Abstracts of the UCL Institute of Education Doctoral Poster Conference March 2017

K.M. Nabiul Alam (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

Children's participation in higher mathematics optional course in rural secondary Islamic schools in Bangladesh: what are the affecting factors?

Recent field study for my PhD research project reveals that a very few number of children in rural secondary Islamic schools (Madrasas) in Bangladesh choose to study 'Higher Mathematics' as an optional subject beyond the compulsory mathematics. Children of both genders, girls in particular have less interest about 'Higher Mathematics' due to many reasons. The preliminary analysis of six focus group discussions with Grades 9 and 10 children across three rural secondary madrasas in Bangladesh suggests that parent's socio-economic status, their religious beliefs, children's gender, mathematics curriculum, mathematics teacher, anxiety about mathematics, success in mathematics, private tuition culture, and children's future ambitions all play a role in making their choice about studying a higher mathematics optional course. The ongoing analysis of additional qualitative data collected through interviews with parents, math teachers and principals will contribute explaining the reasons of children's low level of participation and interest about 'Higher Mathematics' in rural Bangladeshi context. Moreover, the analysis of quantitative data on children's attitude to mathematics would also help to identify possible reasons behind their decision to study or not to study a 'Higher Mathematics' course.

Ghadah AlGhamdi (Learning & Leadership)

Job satisfaction among female head teachers in Saudi Arabia schools

This research aim is to investigate the factors that influence job satisfaction among female headteachers at girls' schools in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, assessing the level of satisfaction among headteachers within the context of an educational environment. Having work experience myself in the Saudi educational system, as both a teacher and a headteacher, I have dealt with various challenges in this area that can have a negative impact on the job satisfaction of female headteachers. For example, a lack of relevant experience, work overload and salary issues among many others.

Amaal Almigal (Learning & Leadership)

Meet Mark: A pilot Study to test the Effectiveness of Proloqu2Go app to Help Children with Autism to Ask Questions.

Mark is a nine year-old boy diagnosed with autism. He is verbal, but has complex communication needs. Although he has the ability to ask simple questions, he does so very rarely. Augmentative and alternative communication systems, such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), are used to enhance his communication skills. This includes the use of latest technologies to provide for the ability to communicate. iPad applications, such as Proloqu2Go, is being used to help children with autism to communicate, but this pilot study is aimed specifically to examine the effectiveness of this application in comparison with PECS to help Mark to ask questions. Mark was observed for three days and his teacher and mother were interviewed. Then, twenty sessions using both iPad and PECD were conducted with Mark to help him to ask questions more frequently. Interviews with Mark's teachers were also took place after the sessions. Initial results show that Mark is highly motivated when using the iPad app to ask questions, however PECS can be just as effective to help him to achieve the same results. What influence the application might have on Mark's verbal communication in relation to his ability to ask questions will also be analysed.

Saba Alqasabi (Learning & Leadership)

What are the factors in schools that influence the implementation of an inclusive approach to employment transition processes in preparing students with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) to move into employment in England?

The process of transitioning to employment is essential for students with MLD, by providing them with suitable training and activities that can lead to achieving their future employment. However, the literature indicates potential gaps in effective inclusive practice in relation to this process. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate this process to understand the gaps related to it, and to find out about inclusive practices that may improve this process. In this study, I decided to use case studies to illustrate a broad range of transition processes to employment in practice. I will use a multiple-case design, in which each school is the subject of an individual case study, and several schools are covered in the study as a whole. I will interview 2-3 students with MLD, and one of their family members and 2-3 school professionals (transition team members). I will also look at students' documents related to the transition process. A cross-case analysis will be conducted in this study, where each individual case study is considered as a distinct study to compare the variations in practice around the six schools' transition processes.

Awatif Alshamre (Culture, Communication & Media)

Investigating the role of social media in supporting parents and teachers of students with Down Syndrome: Focus on early intervention services in Saudi Arabia

The number of social media users amongst special education teachers and parents of children with Down syndrome is increasing annually. Mirza (2013) confirmed that the increase in the number of families with disabled members using social networking sites and other types of media to pressure the government for an expansion of early intervention services in all regions of Saudi Arabia. However, there are no qualitative studies which testify to the true nature of the interaction between teachers and parents when using social media, nor the role of social media in supporting and assisting parents and teachers when using for special education. Current studies on media in Saudi Arabia are limited and do not go beyond working papers, such as (AlMagushi, 2007; Alkhamis & Asalawi, 2007; Fadil, 2007) which focuses on the relevance of social media to serve individuals with hearing and visual disabilities, while it disregards the role of parents of children with Down syndrome and teachers. Therefore, the aim of this research is an investigation of the role of social media in support of parents and teachers of students with Down syndrome: Focus on early intervention services in Saudi Arabia.

