



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Agency Conference 2012

**Researching Agency in Educational
Contexts: Theories and Methods**

Faculty of Education

University of Cambridge

Conference Programme, Abstracts, and Profiles

Profiles

Student Organisers

**Daniela S. Jadue Roa, University of Cambridge,
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I am a qualified early years' practitioner from Chile. My PhD research is centred in young children's voices, their early life transition experiences and its interrelation with their development of a sense of learning agency. I am interested in young children's active participation in their life and schooling experiences, as well as in potential reforms to the educational system taking into account their perspective. I would like to contribute with the design of educational policies that will ensure the inclusion of young children's voices on future policy changes and hence improving the quality and equity of early childhood education provision.

Dee Rutgers, University of Cambridge, dir25@cam.ac.uk

Originally from the Netherlands, but having lived in the UK for the last 9 years, I have a background in English Literature (MA University of Groningen/MA University of Liverpool). I am currently doing a PhD at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, exploring the impact of Dutch-English bilingual education on the learning of German as Third Language.

Taking a sociocultural perspective, it aims to explore the sociogenetic processes of both multilingualism and metalinguistic development within two different educational context (bilingual/regular), reflecting both my interest in multilingualism and language learning, as well as the relationship between sociocultural processes, language (learning) and identity.

**Mohini Vera, University of Cambridge,
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I'm a 2nd year PhD student at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. I'm interested in the development of self-regulated behaviour in young children and the role of language, particularly language for the self in the mediation of such voluntary goal-directed behaviour. Coming from India, with an undergraduate training in engineering, I find my interests situated between and across several disciplines such as psychology, education and philosophy.

**Robert Yates, University of Cambridge,
roboyates@gmail.com**

I'm currently completing a MPhil in Arts, Culture and Education in the Faculty of Education at Cambridge. Before beginning the program, I completed a fellowship with an arts organisation in the USA, where I launched a video documentary program and developed and coordinated educational arts program within the community. My research interests are Shakespeare in education, theatre performance, John Dewey, and philosophy of education.

Collaborators

Dr. David Whitebread, University of Cambridge,
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David Whitebread is a developmental cognitive psychologist and early years specialist. Before joining the Faculty he taught in Primary schools, mainly in Leicestershire, for 12 years. His research interests are concerned with children's cognitive development and implications for early years and primary education. A particular focus has been the development of metacognitive awareness and strategic control in relation to a number of areas of learning. These have included children's problem solving and reasoning, mathematical strategies and road safety skills. Other interests include children learning through play, early years ICT, the education of the gifted and talented, children's drawings, and the application of cognitive neuroscience to education. His current particular focus is concerned with the early development of metacognition and self-regulation in very young children.

Diego Di Masi, University of Padova,
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I am involved, as post doc researcher at the University of Padova, in a national project to prevent child placement out of home, developing an intensive care programme for neglecting families. My research interest is on participation as a learning

process and I enjoy my academic time creating opportunities and developing tools to promote participation with child and young people. I'm interested in citizenship curriculum and in convert educational contexts in community of philosophical inquiry applying the philosophy for children programme to foster agency.

Jaakko Hilppö, University of Helsinki,
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My main research interests currently focus on addressing children's agency, wellbeing and participatory research methods from a broad socio-culturally informed theoretical standpoint. In addition, I'm interested in children's everyday life and their learning trajectories as they participate in and move across various activity systems (i.e., family, school, various peer groups, hobbies etc.). Furthermore, I'm keen on developing pedagogical approaches that foster children agency and participation in educational settings. Outside academia, I divide my time between my family, jogging and making music.

Invited Speakers

**Kristiina Kumpulainen, University of Helsinki,
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Kristiina Kumpulainen, PhD, is Professor of education at the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Helsinki. Kristiina holds an adjunct professorship at the University of Turku in Finland. She has also been a visiting professor at the University of Warwick, UK, and at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Kristiina's research interests focus on socioculturally informed educational research, formal and informal learning, learning environments and new technologies, innovative schools and their pedagogies, teacher professional development, video research methodologies, as well as on interdisciplinary research for the promotion of learning in the 21st century. Currently, she is in charge of two on-going research projects funded by the Academy of Finland, AGENTS – Towards children's efficacious agency in formal and informal contexts and VISCI – Virtual interactive space for collaborative innovation. Kristiina serves on several editorial boards and acts as a reviewer for a number of scientific journals and international research programmes. She is the Editor-in-Chief of Lifelong Learning in Europe Journal (LLinE) and co-editor of JETEN, Journal of European Teacher Education Network. Kristiina has published her research work widely in national and international journals and books. She is also a regular keynote speaker and facilitator at national and international venues.

John Potter, Institute of Education, j.potter@ioe.ac.uk

My research and teaching is in new media and learning, in formal and informal settings as framed by media and cultural studies, theories of identity, new literacies and multimodality. My background is in teacher education, ICT advisory work and, for a number of years, primary school teaching in East London.

**Susan Potter & Rowena Whitehead, Vital Communities,
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Susan Potter has a background in creative and cultural learning, with over 25 years experience of working as an artist educator, researcher and curator with museums, galleries and arts organisations across the UK. She has acted as professional mentor to the Enquire Artist Bursary Programme and contributed a chapter to 'The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the 21st Century'. Arts evaluation commissions include: Look Group Network delivered by Tate St Ives to rural communities across Cornwall; Outside In hosted by Pallant House Gallery and delivered to marginalised artists across the UK; Catalyst delivered by the Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts to KS2 teachers across the UK, and Fen Soundscapes delivered by Britten Sinfonia to KS1 children and KS3 young people in rural Fenland. Her current research is focused on the psychology of participating in the arts, and its specific impacts upon individual mental health and well-being. She has most recently evaluated InMind, delivered by the Royal Academy to adults with early onset Alzheimer's and/or dementia, while she is presently Research Manager

with Arts on Prescription, a national Public Engagement Foundation CASE Study, delivered by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's Foundation for the Arts & Mental Health.

Rowena Whitehead is a singer, songwriter and Natural Voice practitioner with a background in teaching, training and community development. For more than 20 years she has been sharing her passion for singing with people of all ages and abilities, throughout the UK and beyond. She is renowned for her engaging and relaxed approach, enabling children and adults to connect with their singing voices. Rowena views singing as a vital tool in community building. Much of her work in schools and communities focuses upon counteracting social isolation, enabling individuals and communities to come together and share their voices in creative processes. In 2004, she established the charity Talking in Tune Community Music (www.talkingintune.co.uk) promoting singing for social change. She leads ReSound, a cappella choir in Cambridge; she also delivers Singing for Health courses and leads Singing for the Brain groups. She is a visiting voice lecturer at both Anglia Ruskin University and Westcott House, University of Cambridge. She has trained Music Therapy students in therapeutic voice work and is engaged in voice projects across the UK, researching and evaluating the health benefits of singing.

**Riikka Hofmann. University of Cambridge,
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Riikka Hofmann is a Research Associate working on the ESCR-funded epiSTEMe project, which investigates and aims to redesign aspects of maths and science teaching and learning in

lower secondary school. Her other research, including her PhD research, has focused on examining pupils' agency and engagement, and their sense of 'ownership', in narrative and collaborative classroom learning in primary settings from a socioculturally grounded perspective. Prior to her studies and work at the Faculty, she studied Education Studies, Sociology, Psychology and Social science research methods at the Universities of Helsinki and Munich (LMU) and worked as a research assistant and project researcher at both universities, in projects investigating inquiry and problem-based learning and learning with ICT.

