

Abstracts of the UCL Institute of Education Doctoral Poster Conference March 2018

Russell Andersson (Education, Practice & Society)

Seeing the big picture: Translanguaging and the role of British Sign Language in the teaching of English to deaf adult learners

My research gives focus to "translanguaging" which is the practice of using all of learners' linguistic resources to make sense of meaning. It sets out to explore and describe the language practices used in my own classroom where I teach English and to deaf adults who are all users of British Sign Language (BSL) as well as many other of their respective signed languages. The aim is to create a clear picture of how the BSL and English languages are used together in the classroom. To date, much of the research relating to deaf learners has given focus to those in compulsory education and with little in the domain of adult education. Translanguaging is a burgeoning area of research within the last 15 years and in the context of signed languages it is relatively unexplored with only a handful of studies exploring this area. Therefore, this study is timely and sets out to fill a gap in the literature and develop our understanding of signed languages and their role in the learning of English for deaf learners.

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 the kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The number of social media users among special education teachers and parents of children with Down Syndrome (DS) is increasing annually. 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 with regards to the children's educational needs. Therefore, this ongoing study aims to identify the role of social media in supporting parents and teachers of DS students, with a special emphasis on early intervention services. A qualitative approach was selected because it was the most suitable approach for exploring the participants' experiences, which could not be determined through scientific tests or approaches. Interviewing, chosen as the research instrument, allowed the researcher to obtain a detailed understanding of the topic and was linked to the study objectives. Initially, a pilot study was conducted in May 2016. The main study consists of five teachers and five mothers. Thematic Analysis has been chosen for analysing the findings because it is a flexible method that allows themes to emerge from the data.

Paula Ambrossi (Learning & Leadership)

The Aesthetics of Other People's Pain

This paper explores issues around the use of painful images within educational contexts. It asks, when is it right, or is it ever right or relevant to use signifiers of other people's pain, without their knowledge or consent, as means to deepen our own or our students' understanding of related phenomena? What is the role of elapsed time and the public domain? How can thought experiments around the use of certain images and photos help us foresee potential areas of conflict that need to be addressed, both in the private and the collective encounter with such images? It also poses that nothing about the Grenfell Tower events could ever be reduced to anything other than the unaddressed human injustice that it is, as it stares at us like the picture of Dorian Gray, holding us to account. As educators, what are our responsibilities in an age of easy global distribution and authorship? This paper forms part of a thesis on initial teacher trainees' development of Teacher Presence in the classroom.

Kim Bownas (Culture, Communication & Media)

Writing competently, writing critically: the transition from GCSE “pupil” to A Level “student”

In this exploratory case study, three sixth-form students in their first year of A Levels describe their experiences of writing for assessment. The transition from a teacher-directed “pupil” identity at GCSE to a more autonomous “student” identity in Years 12 and 13 is frequently described as a jump, implying a sudden, quick movement. However, the participants, chosen opportunistically rather than representatively, described a slower and more hesitant progress, in which the increasingly complex and substantial content of their subjects was negotiated in parallel with developing an appropriate academic voice in their essays. At the same time as they were working to write competently, with a focus on “getting the marks” and “following the structure”, the students were faced with demands to write critically, evaluating and justifying their opinions, which in some cases they were yet to fully develop. Underpinned by the concepts of literacy practices as socially, historically and culturally embedded, this research examines the participants' own descriptions and reflections, through semi-structured interviews, as well as discussions of the writing produced, self-selected by the students. Its conclusions have further implications for the ways in which writing for assessment is taught at A Level and in earlier years.