Annette Bamberger (Education, Practice & Society)

International Undergraduate Study in Israel: A Study of French Jewish Students at Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (IDC)

In recent years, many Israeli universities have extended their traditional study abroad programmes to encompass award-bearing programmes, which are principally conducted in English and targeted at foreign students. Competition for foreign students is high and has led to an increased institutional focus on marketing and recruitment activities, however, little research is available to guide Israeli higher education professionals in their efforts. Particularly French Jewish students, a significant and growing population in Israel, are underrepresented in the literature on foreign students in Israel. This study explores the motivation and decision-making process of French Jewish undergraduate students, studying in Israel in English. The goal is to gain insight into this key demographic and provide actionable recommendations for international marketing and recruitment professionals, programme designers, and service providers. The study employs a qualitative case study approach and uses the concepts of push-pull motivation and Foskett and Hemsely-Brown's (2001) subjective decision-making model. Findings indicate that motivations are composed of a "package" of four interconnected factors: Israel (destination country), English (language of study), IDC (institution), and academic programme. Stages in the decision-making process and implications for practice are presented and limitations to the study are highlighted.

Ngoc Bui (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

A Critical Examination of the National CEFR-based English Curriculum at Tertiary level in Vietnam

This study explores the implementation of the mandatory CEFR-based English curriculum in the National Language Teaching and Learning Reform within a Vietnamese tertiary context to figure out a discrepancy between policymakers' intentions and teachers' implementation. Using a mixed methods approach, I interview policymakers to identify the intended curriculum, departmental administrators to determine their perceptions of the national language policies and their roles in the implementation of these policies. I conduct surveys to discover teachers' perceptions of the intended curriculum and uncover the factors affecting their implementation activities. By observing teachers' classrooms and through follow-up interviews, I also examine how the language policies are being interpreted and implemented. The findings discuss the guiding roles of policymakers, mediating roles of administrators, implementing roles of teachers, and then explore factors which may have facilitated or hindered teachers' curriculum implementation efforts. The findings will therefore inform the stakeholders of useful information which can determine what further changes are required, what problems need to anticipated, and what measures can be taken to solve the problems to ensure the achievement of the curriculum goals. The study, in this way, will contribute to the common knowledge of innovation management as well as curriculum development policy and enactment.

Abdullah Ciftci (Culture, Communication & Media)

The use of ICT for pupils with ADHD in inclusive Key Stage 2 classrooms in supporting their academic and social development.

ADHD causes behavioural and cognitive difficulties; in attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity that brings in the need to use needs-specific interventions and ICT is commonly applied in classrooms to diversify teaching and learning experiences. The aim is to analyse how ICT-based activities to support the social and academic development of pupils with ADHD that will lead an understanding of how teachers, pupils, teaching methods, materials and environmental factors interact together. Understanding the role ICT in fostering the development of pupils ADHD needs to visit classrooms and analyse the educational activities to evaluate the effectiveness of ICT. Therefore, qualitative case study approach will be employed to analyse comprehensively all components of educational activities together in the real environment, classroom, with employing observation of classrooms and interviews with teachers. 4 inclusive classrooms will be observed weekly for 4 months and interviews with teachers and teaching assistants will be conducted in the middle and at the end of this 4 month period. Thematic analysis of data will be used to reach a theoretical framework for ICT-based classroom activities. It will lead to understand and evaluate creative ways of using ICT and engage pupils with ADHD in learning.

Jenny Clements (Culture, Communication & Media)

The Higher Project Qualification: Do Research Projects Add Value For Secondary School Students?

The Higher Project Qualification is a research qualification that secondary school students can take part in at either Key Stage 3 or 4. It is the equivalent of half a GCSE grade, where the students must submit a research project containing a minimum of 2,500 words. The process of student selection, and the question as to who should or should not take part in this research process, and against which criteria, is problematic, as students are normally chosen to take part based on ability categorisation. This research concerns itself with investigating the problems with ability categorisation; the nature of research projects themselves, and what students, of all abilities, might gain from being part of such programmes; the idea that there is nothing particularly 'gifted' about taking part in research projects will be considered. Students who take part in these research projects must complete Project Activity Logs on how they experienced the process of sustained independent research, which is currently not shared beyond the confinements of the projects themselves. This research will start to explore what students value when taking part in independent research, and problematize the process of defining what value actually means and the subjective nature of this.