Keynote Papers

(Invited speakers)

Kristiina Kumpulainen *“The dialogic construction of agency in classroom communities”*

In my talk, I shall discuss the dialogic construction of agency in classroom communities. I shall base my talk on an empirical study in which we investigated the agency work of students' in two classroom communities. The pedagogical cultures of these classroom communities are embedded in dialogic learning (Kumpulainen, & Lipponen, 2010, 2012). Via our analysis based on the conceptual notion of chorotypes (Brown, & Renshaw, 2006), we have been interested to illuminate the ways in which students' agency work is made possible by the creation of dialogic spaces for learners to navigate across their experiences and knowledge(s) situated across time and space. In viewing the processes of learning as relational and transformative, chorotypes can be defined as creative spaces in which students' agency and identities are negotiated. Our research work reveals three distinct dimensions of agency that emerged in the discourses of the classroom communities: (a) epistemic agency; (b) relational agency; and (c) transformative agency (Kumpulainen, & Lipponen, 2012). These dimensions of agency give evidence of learners sharing and validating their previous experiences as sources of knowledge and resources in meaning-making, establishing reciprocity with each other in

meaning-making, defining themselves as individuals with specific experiences and background, and constructing, maintaining and contesting the cultural practices of what it means to make meaning, participate and learn in situated classroom communities. In my talk, I shall elaborate on these dimensions of agency and illuminate the ways in which these forms of agency manifest themselves in the discourses of the classroom communities. I shall also suggest that the chronotopic analysis provides a potential tool to capture the dialogic processes of students' agency work as mediated by the interactions of their past experiences, on-going involvement, future aspirations and goals that are intended to be accomplished (Brown, & Renshaw, 2006; Kumpulainen, & Lipponen, 2010; Lipponen, & Kumpulainen, 2011).

John Potter *“Children's agency in research: reflections on recent projects with young learners”*

Children and young people are frequently used as sources of data in social research, including educational case studies and related qualitative work. This talk will focus on the concept of "Agency" among the subjects (and objects) of these studies as it relates to research in formal and informal educational settings, specifically how to access what is sometimes referred to as the "Learner voice" as the authentic and agentive response or behaviour of the learner. In a recent doctoral project, as well as in funded research in classrooms around children's productive engagement with media and technology cultures, data of various kinds was collected by means of video, drawn artefacts, recorded interviews and focus groups with the central

aim of enhancing "Agency" in the work on the part of the children themselves. In analysing the data, perspectives from identity and socio-cultural theory were employed alongside frames of reference provided by leading authorities in learner voice. The talk will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches and suggest methods which may provide further insight into the lives of learners in social and educational research. The talk does not seek to provide answers but to problematize this kind of work and to stimulate further debate about what it means to do research of this kind which attempts to uncover aspects of "Agency" in the lives of children and young people.

Susan Potter & Rowena Whitehead *“Striking a chord: encouraging children to take the baton!”*

How might we assess the long-term impacts that increased arts activity (including music and voice) has upon personal, social and intellectual development within a community context? Crucially, how do we ensure that children and young people’s voices are both heard and listened to in ‘participatory’ research studies? Vital Communities set out to answer these questions. The project was devised to assess the long-term impact (15 years) of an intensified creative intervention upon children, their families and communities in ten diverse locations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. There is often an assumption that the analysis of young people’s learning is, in part, achieved by examining the attitudes among their teachers or their parents. This view of the capacity of young people to contribute meaningfully to discussions of issues that impinge

directly on their lives has been challenged by studies that have sought to interrogate their experiences and perspectives. The issue is less one of the capacity to deal with complex issues and more one of developing an evaluation methodology that is sensitive to and values children and young people’s voices. Vital Communities therefore devised a unique study to assess the long-term impacts (2005-2010) of an intensified creative programme delivered to a cohort of 300 (Y1) children, their families and communities. Vital Communities has come to the end of five full years of research and is at one of the most interesting stages. October 2010 saw the launch of the full research report and two unique research films. Benefits for the cohort children cited in the research included: development of creative skills, experience and knowledge; increased confidence and self-esteem; development of communication and literacy skills; enjoyment and well-being. Benefits for the communities include: developing and strengthening relationships; encouraging tolerance and understanding; promoting community cohesion. Continued observation and research over the next years will determine the continuing longitudinal impacts of this intervention upon the ten participating communities and crucially, the participant children and young people.

Riikka Hofmann *“The notion of ‘agency’ in educational research: sleeping beauty or emperor’s new clothes?”*

Agency has long been a central concept in sociological theorising about the relationship between humans and the worlds they inhabit but recently it has become a popular notion

in research on learning and education. This presentation will take a step back from analysing children's opportunities for agency and ask what is meant by 'agency' in these discussions? How can the conceptualisation of children's engagement, participation and opportunities in educational settings through the notion of agency contribute to our understanding, and improvement, of these phenomena? How does agency relate to other notions in these discussions such as voice, engagement, ownership? This presentation will briefly explore the different approaches to theorising agency. Some of their affordances and limitations for research in educational settings will be discussed. Using a broad sociocultural framework, the presentation will then consider whether and in what ways this notion can be useful in research in education. It will be argued in this presentation that agency is a potentially useful notion in focusing our attention from a narrow economic discourse of pupil engagement toward opportunities for participation and their individual and collective significance. What is proposed is an approach to understanding agency that grounds children's agency in concrete practices in which they participate while taking into account the challenges posed by sociocultural and discursive perspectives on learning, development and action. Some of the different areas of researching children's agency in educational settings will be explored and examples offered.

Parallel Paper Session 1 & 2

Erin Juverna Thrift, Simon Fraser University,
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Profile: I am a PhD student in the Educational Psychology program at Simon Fraser University (SFU), working under the supervision of Dr. Jeff Sugarman. My prior degrees are in Psychology (B.A., University of British Columbia) and counselling psychology (M.A., SFU). Prior to beginning doctoral studies I worked as a counsellor with clients with multiple barriers to employment and as a sessional instructor at various post-secondary institutions. My scholarly interests are wide-ranging and include agency, historical and philosophical critique of psychology and education, counsellor education, career development theory, ontological and philosophical hermeneutics, narrative theory and feminist theory.

“Historical ontology of agency”

Abstract: The proposed research is a historical ontology of agency, a topic that has emerged in psychological literature in the past few decades. The approach is conceptual, based on a Foucaultian framework, and is intended to investigate the historical conditions of possibility that have allowed for the emergence of agency as a topic of interest in psychology and education. This investigation is “genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method,” (Foucault, 1984, p. 7) in that the forebears of agency (e.g., free will, the “will”) and

sociocultural and historical conditions that have allowed for the emergence of this topic are examined by peeling away layers of history. Of particular interest are conditions of the last century which allowed for transmogrification of the “will” - a topic accorded considerable attention early in the history of educational psychology which all but disappeared from the literature by mid-century - to psychological agency which appeared in the 1980s and ‘90s. Moral and socio-political consequences of current understandings of agency in psychology and education will be examined using the four foci proposed by Foucault (1984) for this type of investigation: i) historical generalities in practice and discourse, ii) realms of practice, with attention to both organizing forms of rationality and strategic outworkings, iii) ontological consideration along axes of knowledge, power and ethics, and, iv) the paradoxical relationship between growth of capacity and power in the Western world.