Liz Broadbent (Psychology & Human Development)

OpenDyslexic Font: Impact on the Reading Accuracy and Comprehension of Key Stage 2 Readers with Dyslexia

There are several fonts that have been designed with the aim of ameliorating some of the difficulties experienced by those with dyslexia. Despite many anecdotal claims, there are few peer-reviewed studies to support or refute the effectiveness of a specialist “dyslexia-friendly” font. Without this evidence a decision to recommend a specific font to young readers with dyslexia may not be prudent. This Institution-Focused Study centres on six Key Stage 2 (KS2) readers with identified traits of dyslexia, comparing their reading accuracy and comprehension when using two fonts, OpenDyslexic and Arial. A control group comprising six KS2 readers, with no identified traits of dyslexia, determined whether a change in font affected all young readers equally or whether the effects were more pronounced in the participants with dyslexia. A semi-structured interview enabled all participants to indicate preferences and opinions of the two fonts. Results demonstrate that the group of pupils with dyslexia read significantly more accurately, with fewer errors, when using OpenDyslexic font. The control group was not similarly affected. Comprehension attainment of both groups was not influenced by the change in font. The qualitative element of the study indicates that font preferences varied and were not always consistent with empirical data.

Emma Brooks (Culture, Communication & Media)

Communicative practices in a superdiverse south London hospital

My thesis investigates the range of linguistic and semiotic resources used in a multi-lingual health setting and how these may affect participant understanding and perceptions of experience. Although there is a plethora of research in health communication and perceived inequities, few have looked at health interactions in a superdiverse context. Much has focussed on the experience of patients who have English as an additional language, whereas a significant proportion of health professionals, working at the setting in question, were born outside the UK, and/or are also bi-/multilingual. Viewed through a linguistic ethnographic lens, my research suggests that just as the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the hospital workforce mirrors the complex textured landscape of the local population, the micro language practices of a medical consultation index the wider linguistic practices of staff and patients, as well as the broader context of the hospital and superdiverse population. This poster presents initial analysis of antenatal consultations, interviews and field notes that appear to reveal a ‘micro’ reflection of the wider heterogeneous population and of some of the communicative practices it has been suggested typify linguistic superdiversity, such as translanguaging and conviviality.

Maria Bussey (Education, Practice & Society)

The Feedback FRENED - a trainee-led feedback tool for surgical training

Workplace-based assessment (WBA) offers feedback through which surgical trainees learn but many are failing to receive adequate feedback from trainers who are only superficially engaging with WBA. This qualitative study focused on raising the quality of feedback by encouraging better communication between trainees and trainers. Action research methodology was employed to identify problems and propose practical solutions using a small group of trainee-trainer pairs and comprising interviews, a workshop and a workplace trial. Three themes emerged from interviews suggesting the need for a practical technique that could provide surgeons with cues to maximise the educational potential of WBA. Using the themes and building on existing theory, a new tool - the Feedback FRENED - was developed with the aim of enriching verbal feedback. Each of the tool's five domains relate to critical points in the WBA feedback cycle. The study identified five main benefits of the FRENED including encouraging a more balanced and tailored dialogue, self-regulation in the learner, a means of addressing the learner's specific concerns and improvement on practice. Development of the FRENED is at an early stage and further work is needed to evaluate its primary aim of helping trainees and trainers conduct a structured dialogue.

Aly Colman (Learning & Leadership)

School leadership and the school inspection regime: an examination of policy enactment in a coastal area of deprivation

This study examines the effect of intense scrutiny from the school inspection regime on school leadership and policy enactment. A coastal area of deprivation provides 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 were undertaken to understand the ways that school leaders enact policy when under this scrutiny. The analyses of data and discussion form an understanding of how policy is enacted in relation to the dual responsibility that school leaders negotiate between local context and school inspection regime. The findings demonstrate that the school inspection regime forces a privileging of a compliant and consistent enactment of policy, or hyper-enactment of policy, that reduces the capacity of school leaders in the primary school to address the significant social context of the school. In this respect, the automaton replaces autonomy. By contrast, there are examples of acts of resistance undertaken by school leaders in the secondary school – school leaders often demonstrating a cynical or sceptical view of the school inspection regime, and therefore willing to place the social context of the school first.