Mike Collins (Learning & Leadership)

Responding to Complexity: Exploring the role of Executive Leaders in English Schools

Executive Leadership is a new feature of school organisation in England that has emerged over the last decade or so. It is exercised in a wide variety of contexts and for anyone taking on an executive role, responding to and dealing with complexity is unavoidable. This developing research aims to explore how leaders are performing these roles. A starting point is to draw on complexity theories as an underpinning assumption about the nature of the social world and to see leadership as taking place in multiple overlapping and nested networks of interactions in which both leaders and researcher are embedded. This leads to a case based approach, focusing on individuals in executive leaderships roles and their particular context. A type of social network analysis is being used to explore leaders' perceived networks of interactions alongside interviews and documents to gather further evidence of how these new roles are carried out. Piloting has tested both the approach and a provisional analytical framework, offering useful initial insights. The research will be extended by gathering similar data from other key people in the leaders' organisations and by comparing cases.

Aly Colman (Learning & Leadership)

School leadership and the impact of the school inspection regime: an examination of a coastal area of deprivation.

The school inspection regime in England and Wales has recently increased its focus on all state schools becoming 'good' or better. Schools deemed by Ofsted to be performing below this standard receive intense scrutiny from the school inspection regime before a subsequent short notice monitoring inspection. Although all schools may receive a short notice inspection, the perceived autonomy afforded to schools that are judged by the inspection regime to be good or better is in contrast to those who are deemed 'failing' schools and are disciplined through tighter accountability to the inspection regime. This impacts on the ways education policy is enacted by school leaders. This study examined the effect of intense scrutiny from the school inspection regime on school leadership and policy enactment and the impact of this on inequality. A coastal area of deprivation provided the setting for a detailed case study of school leadership in a state secondary school and a state primary school - both with recent or on-going experience of intense scrutiny from the school inspection regime. Interviews and observations were undertaken to understand decision-making informing school leadership, policy enactment and approaches to school improvement. The data was analysed to form a thesis.

John Connolly (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

Utilising the Social Cognitive Career Theory to compose an instrument to predict choice of Physics for post-compulsory education and career choice.

There have been many studies conducted that have attempted to discover the reasons behind the low uptake in STEM subjects, particularly physics, of secondary school students for post-compulsory education. Studies have concluded the importance of personality, familial and environmental traits when students make their subject choices as well as their aspirations for their future careers. This poster reviews the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994) as a predictive model for choice of physics for post compulsory education based on career choices. The authors of SCCT identify agency via the relationship between self-efficacy and outcome expectations as a factor underpinning interests and subsequent aspirations for choice of career. The poster compares the SCCT model with the expectancy-value model of achievement-related choices (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) which has been used to predict choice of STEM subjects and careers among secondary school students for over three decades. The comparison favourably demonstrates that the SCCT, with its focus on self-efficacy beliefs can be used as a framework to develop instruments for predicting uptake of physics for post-compulsory education as well as students' aspirations for physics or STEM related careers.

Jay Derrick (Education, Practice & Society)

How do high-performing knowledge-intensive organisations use informal modes of learning and team-working to support innovation?

My thesis research is a qualitative study investigating the relationship between innovation and informal learning at and through work, in the practices and procedures of two successful and innovative organisations operating in different knowledge domains, as revealed through the work of project teams in each organisation. The study is investigating how practitioners in each team create and/or take advantage of opportunities for learning as they arise through the course of their work, and how their team leaders and managers support them; how learning and innovation are interrelated; how each organisation's cultural norms, procedures and expected behaviours support or inhibit learning and innovation (whether this is deliberate or not). I plan to use the following conceptual frameworks in analysing my data: Jensen et al's distinction between 'STI' and 'DUI' knowledge (2007), Felstead et al's 'Working as Learning' framework (2009), Engestrom's work on multi-disciplinary and cross-boundary team-working (2008), and Fuller and Unwin's 'Expansive-Restrictive' Continuum for measuring the extent to which a workplace supports or inhibits learning (2006). As a teacher educator, I want to use the study's findings to help develop recommendations for improved conceptual, policy and implementation frameworks for the professional learning of teachers.