Farah Ahmed, University of Cambridge, fa287@cam.ac.uk

***Profile:** Having completed a MEd in Education Research, Farah is studying for a PhD at the University of Cambridge. Her research interests are classical Islamic pedagogy and its implementation in contemporary contexts. Her PhD is looking at the use of Halaqah in developing agency in Muslim children in Britain. Farah is a founder of Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation which is developing a holistic Islamic education programme for Muslim children in Britain. She has developed the ‘Islamic Teacher Education Course’ and is involved in*

setting up the ‘Centre for Research and Evaluation in Muslim Education’ at the Institute of Education, University of London.

“An exploration of Halaqah (Circle Time), an Islamic oral pedagogy that aims to develop autonomy through reflexivity and dialogue within a culturally-coherent Islamic and British context”

Abstract: Islamic schools in secular multicultural Britain face criticisms of contradicting the cherished liberal ideal of education as the development of self-determining individuals. Although some work has been done on gaining a more nuanced theoretical understanding of the concept of autonomy in Islamic education (Merry, 2007), very little research attends to pedagogical practices in Islamic schools. Muslim educators in Britain are still struggling to develop educational theory and practice which can be of use in dealing with the multiple challenges faced by Islamic schools (Lawson, 2005). This paper attends to these wider issues through exploring the theory and practice of *halaqah* in an Islamic primary school in Britain, hoping to explore complex intercultural issues through an educational lens. In doing this it builds on existing research on pedagogy as a culturally informed activity (Alexander, 2008). *Halaqah* is a traditional Islamic oral/dialogical pedagogy for developing ‘*aqliyah* (reasoning), *tafakkur* (reflection) and *shakhshiyah* (good character). Deeply rooted in Islamic culture, throughout the centuries *halaqah* has been used widely and flexibly by communities across the Muslim world, both at the core and periphery of educational practice (Zaimache, 2002). Exploring *halaqah* as a dialogic pedagogy may shed light on Islamic concepts of individual autonomy and

human agency; leading to a deeper understanding of the potential of *halaqah* to provide a culturally-coherent pedagogy enabling Muslim learners to address issues of identity, belonging and integration in a secular-liberal multicultural British context. As the research is in its initial stages, this paper will theoretically explore Islamic conceptions of human agency and of the relationship of language to thought in Islamic epistemology (Attas, 1980). These two ideas are drawn together to explore the use of dialogue in educating for agency within an Islamic context. Some preliminary data regarding children's agency as *halaqah* participants will also be presented.

Ryan Bradley, University of Birmingham,
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Profile: As a manager for the Communication and Interaction Service in Oxfordshire I develop and promote good autism education practice to improve outcomes for pupils at both local and national levels. My research interests are related to this work and I am funded by the University of Birmingham to study the impact of peer mentoring on pupils with autism. I am also collaborating with the Autism Centre for Educational Research to develop training materials in autism education for all schools in England in a project funded by the DfE.

“Improving outcomes - the effect of peer mentoring on selected outcome measures for students with autism in mainstream secondary schools”

Abstract: There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils with autism attending mainstream educational provision over the past decade. Previous research has indicated that group of young people are at higher risk for negative outcomes during adolescence and early adulthood than their peers. Improving outcomes for these pupils is a complex and challenging issue given their particular differences in the areas of social communication and social interaction and the deficit of evidence based practice. This paper will evaluate the effectiveness of peer mentoring on improving outcomes for Year 7 pupils with autism in mainstream secondary schools. Twelve Year 7 students with autism and 36 Year 7 students without autism participated in the programme across six schools in the South East. Results indicated that students with autism in the peer mentoring programme showed improved levels of self-esteem, friendship, and mood, and reduced levels of bullying. The role of human agency in educational practice and research will be discussed in relation to the current study and implications for embedding interventions in schools will be addressed. Scope for the further development of schools and pupils as collaborative change agents are identified. The study will form part of a five year longitudinal research project to evaluate the potential implications for peer mentoring as an evidence based intervention for pupils with autism in mainstream secondary schools nationally.

Pinar-Burcu Güner, University of Bielefeld,
burcu.guner@uni.bielefeld.de

Profile: I have master`s degree in arts (M.A) in Education and Globalization from University of Oulu, Finland. Currently, I am a Marie Curie Fellow as part of a European wide project Marie Curie Initial Training "Education as Welfare for Socially Vulnerable Youth in Europe" (Edu-Wel) in Bielefeld University, Faculty of Educational Science at Bielefeld Centre for Education and Capabilities Research, Germany. My doctoral dissertation`s working title is "Capabilities for a Good Life for Girls` From Turkish Migration Background in Germany". I am Turkish by Nationality.

“Operationalization of Agency with the Lenses of Capability Approach for Girls from Muslim Turkish Migration Background in Germany”

Abstract: This paper is intending to discuss operationalization of agency from the perspectives of capability approach (Sen, 1985) . More specifically, paper will discuss how schools are enhancing or limiting agency of young girls from Muslim Turkish migration background in Germany and what are their actions to overcome these limitations (agency) for a good life and good school education. Main theoretical frame of this research is capability approach (Sen 2009 & Nussbaum 2011) combined with gender and education theories (Diane Reay, 2011, Christine Skelton 2011). Focus groups conducted from 14-20 years old girls, each focus group had five young girls. In-depth focus group interviews (approximately 2 hours) were conducted. Participatory method used to close language gap (Biggeri, 2011) which means young girls may not be able to

express their opinions and feelings in both languages properly (Turkish and German languages). Also, Sen (1985) emphasis that “people should be able to visualize their functionings. Video method is used since it is more accurate and detailed in technical sense more reliable (Knoblauch et al., 2006). After the focus group interviews, socio-economic questionnaire was given to each girl to answer individually to control socio economic conversion factors. Later, girls who participated to focus groups were interviewed individually. For the analysis data from focus groups and individual interviews are triangulated. In the analysis, paper discusses how these girls use their agency for good life and good school education opportunities and how obstacles they perceive and their mixed identity are enhancing or limiting their agency.

Solveig Iren Roth, University of Oslo,
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Profile: Solveig Roth is a PhD student at the Department of Educational research, University of Oslo, Norway. Her PhD project is part of a large scale project called ‘Learning Lives’ of the Grorud Valley’, funded by the Norwegian Research Council. By discussing the term ‘funds of knowledge’, her PhD project aims to explore how young Norwegian girls learn, negotiate and reflect upon knowledge within and across a variety of social contexts in their everyday lives with impact of their learning identity. She has worked as a teacher, and with teacher education at Vestfold University College.