Alison Croasdale (Culture, Communication & Media)

Immersion, Engagement, Presence, and Flow: Ways into Developing Student Creative Writing at KS3 and KS4

This project represents the initial phase of a study exploring 'immersion', as both a theoretical concept and a pedagogical tool that can be employed in the teaching of English, generally, and of literacy, specifically. The study is conceived of as a response to a narrowly-focused English (Key Stage) KS4 curriculum emerging at a time of changing digital technologies, influencing how young people engage with information, communicate, and learn. It is the aim of this study to demonstrate that there is pedagogical value in the adoption of immersive strategies for the classroom as a way of broadening the scope of English beyond an examination focus, especially for reluctant or disadvantaged learners, particularly achieved through a mapping of technological, and broader social and cultural influences, onto the school experience. Secondly, this study aims to explore the ways in which visual-centric teaching methods can then directly influence the quality of, and engagement with, writing, as required by the GCSE examination process.

Lais de Oliveira Borges (Culture, Communication & Media)

Pronunciation beliefs and other predictors of phonological performance in a second language

The prevalent phonologically oriented studies of second language (L2) acquisition focus on external factors such as age of learning onset or length of residence in an L2 environment, while the effects of other individual variations remain under researched. Such variables give both teachers and learners little direction as to how learners can improve their L2 pronunciation competence. This study attempts to bridge this gap in the literature by examining the effects of beliefs about L2 pronunciation on phonological performance. The beliefs of 30 Brazilian English as a second language learners were correlated with the scores they received on a pronunciation test, according to native speaker judgments. The questionnaire about pronunciation beliefs was constructed specially for this study, based on findings from previous studies reported in the literature, and it integrated interrelated socio-psychological variables such as learner attitudes, language anxiety, motivation, willingness to communicate, self-confidence beliefs, and language learning strategies. The findings from this study highlight the importance of manipulating certain pronunciation beliefs in order to improve effective learning. Awareness of which beliefs about second language acquisition appear to be detrimental to pronunciation attainment serves as a first step towards the development of classroom practices and materials aimed at reshaping these views.

Giannis S. Efthymiou (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

The development of responsible citizenship in the case of an English primary school

The significance of including a global dimension in formal education has been highlighted by international agencies (e.g. UNESCO). Although learning about global issues has received prominent attention from policy makers in most European countries, a gap has been identified on how this dimension can be implemented within formal education and what the consequent impacts are on students' learning. This study aims to fill this gap, and plans to design and implement a global learning (GL) programme in an English Primary school, and record its impact on students' learning and the wider school community. It will also aim through an action research (AR) approach, which will be delivered through various stages (plan, act, observe, reflect), to address models of teaching and learning that demonstrate the relevance and importance of GL. As part of the methodology, the researcher will act as a facilitator who will initially carry out interventions to support teachers' understanding and ability to use GL. Next, the researcher acting as a research participant, alongside the teachers will be discussing GL within the context of the school, will plan and deliver GL-approaches (lessons, assemblies, projects) according to the stages of AR. During this process, evidence will be gathered through focus-group discussions and one-to-one interviews with teachers, as well as lesson observations.

Iman Elshawaf (Psychology & Human Development)

Cross-linguistic investigations of literacy difficulties in English-, Arabic- and Turkish-speaking children aged 9-11

The study aims to shed light on the relationship between different impairments in the skills involved in reading on one hand, and the properties of the orthography, on the other hand. The purpose is to determine whether characteristics of surface and phonological developmental dyslexia can be found for all languages learned by dyslexic children aged 9-11 years, whose L1 is Arabic, L2 is English and L3 is Turkish. For this aim, ten dyslexic children, aged 9-11, were recruited for testing in English, Arabic and Turkish in the associated non-literacy tasks. The design of this study is a multiple single case study and modified t-tests (Crawford & Howell, 1998) will be used for data analysis. Word reading times and nonword reading accuracy were the measures used to obtain reading profiles in terms of lexical and sublexical skills. The control group were 35 typically developing readers and were matched on chronological age with the dyslexic children, consistent with the methodology of Castles and Coltheart (1993). The performance of the ten dyslexic students was compared to the performance of the typically developing controls to look for differences and whether any deficits in non-literacy processes are associated with the profiles of reading.