Anthony Dimmer (Learning & Leadership)

It's a Matter of Trust: A Case Study of Collaboration within a Newly Formed Group of Primary Academies

This thesis aimed to find out the extent to which the formation of an academy trust supported collaboration and improvement during the first year of its existence. It reports on a longitudinal case study, which tracked the development of five schools as they started to develop a self-improving system of collaboration during its first two years. The study explores the process by considering the views of teachers about levels of Joint Practice Development, Social Capital, Collective Moral Purpose, Evaluation and Challenge and Alliance Architecture. These are key elements identified by David Hargreaves (2012) as the essentials of a self-improving school system. Together they are the building blocks of his concept of "collaborative capital". It also takes account of the interactions between heads and deputies, senior and middle leaders in creating a culture of collaboration and the extent to which communities of practice begin to grow. The case study takes the form of surveys of teaching staff in all five schools followed by interviews with a sample of leaders and teachers to amplify the findings from the surveys carried out in January and June 2014. A follow up survey took place in January 2015 with interviews held in June 2015.

Wendy Dixon (Doctoral Training Centre, UCL)

Making a move: why do teaching assistants choose to become teachers?

Research Proposal: Driven by a personal interest this qualitative study will investigate the 'told story' and the 'lived life' of a cohort of Teaching Assistants (TAs) who have chosen to become teachers. Within this it is hoped that the TAs current and perceived future status and events that have influenced their decision to become a teacher will emerge. With little empirical evidence exploring the transition from teaching assistant to teacher, coupled with the findings proposed by Woolhouse et al (2009) that TAs are unwilling to progress to qualified teaching status, this study hopes to produce evidence that will not only encourage TAs to consider this move but will also reflect the findings of Fortner et al (2015, p.2) that TAs represent 'a quality and highly persistent workforce'. The methods used to access this data will be a Life History Time followed by a semi-structured interview which will be analysed within a framework constructed of Savickas' career construction theory and Bourdieu's theory of Capital acquisition.

Hazel Dorrington (Learning and Leadership)

An investigation into the relationship between trainee teachers' auto-biographies, their values and beliefs, and their perceptions of children from low socio-economic status groups

Initial Teacher Training providers are required to provide opportunities for trainee teachers to work successfully in schools in challenging socio-economic circumstances, yet there is a lack of guidance on how they might achieve this. The proposed study will use semi-structured interviews to collect data from a sample of trainee teachers. Drawing on Bourdieu's thinking tools of field, habitus and capital, the study aims to understand the auto-biographies of a sample of trainee teachers; the ways in which their auto-biographies influence their values and beliefs; and the way in which this influences their perceptions of children from low socio-economic status groups. It is expected that this knowledge could be used by Initial Teacher Training providers to inform their practice, not least in providing a starting point for reflection on and discussion of trainee teachers' knowledge and understanding of children from low socio-economic status groups.

Sandra El Gemayel (Learning & Leadership)

The impact of armed conflict and displacement on the play of young Iraqi and Syrian child refugees in Lebanon

War and displacement have immeasurable effects on children and their families. They constrain children's opportunities to play, to learn through play, and for their unique potential to flourish. Yet, there are no in-depth studies of the effects of war and displacement on young child refugees in Lebanon. My research aims to investigate what play opportunities are available to these children, how their experiences of war and displacement affect the ways they play, and what measures could be taken to improve their play opportunities. Froebelian principles lie at the core of this study which promotes the integrity of childhood in its own right, the indispensable benefits of play, and the role of the environment in a child's development. This research also studies childhood and play in Lebanon through a Foucauldian lens, exploring diverse discourses, power structures, and regimes of truth. Questionnaires will be distributed to over 100 parents/guardians via a local dispensary, and longitudinal ethnographic case studies will be conducted with refugee families, using 'long' conversations and observations to investigate children's play experiences and enable the children themselves to become active researchers of their own lives. Recommendations will be made regarding improving play opportunities for refugee children.

Stephanie Gibb & Sally Palmer (Psychology & Human Development)

What role does an understanding of competition play in the development of children's intergroup attitudes?

Recent research shows how investigating the development of competitive understanding might advance knowledge on the development of intergroup attitudes (i.e., how members of one group think about, and behave towards, members of another group). Research has extensively explored the role of intergroup processes within competitive contexts in adults (Sherif et al, 1961; Maxwell-Smith et al, 2016; Adachi, Hodson, & Hoffarth, 2015) and in the context of social exclusion in childhood (e.g., Abrams & Killen, 2014; Abrams, Rutland, Pelletier, & Ferrell, 2009; Richardson et al., 2014). These studies do not explore specifically how knowledge of competition, may inform children's understanding of intergroup relations. We present a preliminary study examining this question and a proposed outline of stages of future research. In a preliminary study (Gibb & Palmer, 2016), participants (N=160) aged 4-8 years old considered scenarios involving ingroup/outgroup peers involved in a "snakes and ladders" game (Gibb & Rafetseder, 2015). Participants were asked to evaluate ingroup/outgroup peers who violated a norm to cheat, where cheating advantaged the ingroup vs. the outgroup team. As expected, children were more favourable to outgroup members when their cheating actions advantaged the ingroup. Social-moral reasoning was explored and will be discussed in relation to recent (e.g., Lam & Seaton, 2016) and proposed research.