“Dialogical development of a learning identity: three Norwegian - Tamil girls' negotiating ethnicity and gender as 'funds of knowledge'”

Abstract: This article explores how three girls with ethnic Tamil background learn, negotiate, and reflect upon knowledge within and across a variety of social contexts in their everyday lives. The dialogic development of a learning identity is analysed with respect to their ethnicity and gender as ‘funds of knowledge’. The concept of dialogical self is used to underline the dynamic linkages between traditions and individuality in the learning and identity process in the girls’ learning lives. The study is based on an on-going ethnographic study as part of the ‘Learning Lives’ project (2010-2013) in the Grorud Valley, a community in eastern Oslo, Norway. This is an immigrant area (35 - 90 % in some neighbourhoods), but not a ghetto. During the 1970s the Tamil middle class immigrated to Norway followed by poorer segments of the community. The majority settled in Oslo. The media portray the Tamils as hard-working and well integrated. They value education highly, also for girls. However, the global ‘Tamil exile idea’ that women are in a subordinated position at home, survives. The majority speaks Tamil at home and is raised in Hinduism. This can, in a socio-cultural perspective, be approached by looking at the coherence between learning, identity, and agency in a biographical narrative case study. The cases were selected from a group of 14 informants (15 years old). They are followed over two years from lower secondary to upper secondary school. The data is collected by using participant observation, open-ended interviewing, and using the informants as co-researchers. The cases are analysed (inductively) with respect

to rich points, resources, tensions and contradictions in the girls’ learning lives which are significant when developing a learning identity and when they position themselves towards the future. In order to let the girls’ express their own ‘voice’, in a Bakhtinian sense, more understanding of how ‘the self’ experience the dialogical learning and identity process and how it impacts on the learning identity may be needed.

Olga Campbell-Thomson, Qatar University,
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Profile: *I teach academic writing at Qatar University (The State of Qatar). I am completing my PhD thesis in education at the University of Manchester, UK. The research site of my doctoral thesis is located in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). My main research interest is in the identity construction in the context of schooling within a centralized national education system. I am particularly interested in using Foucault’s concepts of ‘technologies of domination’ and ‘technologies of the self’ to describe, understand and explain the process of identity formation in specific historical and cultural contexts.*

“Technologies of the self: application of Foucault’s analytic tools to the investigation of the process of national identity construction in the context of schooling”

Abstract: This paper is based on my doctoral thesis which explores national identity construction by school children in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The

investigation of the process of identity construction by the school children in the context of schooling inevitably implies human agency. Engagement of that agency with the structural environment of schooling is viewed through the prism of Foucault's approach to the investigation of the social process of the constitution of the subjects' identity as an interplay of various 'technologies'. The term 'agency' does not appear in Foucault's historical investigations of how humans develop knowledge of themselves. Foucault articulates his programme of investigation in terms of various 'technologies' and states that his own work is primarily concerned with the two particular types of technologies: 'technologies of domination' and 'technologies of the self'. I conceptualize these two types of technologies, proposed by Foucault, as structure and agency. Foucault insists throughout his writing that there is a constant interplay of these two types of technologies and emphasizes the necessity to view an individual or agent in the context of individual's structural environment. To Foucault, one type of technology hardly ever exists without another. Foucault's view of human activity as neither the passive reproduction of dominating structures nor manifestation of free will unattached to existing set of practices offers a methodological approach to researching agency, which allows to avoid a dichotomy between agents and their structural environment. In the context of this research, Foucault's notion of technologies is useful in isolating those techniques which shape the specific structural environment of a lower secondary school in the TRNC and techniques which allow individuals to act upon themselves and modify the circumstances of the structural environment of schooling.

Tuure Johannes Tammi, University of Helsinki,
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***Profile:** After graduating in 2009, I've done teaching with students from elementary school to adult education. In 2011, I started as a project researcher consulting projects related to educational innovations working with my own studies on the side. My interests are broadly related to democracy in educational contexts. Currently interesting topics are the conception of active citizenship and citizenship education, citizenship as a socio-cultural identity and children's agency and participation.*

"Instrument or actors? children's agency in a community conflict"

***Abstract:** Last year a concept of "mold schools" appeared in the public debate in Finland. As almost two thirds of Finnish schools suffer from indoor air problems, this debate expresses the worries of the working conditions of the teachers and students. As an example of agency in practice I have chosen a case where a local parents union utilized several strategies, e.g. striking and funding research, in order to get a healthier school building for their children. In the strike, children are more or less tools of influence: the mass that is used to convince the decision makers. However, through involvement in the strike they are engaged in collectively valued activity that can be thought to increase their criticality and agency. In this presentation, the perspectives of eleven 8-12 years old children involved in this "fight" are scrutinized and compared to adults' (N=12) thoughts on how children experience the fight. Data consists mainly of thematic interviews. With children also*

narrative research methods and group discussions are used. I use both content analysis and narrative analysis to approach a deeper understanding on what agency means in the data. In the preliminary analysis on agency I have focused on e.g. how children interpret, imitate and utilize nuances of the fight and how they tell they solve mold-related dilemmas they encounter. Despite children do perceive the fight as something happening between the adults, they are generally highly knowledgeable about the issues related to it and their parents' position in it. Some children also criticize the acts of school staff, municipal decision makers and even their parents. The efforts described above can be seen as engagement to cultural activities through which children can both increase their capability and have influence on the everyday issues.

Stephen Howard Rogers, University of Manchester
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Profile: About to submit my thesis as a part-time researcher. Formerly a head teacher and then National Director of the education charity the UFA, I have been working in education for about thirty years. I am interested in the philosophy of education, with a particular application of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, and also in critical policy scholarship. I have been particularly researching with young people about recent policy moves in student leadership and personalized learning. I have also been researching governance issues in the English public sector. Although passionately interested in all issues to do with education I am a 'novice' researcher.

“Crouching target, hidden child”

Abstract: Drawing on semi-structured interviews and focus group activities with thirty-three young people between the ages of 14 to 17 attending three English schools, I examine their experiences of a ‘personalised’ education system. The policy climate in England has for some time been one of intense and persistent reforms. The Labour Party took office in 1997 and advanced ‘personalised learning’ as a central reforming concept that made use of individual targets, data and pupil voice in the learning process. I identify that while the opportunities for productive voices are evident, the young peoples’ experience of it is inconsistent. Notably, the use of targets and data has often made them invisible and mute, and this affects how they understand the purposes of schools and their place within a school. Outcome data is a necessary and proper concern of schools. However, I suggest that the conceptualisation of learning, and the relational processes involved, is being damaged through the interpretation of voice as a means of delivering instrumental data sets. Agency within school practices is located within competing values of governance (Newman 2006) that contextualise the conflicting demands on staff. Young people experienced moments of care and trust in relationships with certain teachers that points to the possibility of a more virtuous practice if the policy ‘space’ is available. I argue this point using a conceptualisation of social practice and ethics drawn from Alasdair MacIntyre. The fieldwork took place over the course of half a day in each of three schools that represent different cultural communities, were under scrutiny from National Challenge strategies and are interested in student leadership.

Diego Di Masi & Debora Aquario “*A participatory approach to design and evaluation for planning an agency based citizenship curriculum*” (Diego’s profile is in collaborators section)

Profile (Debora): *I am a psychologist and researcher at the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology of the University of Padova. During my PhD I have been involved in a research about teaching evaluation in higher education. The research was based on the importance of a complex and multidimensional approach to the teaching/learning process as well as the importance of involving the main actors of university life (teachers and students), in line with a bottom-up approach and according to a participatory evaluation model.*

Abstract: In 2008 the Italian Government introduced a citizenship education reform in compulsory schools. The following years were characterized by a wide experimentation in the schools to implement the new ministerial guidelines. In such scenario the aim of this paper is to present a doctoral research focused on an *agency-based* citizenship curriculum, bridging school and town in order to support children participation in the public life. In particular the context has been the Municipal Council of Children (an instrument adopted by local administration to promote children’s participation) considered as a place for decision-making process. In an educational perspective, to highlight the discursive dimension of such experience means to develop those argumentative competencies that guarantee an authentic participation, as agent, in a deliberative dialogue (Di Masi and Santi, 2011).