Alexandra Georgiou (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

An ethnographic case study of the linguistic practices of refugee primary school children in Cyprus

The main research question of this study is: “How do refugee children use their communicative resources to support their learning of Standard Modern Greek?” I present the Cypriot educational context and its multicultural policies in regards to the migrant and refugee children. Then I consider the Vygotskian theoretical framework, which is a theory of learning. The main concepts that I am drawing upon are mediation and zone of proximal development. I will illustrate the qualitative methodology that has been followed and the main research tools (classroom observations and interviews). Finally, there will be an analysis of some of the main findings of the study with some suggestions for educational policies in Cyprus and beyond.

Anne Heavey (Education, Practice & Society)

What does the Primary History Curriculum in England Teach Children about Significant Women?

In 2014 a new National Curriculum was introduced in state-maintained English schools. Very little is known about the implementation of the subject of History in Primary schools. Even less is known about the significant women taught on the Primary History curriculum, or even the extent that they are taught at all. The National Curriculum document does suggest several women for study, however these are non-statutory recommendations. These women fall into three main categories: nurses, political activists and Queens - to be significant can a girl only aspire to be an agitator or a caregiver? On the surface the English school system appears to perform well for girls - they achieve higher examination and assessment scores as a group than boys and are less likely to be formally excluded. Feminist researchers have revealed a worrying picture underneath these statistics: the “hidden curriculum” and maintenance of gender stereotypes in schools lead many girls to lower their aspirations. Girls learn it is more important to be “nice” than ambitious, and “successful” girls are resented by their peers and teachers. Could the way we present significant women to children on the Primary History curriculum have a role to play in addressing negative gender stereotypes?

Mina Jeon (Psychology & Human Development)

Impact of sleep on short-term and long-term Memory in Korean children

Compared to children from other countries, Korean children exhibit insufficient sleep, possibly due to academic demands or stress and early school starting time. Previous studies have shown that sufficient sleep is important for working memory and consolidating memory. However, these findings are primarily from Western countries and Korean children's sleep was measured based on subjective measures only, such as questionnaires. Therefore, this study adopts an explorative approach and aims to examine Korean children's sleep patterns by using objective measures and study the impact of sleep on different types of memory functions. The participants were 31 Korean children, aged 6 to 13 years, who wore an actigraphy (a device to measure movement) for 6 days to accurately measure their sleep patterns. Forward and backward digit span tasks from British Ability Scales were used to measure children's short-term memory and working memory. The animal naming task developed by Ashworth (2013) was used to assess declarative memory. Compared to Western countries, Korean children showed later bedtime and similar get up time which results in short sleep duration. Poor sleep efficiency was also found. Short-term memory was not predicted by sleep patterns but working memory and declarative memory were predicted by sleep. Sleep was found to be an important factor for children's working memory and declarative memory, which is essential for their learning.

Nelly Joye (Psychology & Human Development)

Spelling with a language disorder: a qualitative analysis of spelling errors in French and English

Language difficulties impact on the development of literacy. However, the skills involved in literacy development across orthographies remain underspecified. By exploring the spelling errors of children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in French and English, the present paper proposes to assess the relative contribution of phonological, morphological, orthographic and semantic skills in literacy development in these two orthographies. Seventeen children with DLD were recruited from French and English primary schools with a language unit. They were given five minutes to write about their best or worst day at school. Scripts were transcribed and analysed for productivity and spelling accuracy. Spelling errors were also compared to those made by children matched on age or spelling level, using a multilinguistic framework of analysis, whereby errors were considered as either phonological, morphological, orthographic or semantic in nature. Cross-linguistic differences in the spelling errors made by children with and without DLD were evident, with particular difficulties noted with morphological inflections and segmentation in French, and unstressed and long vowel spelling in English. Qualitatively, the errors produced by children with DLD were similar to those produced by spelling-matched peers. Results are discussed in terms of underlying linguistic components affecting spelling development across languages.