Xaviera Gonzalez-Wegener (Education, Practice & Society)

How teachers grade struggling learners in Chile?

Classroom assessment grading occurs in a grey area. Inconsistencies and inadequate assessment practices may risk producing segregation or even exclusion of struggling learners in Chile. In a high-stakes classroom assessment context, grades obtained in secondary schools can have a great impact on several aspects of students' lives, such as year repetition or grade retention. The proposed study focuses specifically on how teachers may adapt their grading practices in order to address struggling learners' individual needs. For this purpose, this study intends to explore how differentiated grading practices takes place in Chile. Interviews and policy analysis will the triangulated to explain the relationship between the theory, policy and practice.

Mahmudul Hasan (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

Impacts of Supplementary Islamic Education on mainstream education: Perception of Bangladeshi young Muslims in Essex

Many Bangladeshi Muslim children between 5- 16 attend in mosque schools or other supplementary schools outside normal school hours at evenings or weekends in order to receive education in Islamic beliefs and practices. Parents recognize the connection between such education and the achievement of a secure religious and personal identity for their offspring. The fact that many Muslim children attend schools as well supplementary Islamic schools has led to a debate about the impact of the latter on the former. Some reports such as Open society institute's report (2005) claims that supplementary schooling places an additional burden on Muslim children, in terms of both time and intellectual effort. Which might cause for their low academic achievement. This issue has not been studied in depth and in particular we do not know how students etc think of this link. Therefore, this research aims to conduct an investigation into the perceptions of Bangladeshi young Muslims about the impacts of SIE on their mainstream education and to find out any differences of in perceptions towards SIE between sub-groups e.g. parents and teachers, teachers from the mainstream and those from SIE, current and former parents and current students and former students.

Brendan King (Education, Practice & Society)

What influence(s) do family, physical education and peers have on low socioeconomic students' extracurricular sport socialisation

For renowned French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, 'habitus is an important, and class-specific, foundation for behaviour. However, Bourdieu offers little explanation of how habitus is acquired at the micro-level. Using Bernstein's elaborations of the contexts and agencies where behavioural principles are formed, this study examines how Key Stage 3, low-socioeconomic students in inner-city London secondary schools acquire a habitus that underpins their long-term sport participation. Previous research suggests that the habitus of children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds is influenced by the extended family, their physical education teacher and their peers. This results in a broad range of unordered activities that take place in various spaces. A total of 15 low-SES students who participated in extracurricular sport were involved. This study utilises three data collection methods: (1) drawing assignments, (2) focus groups and (3) semi-structured interviews. The data generated by these methods was then coded and analysed using Bernstein's contexts as an analytical framework. Primary codes related to the contexts where socialisation takes place. Secondary codes related to the identity of specific agents acting in these contexts. These findings offer an important contribution to insight into class-specific sport socialisation processes, resulting in the acquisition of a specific 'sports habitus'.

Eileen Laffan (Culture, Communication & Media)

Pre-sessional English Courses: The acculturative and academic transition of international students to the UK

International students are seen as a desirable student community and provide a valuable contribution to UK Higher Education Institutions. This study aims to discuss the international student experience (in this context, international students with an IELTS or TOEFL requirement). This study will focus on international students' experiences of pre-sessional English courses and how they provide a transitioning space for the adaptation and acculturative process, included in this is an exploration of their expectations prior to coming to the UK and how they reflect on those expectations. The rationale for undertaking this research is the contribution it will provide to professional practice in pre-sessional English learning and teaching, along with the improvement and provision of services to international students. This study will follow a qualitative research approach in a narrative case-study design of six case-studies with six participants. Each case-study will comprise of two semi- structured interviews: one whilst undertaking the pre-sessional English course and a second in the first term of the students' degree course. This research will address the journey that international students undertake from home country to the studying in the UK, and the academic and acculturative challenges and issues they face and experience.

