy" (J. Sachs, 2003, p. 69).

As teacher professional learning responds largely to develop teachers who can meet professional standards, the research argues that the various formal, non-formal and informal professional learning activities also builds critical inquiry on teachers. In aligning their practice with their social values, teachers have the potential to take ownership of their learning to respond to the past, present and perhaps, future fragilities, inequalities, and uncertainties the world is experiencing. Through this, their activist identities maybe manifesting in their pedagogical, curricular, and professional-related activities as teachers.

To respond to this, the study takes on a social constructivist approach, allowing qualified teachers working in Scottish schools and have self-identified as activists to participate in mapping, creating artifacts and reflecting on the different activist work they have done. Through a series of activities and data-gathering, the study hopes to present a broad-based view of teacher activism both a spectrum, and as a platform for diagnosing educational problems, constructing solutions, and advocating for socially-just practices to improve teaching and teachers' work.

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## **Rapid007**

### **A tale of two cities – Exploring Assessment Policy and Classroom Practice in Dundee and Liverpool**

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**Theme:** Assessment and Evaluation

#### **Aims**

This work explores the impact of 25 years of assessment policy in two countries through illustrative case studies of two cities.

#### **Methods**

Education policies in England and Scotland released since devolution in 1998 up until the COVID-19 pandemic were analysed. Interviews were conducted with 26 policy participants between the two countries and 26 teachers for the two cities. This allowed for exploring how policy is developed and enacted nationally and locally.

#### **Main findings**

Education in Scotland has traditionally been proud of its many key differences from its neighbours in England. Despite differential policy messaging between the two countries, policy influencers describe the extent of reach change and improvement as a frustration in both. In schools, many national influences on policy go unnoticed, and the perennial effect of external exams and accountability metrics are prioritised. Frustrations over how these external exams stifle positive change are repeatedly expressed by school professionals and policy influencers alike.

#### **Conclusions**

Scotland and England have both pursued political changes to assessment processes in a bid to drive educational change. These changes have had mixed success, leading the two countries to shift their priorities and sometimes steer multiple directions simultaneously. Purposes such as accountability and demonstrating improvements in national education standards have often taken priority, while policy influencers and school professionals would like to focus on using assessment to promote learning.

## **Rapid010**

**Using Self-study of teacher education practices to explore my understanding of nature of science and its influence on my teaching on a PGCE science course**

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**Keywords:** Self-study, Teacher educator, epistemology

**Theme:** Professional and Vocational Learning

In this doctoral research, I utilise a self-study of teacher education practices methodology to critically examine my beliefs about the nature of science (NOS).

### **Aims**

My research has three main aims. These are:

- To uncover how adopting self-study methodology repositions my beliefs about the NOS and the distinctive features of scientific knowledge.
- To understand how new fresh perspectives about the NOS inform my practice as a teacher educator.
- To spark national debate that offers reflexivity which problematises the current focus on developing preservice teacher practice in preference for studying our practice as teacher educators.

### **Methods**

To achieve these aims I use six distinct research methods. These are:

- Values nature of science (VNOS) questionnaire
- My own reflective journal writing
- Critical incidents
- Discussion with critical friends
- Recordings of six podcast episodes from the crossing silos podcast series. Focus group interviews

### **Findings and conclusions**

These qualitative methods combine to give a fresh perspective of my beliefs and how these are framed by my peers and the preservice teachers with whom I work. I realise that I continue to hold novice beliefs about NOS. My reflective writing and critical incidents highlight the discomfort I felt in realising my beliefs about the nature of science were naïve and simplistic. However, conversations with critical friends and proactively working through my dual role as the researcher and the researched; reshape that discomfort to prompt action that informs my practice. Switching the focus of research inward on my practice is emancipatory repositioning how I define science epistemology. Further, self-study fuels a desire to continue to research my practice as a valuable form of professional development.



**Rapid011**

**Understanding (Global) Citizenship Education in Model United Nations Activity in a Chinese Secondary School**

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**Keywords:** Model United Nations (MUN), global citizenship education, ethnographic case study, secondary school

**Theme:** Social Justice and Inclusion

Model United Nations (MUN) is a global simulation activity founded alongside the United Nations (UN) in 1945. It allows young people to act as country diplomats, debate international issues, and try to seek consensus. While MUN is praised for fostering global citizenship knowledge, skills, and values, there are concerns it may reinforce educational inequalities and power imbalances, affecting how knowledge and power are distributed within MUN.

Originated from my own experience of a MUN participant and organiser in China, I am eager to explore the complex relationship between MUN and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in a Chinese context. Taking an ethnographic case study, I looked at a MUN club in a secondary school in a middle-sized Chinese city. I first conducted Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of local news reports on MUN activities to understand the broader context. Then, I spent over six months conducting participant observation and interviews at the school club.

My findings show that MUN can reinforce educational inequalities, making it appear as an 'elite' activity influenced by students' socio-economic and academic backgrounds. The pedagogy and power dynamics between teachers, students, and other stakeholders may limit students' agency and critical engagement. Nevertheless, some students could exercise autonomy in their participation in MUN activities and the broader school context. My research highlights the ongoing challenges of ensuring educational access for all young people, regardless of their backgrounds. It also calls for critical reflection on GCE programs and their knowledge production processes.

## **Rapid012**

### **The importance of creating space for critical discussion in community education work**

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**Keywords:** critical, reflection, praxis, community

**Theme:** Community Education and Learning

“We humans are the most creative life forms on our planet—amazing beings who can change not only our environments but also ourselves” (Eisler, 2007, p.282)

This research thesis set out to explore the importance of creating space for critical discussion in community education work. In particular, the opportunity for praxis, the synthesis of theory, practice and resulting action (Ledwith, 2011, p.283). The research explored the views and experiences of community education practitioners, academics and students who were working or studying in Dundee and the wider Tayside area in Scotland.

All of the participants were asked about their experience of spaces and places for critical reflection and discussion. The research investigation had a particular focus on the impacts on practitioners themselves and the individuals and communities they work with. The research took place in 2021 and involved a series of individual semi structured interviews.

Findings revealed that spaces and places for critical discussion were valued. However, there were a number of challenges to protecting time and space for this to take place. One of the key factors was the contemporary social and political landscape. In a time of ‘polycrisis’, practitioners are increasingly ‘fire fighting’, responding and reacting to issues in communities with ever reducing resources. The research also identified key components and elements of effective spaces and places for critical reflection. These include priority, support, safety and challenge.

Overall, the research reinforced the well demonstrated premise, that critical praxis is crucial if community education is to fulfil its transformative social purpose.

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