Alison Joyner (Education, Practice & Society)

Giving voice to teachers: A case study from Kenya exploring teachers' role in the social and emotional learning of their students

The research is proposed for the Institution Focused Study (EdD in Education), using the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) as the institutional context. The study will explore teachers' understanding and experience of social and emotional learning (SEL) and development, and the support they provide to their students' SEL. It will seek to elucidate the interdependence between social and emotional competencies, and making a reality of a 'pluralistic' society – promoted by AKF as one that embraces and celebrates diversity. Research questions will address how teachers interpret, and live, social and emotional learning and 'pluralism' in their situation; how this influences their understanding of the positive development of students' social and emotional skills; and how they support the acquisition of those skills in the classroom and school environment. The sequencing of the questions reflects the need to start with teachers' perspectives on social emotional learning and pluralism, to understand their support to that of their students, and how this may be enhanced through teacher development. The case study, conducted in a primary school in Kwale County, Kenya, will use a transformative paradigm to underpin participatory action research by teachers themselves. A Kenyan AKF education officer, a former teacher, will act as research advisor.

Adam Peter Lang (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

'See it, Say it, Sorted'. The Prevent duty and its impact on English secondary schools: A view from School and College Leaders

In July 2015, a legal duty came into force requiring that 'specified authorities' in England, which included schools as well as colleges, show "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This is popularly referred to as the Prevent duty. As yet no systematic study on the way the Prevent duty is viewed and has impacted on school leadership in English secondary schools has been published. My work draws on the work of Foucault, Bourdieu and Stephen J. Ball's analysis of policy enactment and the 'paradox of enactment'. I am applying a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods including in-depth semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. My key words include Prevent duty, school leadership, policy enactment, extremism, populism and securitisation.

Nadav Lavi (Education, Practice & Society)

Teachers' autonomy in a Multi-Academy Trust in London and its influence on pedagogy

Academies' dissemination and particularly the evolution of Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) are an example of the shift in educational policy in England from government to governance, which means that policy is a product of a joint effort by the public, private and voluntary sectors and no longer solely dictated by the government. One of the aims of the academies programme is expanding schools' and specifically teachers' autonomy, as current policy and previous research state that teachers' autonomy is a means of improving educational outcomes. However, current policy declares that autonomy will be expanded while increasing accountability. Previous research demonstrated that accountability seems to be fundamental in shaping teachers' practice at the expense of their autonomy. This research aims to improve the understanding of what promotes and restricts teachers' autonomy in academies and what influence autonomy has on their pedagogy. In-depth Interviews with teachers and middle and senior leadership will be conducted and documentary data will be collected from three schools in a MAT in London to understand teachers' and school leaders' perceptions and narratives of their autonomy and their teaching practices. Data analysis will draw on Foucault's notions of power/knowledge governmentality and subjectivity.

Maria Mengisidou (Psychology & Human Development)

Using verbal fluency tasks to investigate the lexicon in Greek-speaking children with literacy and language disorders

In verbal fluency tasks, children produce as many lexical items belonging to a given semantic category (e.g. "animals") or as many words beginning with a given phonological category (e.g. the letter "F") usually within one minute. In the semantic condition, the retrieved words are clustered in semantic subcategories, such as "pets", "fish", and in the phonological condition, the retrieved words are clustered in phonological subcategories, such as "flag-flower-flash". The tasks tap lexical organisation and lexical retrieval. Data derived from a group of children with literacy and language disorders aged 8–12 years and a group of children with typical development aged 6–12 years. Children with the two conditions often show word-finding difficulties. The objective of the study was to investigate whether word-finding difficulties in the tasks could be attributed to a general slowing of retrieval processes while children's organization of the lexical items is intact. The specificity of word-finding difficulties was tested using a non-verbal fluency task ("Make as many different designs by connecting dots in 1 minute") not hinging on lexical and phonological processing skills. Results are discussed on the basis of the proposed causal models accounting for children's word-finding difficulties.