Jessica Massonnié (Doctoral Training Centre, Birkbeck)

The effect of noise on learning in primary school

Primary school children are exposed to various types of noise. Road traffic noise has been shown to negatively impact mathematics performance, whereas the effect of irrelevant speech depends on its meaningfulness and saliency: babble noise has a detrimental effect, but not when it is mixed with environmental sound (Dockrell & Shield, 2006). Crucially, this mixed noise favors children's spelling and sentence comprehension (Dockrell & Shield, 2006), and multi-talker voices at a certain level enhances adults' creativity (Mehta et al. 2012). When adults' short-term memory is tested under irrelevant speech, a high number of voices produces less impairment (Jones & Maken, 1995). Moreover, beside the source of noise, individual factors explaining children's sensitivity to noise remain unclear. To better understand how noise affects learning in primary school, we will investigate: The effect of traffic, verbal (single voice) and classroom (multi-talkers) noise on mathematics, reading comprehension and text recall; The effect of classroom noise on children's creativity; If school interventions could favor noise reduction, potentially enhancing children performances; The extent to which SES, inhibitory control and working memory mediate the effect of noise on performance. Planned experiments and preliminary results will be presented.

Cheong Micheong Stella (Curriculum Pedagogy & Assessment)

Becoming a bridge figure: Reinterpreting cosmopolitan identities for young North Korean defectors in South Korea

South Korea has been slowly transforming itself into a multicultural society from homogenous nation-state in recent years. In terms of multicultural education, it means that we must prepare new learning and teaching methodologies and curricula with consideration to differences in ethnicity, language, and values. In the Korean context, we should take into consideration about the population of North Korean Defectors as a meaningful minority, as well as multicultural education for young North Korean defectors in South Korea is required in order to prepare for potential reunification (MoE, 2012; KEDI, 2012). However, most policies are founded on a basis of implied assimilation and it focuses on ethnic minorities rather than young North Korean Defectors. As a result, it forces young North Korean defectors to adapt and assimilate into the Korean education system, rather than providing them with an education that would enable them to become world citizens with their own identity. The aim is to reinterpreting cosmopolitan identities for young North Korean defectors in South Korea. The preliminary interview data provides insight not only into the difficulties of two different social and political spheres (between South and North Korea) both in public debates and in everyday encounters but also into the possibilities as a bridge figure for the potential reunification.

Ikuyu Miyamura (Learning & Leadership)

The values of school leaders transforming crises into development - through life stories of headteachers in Japan

'Dynamic relativism' in 'Theory of Human Development' by Ueda (1964) has left a researcher fascination as well as a question if something is missing in this theory. In Japan, experimentalism refers to John Dewey's idea and Ueda's unique stance was criticized as 'creeping Experimentalism'. Without finding 'something is missing' in the theory of Ueda, a move to the UK in 2008 led the researcher to experience an identity crisis. Discovering innate qualities inside and nurturing them facilitated to overcome the crisis and has led to personal growth. A model of self-empowerment in 'Self Managing Leadership'(Usha n.d.) seems to answer the previous question of 'something is missing'. As little empirical research has been done for this model, this study would like to test this transformation model empirically. This research will explore the school leaders' values transforming crises into personal growth through life stories of headteachers in Japan. It aims to clarify 1) the headteachers' experience of having crises, 2) key elements of overcoming crisis, 3) perception of their own growth from turning crisis into personal growth, and 4) their impact of their growth on others

Tomoaki Miyazaki (Curriculum Pedagogy & Assessment)

Learning Democracy in Turmoil: Ideal or Reality?

After his inauguration, Donald Trump, the 45th US president, issued the executive order, so called Muslim ban, in January 2017. However, the order seemed to undermine the prospective diversified society where young people would live in their future. Moreover, protests during the inauguration ceremony seemed to urge the reconsideration of the good practice of democracy. Therefore, this project aims to explore how young people accept and integrate different political opinions in the online discussion forum. This project has collected and analysed data from KidzWorld, a publicly open web forum designed for teenagers. The analysis of the discussion about Donald Trump showed a clear difference in the discussion style among the users: pro-Trump teenagers supported their claim with evidence, while anti-Trump did not. Moreover, the anti-Trump side blamed the counterpart based on their own views and values, which seemingly advocate the concept of freedom and diversity; however, it turned the entire discussion to emotional argument as users took name-calling behaviour. The result suggests a potential and risky shift from the evidence-based neutral argument to the emotional and hostile argument in the political discourse among young people and others.

Su Morris (Psychology & Human Development)

Local and global processing in maths and science achievement at primary school

There is some evidence that people with autistic traits, and those who score highly on systemizing measures, are more likely to study or work in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Evidence also suggests that these groups perform well on local processing tasks. However, the relationship between global and local processing, and performance in science and maths at primary school is yet to be explored. 135 children from years 1, 3 and 5 (aged 5-10 years) were tested to measure their maths and science abilities, their cognitive skills, and their visual perceptual processing preferences. The children's systemizing and empathizing quotients were calculated from a parental questionnaire. After controlling for age, there is no association between local processing and maths and science, nor between systemizing and maths and science. The ability to separate from context (by disembedding or segmenting) has a strong association with maths and science, which is driven by IQ and executive functions rather than perceptual processes.