Such competencies have been fostered involving the classes of elected children counsellors converted in communities of philosophical discussion (Lipman, 2003). The project develops an innovative citizenship curriculum taking into account the participatory approach on design and evaluation (Cousins and Earl, 1995; Konings et al., 2010). According to such perspective, participation occurs in all the phases of the process, and all the agents are actively engaged in it. According to the curriculum transposition model (Chevallard, 1985; Perrenoud, 1998; McCowan, 2008), the implemented curriculum has been designed by teachers, students and the researcher starting from the national standards and the curriculum expectations defined by the Italian government, identifying the desired results and the evidences of learning, in order to plan instructional activities based on the enabling knowledge in terms of concepts and skills (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). The project has been conducted in Rovigo (Italy) involving 32 classes and 811 children between 9 and 13 years old. The participatory design and evaluation process will be presented and discussed focusing on the effects on children agency.

Jaakko Hilppö “*Modalities of agency in children's everyday life: children's perspectives*” (profile in collaborators section)

Abstract: Within educational research, children’s agency is to a large extent conceptualized in terms of the social practices within which the research is carried out. In other words, the more nuanced dynamics of individual agency, which contribute to the emergence of these practices, escape analysis. Hence,

novel conceptualizations that strive to grasp these dynamics are needed. Furthermore, children's everyday lives encompass multiple practices that give rise to different forms of agency. However, our understanding of children's everyday lives in these "networks of practices" is based on parents' reports or constrained observations. Building on socio-culturally informed theoretical frameworks, this study seeks to highlight children's agency in everyday life from their own perspective. Hence, methodologically the study draws on the "children as co-researchers" literature as well as the new childhood studies perspective. In practice, to generate the dataset analysed in the study, children (age 9-10) took part in photo reflection situations, in which with they reflected and elaborated on their everyday life and its various aspects. Importantly, prior to this, the children had taken part in an enculturation process with their peers in school, and documented over their everyday life across settings over a three-day period with digital cameras. In the reflection situations these photos functioned as tools that mediated the children's reflections. The on-going analysis of this dataset aims to show how modalities of agency (Greimas, 1977; Jyrkämä, 2008) can be used to highlight the variety in sense of agency children have in relation to different aspects of their life. In particular, we ask: how were individual modalities used when children reflected on their everyday life, and second, what kinds of different sense of agency were thus talked into being? Our results bear importance to researchers and practitioners alike aiming to understand and design educational settings that facilitate and promote children's agency.

Daniela S. Jadue Roa "*Young children's voices in transition research: a Chilean case study*" (profile in organizers section)

Abstract: This paper discusses the processes of: (1) transition; and (2) learning agency development in early childhood educational settings and proposes a framework for understanding the inter-relation between these two processes. The research was carried out in a State school in Santiago, Chile, with two classroom groups (A & B) in their last months of Kindergarten and first period in First Grade (aged between 5½ and 6½ years). The research questions addressed in this presentation is: '*What issues arise in relation to young children's experiences of transition and their development of a sense of a learning agency, when asked to represent this experience through photographs?*' Preliminary findings of photo tasks carried out with the two groups (book making and poster making) are discussed. The study adopts a cultural-historical perspective of development and follows the mosaic approach proposal of a multiple level and multiple methods design. To analyse the data a coding framework was created grounded in the data and in the literature which compiles and interprets the information revealed through the documents created with the photo-tasks. Findings draw upon the important issues for these groups' transition process and its relation with their development of a sense of learning agency. Finally, the discussion highlights the relevance of these issues and their relation to the context in which the data was gathered as well as the contribution of this study to research in the transition and learning agency field.

Jenni Carter, University of South Australia,
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***Profile:** Jenni lectures in English curriculum and literacy in undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including a core course for first year students in language and literacy. Her current research interests are in two key areas. Firstly, the experience of first year university students, and the potential of digital literacies in disadvantaged schools to further aspirations to university. Secondly, the analysis of contemporary education policy and, informed by the thinking of Derrida, the implications for how we understand the axiological foundations of policy and ethical responsibility. There is also work being done in bringing these two areas of research interest together.*

“Agency as becoming and belonging: transition as permanent state of change”

***Abstract:** Gaining insights into the ways in which students are able to successfully move from one institutional setting to another is of great interest in times where there are strong policy commitments to lifelong learning. This paper will report on a research project, *Becoming Teachers*. Through a series of focused interviews the research examined how 10 students from low socio economic backgrounds navigate their transition into university and their sense of ‘becoming’ university students and teachers during their first year of study. Students were interviewed early in their first semester of university, and then again halfway through the second semester. The interviews focused on students examining what they understood to be significant or critical experiences,*

identifying the practices they used to engage with the institutional conditions of the university, and how they understood themselves as both university students, and as future educators. While much of the literature around transition focuses on what institutions should do to support the student experience of transition, this paper will focus on the agentic practices of students. In particular it will discuss what these students did to make sense of the institutional conditions and practices they encountered, the strategies they used to develop academic practices and literacies, and developing positive views of themselves as ‘becoming’ university students. Attention is then drawn to a set of possible discussions that examine how students in institutionalised settings are constantly making sense of what they are doing. This position takes up a view where transition is understood as an on-going process of change and becoming, rather than a linear process of overcoming period moments of shifting from one setting to another. Further, a view of individual agency is seen as occurring within a complex sets of relationships, and within the context of developing a sense of place and belonging. Some implications for institutional practices are identified. As a pilot project this research will inform a larger scale study of the experiences in their first year of university.

Michael Fordham, University of Cambridge,
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***Profile:** I currently balance several roles as Head of History at Cottenham Village College (11-18 comprehensive), a mentor on the Cambridge History PGCE course and a PhD student under the supervision of Christine Counsell and Philip*

Gardner. I have research interests in teacher knowledge, specifically regarding the nature of the relationship between history teachers and the academic discipline of history. My wider interests are in the ways in which historical knowledge is structured in the process of curriculum design.

“Situating history teachers in a disciplinary community: a phenomenological study”

Abstract: Academic disciplines are social and temporal phenomena, and this poses theoretical problems for researchers who aim to describe the relationship between school teachers and the academic discipline they teach. This is, at heart, a matter of agency and structure, for teachers exercise agency in relation to their subject, yet are limited by the social and epistemological structures of an academic discipline. Several models of teacher subject knowledge have been proposed, most influentially Lee Shulman’s model of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). This model has, however, attracted criticism for failing to account for the social and temporal character of disciplinary knowledge. In particular, PCK does not allow for an explanation of how a teacher participates as an agent within or in relation to the disciplinary community. This paper reports the findings of a research project that examined this relationship between history teachers and the academic discipline of history. The research was directed by two research questions that sought to elicit how history teachers characterise the disciplinary nature of their practice, and what understandings about disciplinary history emerge when teachers design lessons. Calling upon a phenomenological methodology, four expert history teachers were identified as

research participants. Each history teacher was interviewed twice about a lesson or sequence of lessons they planned to teach, and the findings analysed by the identification of themes. The findings from this research helped in the formulation of a conceptual model by which the relationship between history teachers and the academic discipline of history might be better understood. In particular, the two concepts of ‘working towards the discipline’ and ‘proxy authority’ are advanced as potentially useful ideas in future studies of teacher knowledge.