Xin Miao (Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment)

What's the story? Reflective case studies on school geography in China

The research developed two video case studies in London schools to generate professional conversations on the 'curriculum making' process as part of GeoCapabilities Project. The case studies aimed to generate reflection and discussion on individual teacher's enactment in the curriculum to clarify the idea of curriculum leadership. According to the project, localised curriculum leadership is the process by which the disciplinary knowledge is transformed by the specialist teacher to make geography curriculum 'powerful'. The London cases provide a platform to schoolteachers in reconsidering their role in teaching and their relationship with specialist knowledge. The main focus of this paper is to examine the possible implications among geography teachers in China. Does 'curriculum making' require every schoolteacher to see the layer of curriculum thinking beyond every-class lesson plan? How does curriculum making fit in with the current leadership in examination-guided curriculum in upper secondary school? The Chinese cases explore such questions by in-depth semi-structured interview and class observation. Beyond the cultural differences, the GeoCapabilities project enables insights into school geography due to its emphasis on teacher's agency. The project has brought new perspectives in current China towards the shared understanding of educational value of geography in schooling system.

Erin Moran (Psychology & Human Development)

The experiences of mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Kazakhstan: A pilot study

Parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) commonly experience more stress than parents of children with other disabilities. Families often experience stigma and are excluded from educational services, healthcare and community events. This is particularly true for parents living in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan, where ASD awareness is low and attitudes towards inclusion are largely negative. Three semi-structured pilot interviews were conducted in Kazakhstan to explore the parents' experiences. Four topics of interest emerged; diagnosis and school placement process, satisfaction with current educational provision, overall access and quality of education, and value of a quality education. The findings from the interviews will be presented and discussed. The results from the pilot interviews will be used to revise the interview schedule. This new interview schedule will be used to conduct a further 10 semi-structured interviews exploring the aforementioned topics.

Su Morris (Psychology & Human Development)

How does global and local processing develop in children aged 5-10?

Visual environments and stimuli can be organised into multiple levels. Global processing refers to a focus on the 'gist', local processing refers to a focus on details, while field independence is observed when an embedded local target is separated from its global context. Visual perception can also be modulated by task goals and attentional processes. This study assessed the performance of 135 children in Years 1, 3 and 5 on three global/local processing tasks and two field independence tasks. There were distinct patterns of global/local responses across Years depending on the different task demands. Overall, a global preference was exhibited earliest when attention was freely directed with no time limit. When attention was directed towards a specific level, both males and Year 1 children showed increased interference from non-matching local levels on global responses. When attention was divided between global and local levels, children responded more quickly and accurately to the local level than the global level. Performance on the field independence tasks improved with age and had limited associations with performance on the global/local tasks. These results highlight the impact of task-related attentional demands on global/local processing performance, and emphasise that global/local processing and field independence are distinct constructs.

Jeannie Newhouse (Learning & Leadership)

What do six-year old children think reading is? Exploring perceptions of reading among pupils learning to read using systematic synthetic phonics

Within the current debate in England over how best to teach young children to read, one voice is conspicuously absent – the child's. This is despite an intensive synthetic phonics fast and first approach to reading instruction that deviates substantially from the more balanced multi-strategy view that was advised prior to 2006. While researchers debate the efficacy of current policy in terms of conceptual validity, attainment and cost, evidence considering the child's view is largely restricted to anecdotes. Yet researchers (Clark, 2017; Levy, 2011) have demonstrated that even very young children can make insightful contributions to issues concerning their learning and learning environment. The key is to create data collection tools that provide familiar contexts and child-friendly media through which they can express themselves. Using a collective case study of 12 children from Year 1 classes across two English primary schools, this qualitative research accesses children's perceptions of what reading is and how they learn to read, through a range of participatory methods, including an innovative co-constructed storybook, while exploring the school and home context that underpins those perceptions.