Eva Sakellaridi (Learning & Leadership)

Inside the black box: an investigation into the school business management of a sponsored academy chain

Reformers and governments around the world tend to argue that businesses and schools are similar and that the latter could be substantially improved by the application of private sector business practices to their operations. On the other side of the coin, there are those who argue that such business practices may be leading to a wider corporatisation, thus constraining and reshaping the vision and practice of schooling. With this context as a backdrop, I seek to understand the processes and impacts of three fundamental business practices: finance, human resources and marketing. A sponsored academy chain will be selected as a case study and interviews and observations will be carried out. Participants will include school business managers, head teachers, teachers, parents as well as key members of the school business management staff. The aim of the study is to offer a critically-engaged analysis of whether and how business practices lead to corporatisation and as such, a reorientation of the aims, practices and values of schools. Such a critical empirical analysis is much needed as there remains a paucity of research evidence relating to the pedagogical effects of business practices that could help policymakers, educators and parents make better sense of them.

Simsek Ali (Culture, Communication & Media)

A Study of the Cornerstone Maths Project Teachers' Classroom Practices: Geometric Similarity Using Cornerstone Maths Software

The research seeks to reveal how a new dynamic tool (the Cornerstone Maths software) interacts with various features of classroom practice when teaching geometric similarity in the hands of teachers with varying levels of experience in using digital technology to teach. The study integrated features of multiple case study design and involved two mathematics teachers from two secondary schools in England. The data was collected through classroom observations and semi-structured post-lesson teacher interviews. The Structuring Features of Classroom Practice (SFCP) framework (Ruthven, 2009) was used as a theoretical lens, which focuses on five components of classroom practice: working environment, resource system, activity structure, curriculum script, and time economy. Data analysis suggests that the varying levels of teachers' experience in using digital technology to teach have a considerable influence on the degree and type of their technology use.

Tomoya Sonoda (Education, Practice & Society)

Power and myth of evidence: Educational marginalisation of children in cross-line areas in Syria

The research focuses on the interplay between power and evidence in decision-making processes within international aid. It seeks to unpack the patterns of educational marginalisation of children in opposition-controlled cross-line areas of Syria. Whilst critically questioning the Habermasian/substantialist assumptions of an evidence base, I explore the Foucauldian/relationalism viewpoints in order to understand the forms of power that come into play in evidence generation and use, and how the practice of power shapes decisions about who is in and who is out of aid opportunities.

Claire Stansfield (Social Science)

Designing search strategies for systematic reviews using diverse research literature

Background: Many systematic reviews undertaken to inform social policy in the areas of public health, social care and education rely on diverse literature. Identifying the literature for these reviews involves decision-making on appropriate sources and methods to seek out the literature, and is particularly challenging. Guidance is largely limited to general principles on utilising resources effectively. Research aims: to explore the candidate's published work on designing search strategies, and relate to other empirical, theoretical literature and guidance, to provide a deeper understanding of the process. Methods: 1) Build upon the dimensions of difference of systematic reviews developed by Gough et al. (2012) to formulate dimensions of differences in searching, using ten systematic reviews. This is used to situate the challenges of search strategy design for diverse topics. 2) Explore key themes from these reviews and the candidate's published case studies, on designing search strategies. Results: Twelve dimensions of searching were developed, of which eight demonstrate distinct characteristics for diverse literature. Five influences on designing the search strategy are: evidence, process, people, resources and technology. Further work will compare specific themes with theoretical perspectives on searching, and place this in context with current guidance on systematic searching.

Mario Sylvander (Education, Practice & Society)

Pop & Fizz in University Admissions Interviews

In the context of US and international private independent schools and my work in university guidance for application and admission, I have focused my studies on off-transcript behaviours and attitudes. Having progressed through studies of measurement and development of personal learning initiative--what I term "self-entrepreneurial [self-e] learning"--I will begin a grounded theory study of university admissions interviews. I have been presented with the opportunity to study a large cache of video interviews from a prominent commercial interview platform that employs 60 interviewers, all carefully trained in conducting interviews that by design will not allow an interviewee to stay on [a prepared] script. First tempted to examine interview differences between successful and unsuccessful applicants to elite universities, I subsequently learned that the "top" interviewees may or may not be applying to elite universities. The study to be undertaken, therefore, will compare and contrast thematic analyses of interviews that are judged to be exceptional and those not. By using a grounded theory approach, I will seek to identify "pop & fizz" factors that distinguish an especially successful interview from a less-successful one, open to many categories of factors--from words, to gestures, to tones, etc.