Yvonne Skipper & Karen M. Douglas, Royal Holloway University, yvonne.skipper@rhul.ac.uk

Profile: *I am interested in how feedback affects learning; whether the feedback comes from a teacher, from a peer during collaboration, or even implicitly through the design of the education system. I am also currently working on a project examining collaborative learning in multi ethnic classrooms. We are investigating under which conditions interacting with children from the same or different ethnic groups leads to improved learning and also improves social relationships and ethnic group attitudes.*

“School transition: negative outcomes associated with selective transfer systems”

Abstract: The transfer from primary to secondary school can be a negative experience for children, often leading to a drop in school grades, decreased motivation and engagement. We argue that the system of transfer, and particularly conceptions of control, may influence how children cope with the transfer.

We examine the potential influence of two different secondary school transfer systems - geographical catchment or selective entrance exam – on children’s feelings about secondary school. In the geographical catchment system children attend the school closest to their home. However, in the entrance exam system children are given the option of sitting an entrance exam which, if they pass, will allow them to apply for a place in the higher achieving grammar schools. Whether children take the exam is often based on teacher perceptions of how likely they are to pass. All children (N=137 aged around 10) were assessed at two time points, at time 1 children in the exam system had decided whether to take the optional entrance exam, at time 2 children in the exam system had received their exam results. At each time children completed measures of locus of control, self-esteem, theory of intelligence, and feelings about the school system. The geographical catchment system led to more positive outcomes for children when compared to the entrance exam system. Further, within the entrance exam system, at Time 1, children who intended to take the exam showed more positive outcomes than those who did not. Similarly at Time 2 children who had passed the exam showed more positive outcomes than those who had failed or had not taken the exam. Those who failed the exam were indistinguishable from those who had not taken the exam. This study highlights the important role of selection procedure on children’s feelings about the transfer from primary to secondary school.

Louise Wheeler, University of Birmingham,
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***Profile:** I am a postgraduate research student in the University of Birmingham’s School of Education. I am currently in my first year of PhD research into ‘Language Ideologies and Identities in English Language Learning in Kazakhstan’, in which I adopt a linguistic ethnographic approach to explore how language ideologies are constructed and negotiated in this context and how multilingual learners negotiate their identities in English language classrooms. Previously, I have worked as an English Language teacher both in the UK and abroad. My presentation is based my MA TEFL thesis ‘Agency and Literacy Practices as Mediatonal Means’.*

“‘Not write, not save’’: literacy, language & agency as social practices”

***Abstract:** Agency has been conceptualised as *the “socioculturally mediated capacity to act”* and it has been argued that second language learning can be seen as the development of agency in the new language (Van Lier 2008). However, much of the previous research into language learning tends to overlook the extent to which classroom practices may be patterned by literacy. This presentation draws on research that takes a sociocultural view of language, literacy and agency to explore the relationship between the development of literacy practices and learner agency in second language learning. Rather than seeing on reading and writing as neutral skills, the research focussed on ‘*literacy practices*’: cultural ways in which literacy is used and understood in particular social contexts (Barton and Hamilton 1998). It aimed to explore how*

literacy practices are shaped, negotiated and transformed in the tension between the agency of individual language learners and the cultural and social constraints in which learning is embedded. The study adopted an ethnographic approach, drawing on data from classroom observation, documentary evidence and interviews to construct a detailed account of the literacy practices developed by one adult English language learner at a UK language school. This presentation will focus on a particular set of practices the learner referred to as 'saving', to illustrate how learner literacy practices develop in the tension between an agency that is culturally and historically shaped and the resources available in context of learning. By examining the way in which the learner's 'saving' practices mediated his language learning, the presentation will consider how opportunities for agency development are created or limited by the English language classroom. The presentation also aims to demonstrate the value of attending to learner 'improvisations': both as researchers of agency in educational contexts and as teachers concerned with developing agency in our learners.

Emma Marya Coonan, Cambridge University Library,
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***Profile:** Emma directs and teaches on Cambridge University's Research Skills Programme, which supports the information skills and academic development of students and researchers across the University. A keen blogger and tweeter, she holds a PhD in literary theory as well as an MSc in Information and Library Management. Her chief research interests are*

information literacy and learning development, and in 2011 she was seconded to a fellowship at Wolfson College, Cambridge, to develop 'A New Curriculum for Information Literacy' in collaboration with Jane Secker, LSE. She has recently been nominated for Information Literacy Practitioner of the Year.

"Information literacy as learner agency"

Abstract: Information literacy - the theory and practice of how learners encounter, validate, judge and use information appropriate to a given context - is undergoing a quiet revolution. Traditionally the preserve of the library, information literacy has often been conflated reductively with bibliographic instruction, database usage or ICT skills. Within the discourse of academic practice it has been assigned the status of a low-level, bolt-on skillset, often associated with a remedial approach, and prone to inherently transmissive teaching. Secker and Coonan's 2011 *New Curriculum for Information Literacy* (ANCIL) research outlines such a framework for the higher education context, within a wider theoretical perspective that situates information literacy as a fundamental element of lifelong learning at every level. It demonstrates that IL goes far beyond a mandated set of skills or competencies: rather, it inheres in the individual's on-going ability to generate contextually appropriate strategies for encountering new information environments and goals. The ANCIL curriculum therefore presents information literacy learning as the development of a metacognitive framework which enables individual learners to create and refine these strategies throughout his or her life. This intensive 10-week

project took a dual methodological approach, combining a modified Delphi study with a wide-ranging review of existing models and literature. The expert panel was drawn from the library, information, and education fields. A group of trainee teachers was also observed and interviewed. Survey and interview data were analysed qualitatively, using a coding frame which generated the categories that ultimately comprise ANCIL's ten strands of information literacy. A mapping of these facets to existing IL models was carried out as part of the literature review. The ANCIL research offers a new, learner-centred definition and framework through which to view information literacy, offering an alternative to prescriptive, competency-based models. It therefore has wide-ranging implications for how learning, pedagogy, and identity are perceived and performed in higher education. In addition, it opens the way to a greater awareness and understanding of the intersection between information and learner identity. The ANCIL research has led to a redefinition, and perhaps shows the way towards rehabilitation, of information literacy as a crucial element in all educational contexts.

Mari Anne Okkolin, University of Jyväskylä, mari-anne.okkolin@jyu.fi

***Profile:** Ms Mari-Anne Okkolin is a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. She is finalising her thesis in education entitled *Highly Educated Women in Tanzania – Opportunities and Constraints to Construct Educational Agency*. Her background is in social sciences from where she attained her Master's. Ms Okkolin has*

worked as a junior lecturer in Master's Programme in Development and International Co-operation and as a project co-ordinator in a University owned consultancy company. Her expertise is in the field of gender, education and development.