Laraib Niaz (Curriculum Pedagogy & Assessment)

Exploring the Nexus between Religion and Education: The Case of Pakistan

Against the backdrop of Pakistan, where Islam plays a defining role in all spheres of the society, this study aims to understand the relationship between religion and education in the everyday life of students and how it influences their national identity and their perspective regarding the “religious others” and the “gendered other”. Much ‘academic ink’ has been spilt on the need for curriculum reform in the country and the involvement of Islam in textbooks (Rosser, 2003, Nayyar and Salim, 2003; Rahman, 2012; Naseem, 2016), with a surprising lack of research on the involvement of Islam in the everyday school life of students. Looking back at George Herbert Mead’s (1934) idea of symbolic interactionism to determine social interactions, one can see how finding the role of religion in education in Pakistan requires looking for the underlying religious meanings in conversations and teachings in the classrooms. This study therefore relies on the field of educational anthropology, using classroom observations, focus groups and semi-structured interviews to assess the association between religion and education in the country.

Sulumenty Odhiambo (Education, Practice & Society)

The role of the Pupil Premium grant in promoting educational achievements of disadvantaged Black girls of African and Caribbean descents in secondary schools in south London. A critical analysis using Capability Approach

This study focuses on the UK government initiative of the Pupil Premium (PP) grant. This is an additional fund given to schools, since 2011, to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The study considers: first, the impact of the Pupil Premium grant on the educational achievement of black girls of African and Caribbean descents in five secondary schools in south London; second, the black girls’ experiences and perceptions of the educational interventions provided as a result of the Pupil Premium funding. This research will utilise qualitative research methodology to collect data through interviews with PP Black girl pupils and teachers responsible for implementations of the PP funding. The interviews will be supplemented with document analysis of the schools’ Pupil Premium Reports and Equalities, Diversity and Cohesion Policy. The emerging themes from findings will be analysed using the Capability Approach framework.

Denise Quiroz (Curriculum Pedagogy & Assessment)

Creating pedagogies for sustainability in Chile through chemistry education: Teachers' perspectives and experiences

Chile is in the top ten countries with environmental issues in the world and has 37 documented environmental conflicts, which are related to mining industries. Industrial pollution has affected the natural environment and diminished the quality of life of the economically disadvantaged people who live nearby. Such examples of unsustainable industrial activities can be a good context for teaching sustainability through chemistry in Chile because it provides a contextualized example of chemistry in everyday life, while also allowing for critical discussion about how to achieve sustainable management of natural resources. This research aims to look at how sustainability issues like these can be taught through chemistry in schools. Building on the three pillars model of Education for Sustainability (EfS) of interconnections between environment, society and economy, this research has two main stages. First, interviewing ten Chilean chemistry teachers about their perspectives and pedagogy on sustainability. Second, a case study, which explores how a Chilean chemistry teacher integrates sustainability in her teaching by using the context of the copper mining industry in Chile. Data collected attempts to highlight teachers' voices and experiences about how linking chemistry education to EfS in the context of a country with a neo-liberal model for development such as Chile.