Ka Wan Calvin Tse (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

Time to talk: Students' Mathematical thinking when solving IB DP Chemical Kinetics problems

This study explores students' mathematical thinking when solving IB DP Chemical kinetics problems. It attempts to answer the research question "How do students use mathematical concepts when solving IB DP Chemical kinetics problems?". Data was first collected through a researcher-designed, paper-and-pencil test in which five first-year IB DP Chemistry HL students were asked to solve six problems. This was followed by semi-structured interview in which each student was asked to justify the interpretation of his / her written responses. The findings clearly indicate that these five students have difficulties in handling mathematical concepts that are relevant to Chemical kinetics. The assumptions that prior mathematics learning facilitates transfer do not seems to hold. Mathematics has its discipline rules and chemistry has its discipline rules and certain conventions are used only in chemistry because to use the mathematical conventions would actually not display the chemistry meaning properly. Some possible implications for teaching practice and areas for future research are proposed.

Naoko Uchiyama (Culture, Communication & Media)

An Itinerant Artist in Critical Multiculturalism: Nation-Based Identification and Reimagined Nations

The past three decades saw the rise of multiculturalism as a critical counterpart to universalism or Euro-American centrism. It has been criticised from the beginning, however, as it has risks of confirming, under the name of egalitarianism, the essentialist definition of non-Western people and culture, of concealing the centripetal impact of the predominant culture, or of even thoroughly abandoning the engagements with others to search for ways to discuss their cultures (Araeen 1994; Brooker 1999; Buck-Morss 2009). Persons of itinerancy have critical aptitudes in this context, rather than being merely appraised as embodying their expected diversity. Their (mis)interpretations bring hybridity to what is believed authentic, and their itinerancy often reveals what enables their movements (their age, class, gender, nationality, race, etc., depending on each socio-political context). In the case of Japanese-American artist and designer, Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), who had travelled extensively around the world throughout his career, the present study considers the potentials of travelling individuals in art historical studies in the time of post-multiculturalism. Challenging the stereotypical gaze towards his family background, Noguchi's mid-20th century experiments reveal how complexity, rather than diversity, underpinned the international expansion of the modernist art movements.

Piers von Berg (Education, Practice & Society)

Young people, citizenship and the university

This is a research project into how undergraduate students understand and learn citizenship whilst at the University of Birmingham. The University's Education Strategy 2015-2020 identifies responsible and ethical citizenship as a graduate attribute that all Birmingham graduates will attain by graduation. There is however no up to date empirical data on what kinds of citizens emerge from UK universities. What is known appears contradictory: over the past 20 years the numbers attending university in the UK and of young people not voting have both increased (Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Electoral Commission 2005). Studies of late 1990s cohorts describe UK students as 'quiescent' (Ahier et al 2003) and more recent larger studies show a marked decline in positive attitudes towards democracy among young people (Foa and Mounk 2016). This study will collect and analyse evidence on how students are developing citizenship at the University. It will also give students the opportunity to describe what kind of civic education they would like that is currently not provided. This is a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and focus groups. It employs elements of a participatory approach where students and recent alumni will help design interview schedules and analyse data.

Derek Zheng (Psychology & Human Development)

Exploring the role of Educational Psychologists in primary level pupils at risk of/ who have been permanently excluded in a London borough

This study aims to explore the role of Educational Psychologists in primary level pupils at risk of/who have been permanently excluded in a London borough. A qualitative, single case study design was used and semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with 2 Local Authority (LA) officers, 2 LA EPs and 2 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) staff. Findings were evaluated using thematic analysis. LA EPs were highlighted as being uniquely positioned within the LA, home and school contexts. LA EPs provide a distinctive contribution, as they work at both individual and/ or systemic levels by bringing in their psychological skillset and expertise in therapeutic approaches, standardised psychological assessments, consultation and multi-agency working, all which contribute to the educational and psychological well-being of the pupil. However, EP involvement by LA EPs is largely reactive, as the LA EPS operates as a fully-traded service. Schools/ PRU have to buy in EP services for LA EPs to be involved with a child at risk of/ who have been permanently excluded. Findings suggest that there is scope for EPs to look into these concerns to bring about better outcomes for pupils at risk of/ who have been permanently excluded with their unique expertise and skillset.