“The sense of educational agency through the voice-centred relational method”

Abstract: Each phenomenon under exploration has specific goals determining the selection of an appropriate research design, data collection and analysis methods. In my presentation I shall discuss about one tool, the Voice-Centered Relational (VCR) method, which I have applied during the interpretative stage(s) of my PhD research on education, gender and development. In my talk I'll introduce five differently focused readings of the interview transcripts that guide the researcher to ask and answer three interrelated questions: “who is speaking under what circumstances?”, “who is listening?” and “what is the nature of the listener-speaker relationship?” I'll also illustrate how the voice of participants lies at the heart of the VCR-method aiming at listening how they speak about themselves before I speak of them. In my research the sense of agency is interpreted and conceptualised through Amartya Sen's four conceptual spaces within which the human life can be evaluated (well-being achievement, agency achievement, well-being freedom and agency freedom). This presentation focuses, however, on the VCR-method to understand and analyse qualitative interview data. The VCR-method has proven analytical potential to capture the perceived and experienced representation of research participants, in this

case, the sense of educational agency and social location narrated by ten highly educated Tanzanian women.

Eeva-Liisa Nieminen, University of Helsinki, eeva-liisa.nieminen@helsinki.fi

***Profile:** Being a teacher of physics, chemistry and mathematics in a secondary school, with many years of experience as a teacher, I am preparing a doctoral thesis. I restarted educational studies, when teachers were expected to participate in developing curricula. Because I have been working at the same time, studying is more like a development project, which gives me additional motivation in my school work. Participating in courses and conferences is enlightening, nice and rewarding, but to complete the thesis necessitates hard work. For the past two months I was studying full-time, focusing on the literature of motivation and interest.*

“A door to success in life - 9th grade students’ experiences about motivation in physics and chemistry learning”

***Abstract:** Science teaching has been a target of multiple attempts to change it. Researchers give ideas, teachers adapt them, but rarely students are asked. In Finland, however, curricula have offered freedom to be fairly independent inside the given framework. In my study, the focus is in students' voice. The research questions are: 1. How does studying of physics and chemistry appear to students and drawing from it: 2. What motivates students in their studies of physics and chemistry. I have used the phenomenological method, the research report including first-person narratives of six students. As a teacher, I have tried to apply the ideas of constructivism*

and inquiry, however listening to students' response. The data consists of 20 interviews, which were analysed using theories of self-determination, interest, and the theory of communities of practice, and activism theory. The narratives show that the students often tend to maintain old structures. The theoretical stance for classroom is based on the ideas constructivism and the superiority of inquiry oriented laboratory work, but on the other hand ideas of human agency and social activism emerge from students' voice. Narratives give a rich picture of active persons who engage in studies departing from their individual goals and needs. Motivation comes as importantly from desire to succeed in life, which leads to strong self-regulation as from intrinsic interest. Being a member of a science class enhances motivation. Students learn the best when learning provides a good explanation. Motivation is reinforced if there is excitement. Students like different learning methods, because of interest and variety, and being able to choose their activities they can feel autonomous and competent. Although this study refers to a special class, it brings forth explicitly, with its phenomenological method, the world of students and their lived experience, which takes active participatory forms.

Charlotte Nussey Institute of Education, charley.nussey@gmail.com

***Profile:** I have worked as a full time teacher, and subsequently as an educational researcher. I work on issues around gender and race inequalities, and I am interested in agency as it relates to the Capabilities Approach, female empowerment and to social justice. I am studying at the Institute of Education in*

London. My previous fieldwork has been in Tanzania, but my PhD will explore gender and adult literacy in South Africa.

“Agency through narrative: resistances and negotiations in the stories of Maasai teenagers”

Abstract: This paper reflects on findings from qualitative research conducted over four months, at a rural NGO school in a Maasai community in Monduli district, Tanzania. The research aimed to start to address the paucity of studies exploring students’ lived realities of schooling in Tanzania, focusing on processes of agency and empowerment in and through education. The main research question, ‘in what ways are pedagogical processes concerned with empowerment realised in a Tanzanian classroom,’ was therefore explored with a range of ethnographic methods, looking at the whole school setting, but particularly focusing upon the construction of gendered and ethnic identities within a Form III class. This paper first sets out some theoretical notions of agency, particularly those offered by the Capability Approach and by Naila Kabeer, and then explores these within the context of the students’ and teachers’ emergent notions of agency. The paper then explores two key spaces in which gendered norms, and their intersections with ethnic identities, were resisted or negotiated through expressions of student agency. The first was a writing task which drew on students’ own experience, and the second was in engagement with an English literature curriculum text which they felt was relevant to their own lives, and which offered them a variety of positive role models. This paper will draw on a range of data including students’ essays

and interviews to show how these two tasks were key ways of developing students’ critical consciousness.

Mujadad Zaman, University of Cambridge,
mz280@cam.ac.uk

Profile: *Mujadad is currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. He is exploring the growing socio-philosophical importance of the university within the ‘Knowledge Society’ with an aim to critically articulating the complex relationships that exist between them. In addition, germane themes pertaining to the ‘purpose’ and ‘ideal’ of the university in the 21st century is an area he is working on as well as tracing the modern academic imagination. The areas of his professional interest include, though are not limited to, the sociology and philosophy of knowledge, ethics, aesthetics and theology.*

“Augustinian patriarchs and pelagianist praxis: redefining the possibility of agency within educational studies”

Abstract: This paper is a contribution towards the perennial question of agency in social thought as well as in educational discourse. The problem is approached by firstly coaching the principle tenants of the issue within an early Christian theological controversy between St Augustine (orthodoxy) and Pelagian (heterodoxy) i.e. the contestation over the necessity of Divine Grace and freedom of individual will. Whereas Augustinianism stresses the possibility of human agency as only within the confines of divinity, Pelagianism stresses the importance of relying on sui generis individual reason and agential will. I correspondingly argue that where most

contemporary approaches to agency in social thought suppose agential efficaciousness by virtue of cognitive functions (critical realism), linguistic positioning (Bernstein) or cultural awareness (Freire), they confront an Augustinian Impasse by directing praxis as an enclave of broader structural limitations (e.g. Bourdieu). This is often because the literature separates sociation (to act) from ontology (to being) and as such social agency is not sui generis to the individual, creating distance between the individual and the social occasion of agency. To remedy this, it is argued one ought to employ the Pelagianist Heterodoxy that is educative praxis. Here we approach the question from the opposite direction, by starting from ontology not sociology. Educative praxis consequently emphasises a way of directing the importance of the individual's capabilities by placing her a priori distinctiveness as stressed by individual will and reason. This new framework is hoped to approach the problem of agential power within educational studies by presenting key questions and theoretical avenues on how to inform and impart educative praxis.

Rachel Revsin Ravid, Academic College of Education,
rachel.ravid@gmail.com

***Profile:** I am a lecturer in Oranim Academic College of Education- in the department of early childhood education. I major in early year's special education needs. Currently I am an EdD student at the University of Bath- submitting my final thesis. My main research interest is parents of young ASD children sense of agency while going through various educational placement procedures. Furthermore, I teach: early*

childhood literacy; early diagnosis of developmental delays and disorders; inclusion in the early years; self- regulation's intervention programs in the early years; and qualitative research approaches and methods such as phenomenology and action research looking at how they could be implemented within the kindergarten's environment.