Lorena Sanchez (Education, Practice & Society)

Bilingual Literacy for Life: An Ethnographic Study of Out-of-School Women in an Indigenous Language Literacy Programme in Mexico

This study aims to explore and analyse Indigenous language literacy practices for adults in rural communities in Mexico, targeting a government-led literacy programme and the demographic that makes up the majority of its participants: out-of-school women. This research is aligned with the current global agenda that outlines certain transformative goals and targets regarding education, including eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equitable access to quality education, particularly for Indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations. By means of a critical and methodologically rigorous ethnographic design, two case studies will be carried out that will aim to bridge an epistemological gap between government-led literacy programmes and policies and their respective local practices, thereby informing and enhancing the discourse and literature regarding literacy practices in the social and cultural contexts of Indigenous women. The data that will be collected will consist of study circle observation and semi-structured interviews with programme participants to determine the impact of this literacy programme. Additionally, the findings of this study will have implications for policymakers and practitioners in different country contexts, and will aim to contribute to both the wider landscape of international educational development studies in the Global South and to adult literacy studies more generally.

Ruethairat Trakulchang (Culture, Communication & Media)

Exploring the Linguistic Practice of 16-18 Year-Old Thai Adolescents in Online Platforms

The development of hashtags on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, has allowed Thai adolescents to communicate and enact social relations with networked publics. Hashtags have extended its semiotic reach as an information-organizing tool to a social resource for building relationships and communities. Thus, hashtags plays an important role in developing Thai adolescents' repertoires of text making in response to shifting social demands and technological affordances. One of the aims of this study is to investigate how they use hashtags as a social resource to communicate with the intended audience on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This study focuses on analysing hashtags at both the lexicogrammatical and pragmatic levels. The frameworks used to analyse hashtags at the lexicogrammatical level are grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), focusing on three metafunctions (experiential, interpersonal, and textual). This is to understand how hashtags can enact different types of functions. In addition, the analysis of hashtags at the pragmatic level explores the searchable functions of hashtags, focusing on how hashtags link posts to a feed of discussions about particular topics. Insight into adolescents' uses of hashtags is gained through observations of their texts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Yee Ni Tse (Education, Practice & Society)

The role and effect of graded music examinations in Hong Kong instrumental teaching and learning: Positive or Negative?

Graded music examinations are believed to have positive impacts on student's instrumental learning, such as goal setting, providing motivations, sense of achievement and formal measuring of musical achievement (ABRSM, 2014; Davidson & Scutt, 1999; Salama, 1994). Taking these examinations is a commonplace activity in Hong Kong and is reported to be significantly important and necessary by stakeholders (Tse, 2016). Yet, it is observed that certification has become so important that it may have become the ultimate goal of instrumental learning. Instrumental teachers also reported that they faced parental pressure on entering their students for graded examinations. These suggest a possible change in perceptions and values of instrumental teaching and learning. No research, however, has been done recently to examine this issue. The current empirical research aims to investigate whether and how music certification and graded examinations have shaped the perception and value of instrumental teaching and learning by stakeholders in Hong Kong. Survey methodology involving questionnaires and individual interviews will be employed. Likert-scale questions will be used in the questionnaires. Emerging findings will be followed by pupil-parent-teacher triadic interviews.

Bridie Woods (Education, Practice & Society)

Negotiating structures when taking time out of a study programme: Student interruptions of study using Archer's critical realist approach to structure and agency

This final thesis stage of my EdD, a professional doctorate, is linked to my professional practice as a Student Welfare Advisor. The research focus is students who need to take time out of a study programme, known as an interruption of study, because of a personal crisis. This can be a challenging experience because students often need to navigate their way through a complex network of structures when arranging an interruption of study. I am using Margaret Archer's approach to structure and agency because it addresses the concerns of the students that I have supported through an interruption. Archer applies a critical realist lens to her theory, which maintains a stratified ontology, thus drawing a distinction between structures and agency. She considers the role of the agents' reflexivity - their 'private mental domain' - and their personal concerns, when they interact with the structures they encounter through life's journey. I have conducted 16 interviews with seven students, four academics and five administrators to investigate how students and staff navigate their ways through the structures that are related to the interruption process. The experiences of two students who interrupted their study programmes are briefly represented.