“The placement process of children with ASD in early-age educational provisions in Israel from a phenomenological perspective”

Abstract: This study explores the process of the placement of children with ASD in early-age educational provisions in Israel from a phenomenological perspective, focusing on what can be learnt about this process as it is experienced by both parents and kindergarten teachers. The present research aims to explore, describe and interpret parents' and kindergarten teachers' experience of their sense of agency while going through various interactions within the placement process. Hence, defining the process of early- age school placement as a social exchange activity by which personally perceived meanings are negotiated and shared. The approach of this study is based on the worldview of existential phenomenology, which seeks to interpret the experiences of individuals as part of the environment in which they live and with which they interact. Therefore, the research describes the placement experience as it is given. The data collected included semi - structured interviews with five mothers and four kindergarten teachers, observations, visual tools, written documents, e-mail exchanges, telephone conversations and home- school communication notebooks. Data was analysed following the

principles of the hermeneutic circle using in turn, both holistic and analytic approach. Findings were related to decision-making theoretical concepts and to major conceptions taken from Schutz's social phenomenological theory.

Sarah Eagle, University of Bristol, s.eagle@bristol.ac.uk

***Profile:** Originally a graduate in Experimental Psychology, I worked for some years in social housing and community development - and am now a postdoctoral researcher in a department of Education where I am interested in learning in informal contexts, using theories that have developed from, or are aligned with, the cultural-historical psychology of L.S.Vygotsky. Much of my work has been concerned with digital technologies and learning; this theme runs through my doctoral research, which explored young children's experience with technologies in the home, my work within a research network on Technology Enhanced Learning, and a new interdisciplinary project exploring the 'internet of things', creativity and learning.*

"Interaction, artifacts and agency in young children's learning"

***Abstract:** This paper presents an analysis of young children's interaction with others in the course of using designed artefacts (picturebooks, digital toys and screen-based technologies) which pays particular attention to the child's agency in the activity. The perspective taken is that children learn through shared meaning-making, a communicative process in which*

interacting partners attend to the focus of attention of the other. A physical artefact is considered to be a potential resource for shared meaning-making, in that cues about the aspect that a partner is attending to become available through gaze, gesture or verbal means. The question of interest is whether which the nature of the artefact has any bearing on the extent to which a child is expected to follow the adult's interest or attention or vice versa - in other words, the agency of either partner in the interaction. In a detailed analysis of interaction between parents and young children during their use of digital technologies in the home, a general pattern was that parents' attention was on organising the child's interest and actions towards particular aspects of the device and its use. Children's questions and other initiations were rarely attended to or built on. This pattern is discussed in relation to research that investigates children's learning in relation to the use of picturebooks, which highlights as significant the nature of interaction around the book and its content, and also in relation to research on children's interaction which ascribes particular significance to children's agency. It is suggested that popular understanding about the relationship between books and early learning is more closely associated with the content than with the nature of interaction around their use, which in turn downplays the significance of the child's agency in the interaction. It seems that this conception is carried through into assumptions about digital technologies. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of such assumptions and possible openings for an alternative approach.

Parallel Poster Session

Einat Litchtinger, Oranim Academic College,
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***Profile:** My thesis was about self-regulation in writing, additionally I wrote a book about this subject. I teach in the department of special education and in the Youth at Risk M.Ed. program in Oranim Academic College. I guide the teachers that learn in my courses to implement intervention programs that promote self-regulation processes and motivation of their students. My studies over the last few years have focused on these programs and their effects on the teachers and their students. I live in Kiryat Tivon in the north of Israel and raise my three kids there.*

“Impact of intervention programs to promote self-regulation in at-risk students on the self-identity and motivation of teachers”

***Abstract:** This study examines the changes that took place in the self-identity and motivation of teachers of at-risk youth as a result of programs that promote self-regulation in their students. Teachers’ self-identity is the way that they perceive themselves and their role (Beijaard et al., 2000). There is a connection between their self-identity and their motivational characteristics, such as their self-efficacy. All of these have considerable influence on their performance and on the way they cope with challenges (Day et al., 2006). These factors are*

especially important for teachers of youth at risk. Empowerment of these teachers would enable them to create processes of inclusion with their students (Schultz et al., 2008). The programs to promote self-regulation were based on instruction of cultivating strategies along with advancing the students’ active management of the process (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Using the multiple case study method, the study examined the impact of these programs on thirty teachers. Self-reports were collected from the teachers during the program, at its conclusion and one year later. An analysis of the findings shows that the processes experienced by the teachers fell into three models. A majority reported reinforcement in their self-identity and self-efficacy on both the classroom and institutional levels. A smaller number of teachers indicated a change in the classroom but not in the systemic level, while still fewer reported no change at all. The discussion will consider the significance of these findings for the empowerment of teachers.

Angel Urbina, University of York, maug500@york.ac.uk

***Profile:** With a Psychology background specialized on child development, I have delivered different psycho-educational courses in Mexican Universities (public and private sector) for a number of years. Currently, I am lecturer for Applied Psychology on-line studies at Masters Level at a well-known University in United Kingdom. My current PhD project is focused on exploring the Preschool Transition process in Mexican public schools, due to its relevance for preschool children and their families. In addition, this type of research*

has not been carried out in Mexico. This study aims to open a new transition's research field in Mexico.

“Preschool and first grade teacher’s perceptions and practices on preschool transition in Mexico”

Abstract: Transition from preschool to first grade has been an interesting topic for many researchers concerned about the promotion of an adequate adaptation process for children entering primary school. This topic has been widely investigated by worldwide researchers highlighting the importance of this process not only for children, but for their families and teachers. Particularly, this study can be better understood under the theoretical framework of issues related to teacher's exercise of agency in their pedagogical practise during this transition process, whose main objective is to explore this process by investigating teachers' perceptions and practices in transition to first grade in both, preschool and first grade in Mexican Schools. This research addresses to answer key research questions from both educational level teachers: What are the main problems they perceive children face during this critical period? What are the transition practices they commonly use? What do they think can be done to support this transition? A cross-sectional design will be employed and two different 40-item questionnaires developed based on literature findings will be administered to a sample of 30 teachers from public schools in Mexico City in order to gather the data. A qualitative and quantitative approach will be used to analyse the data obtained. Finally, the results from this research will provide the opportunity to open a new transition research field in Mexico that might have an important impact in supporting

the process in this community and planning carefully educational interventions during this process in National Educative System.

Paul Crowhurst, Chinese International School,
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Profile: *I am a New Zealand born Primary Educator. I have lived and worked in four countries - New Zealand, U.K., Thailand, and presently Hong Kong. I have a broad range of professional interests within the context of classroom teaching practice. My current area of interest is tutorial style teaching and how it can be facilitated in classrooms at primary and secondary level.*

“The interpersonal qualities of teachers: a foundation for effective practice”

Abstract: Effective educators are continually searching for initiatives that raise achievement and promote holistic development. Even without knowledge of empirical research, most parents and students intuitively know that the quality of teaching is determined by the type of person the teacher is. Certain theorists have outlined the interpersonal connection between teachers and their students as one perspective on what constitutes effective practice. A quality personal connection between teacher and student can enhance the agency of students by defining the social and emotional climate in classrooms. Developing a classroom free from inhibiting psychological structure leads to students having freedom to

explore their creative capacities, acting as empowered learners. The key research question was - how do the personal qualities of teachers impact the quality of learners' classroom experience? The value of interpersonal dynamics in the classroom was popularized during the humanistic movement within education. This research is a historical literature review and an exploration of the writings of humanistic educators. Key theorists from the humanistic education movement were identified, their writings examined, and key findings unpacked and explored. This exploration is seen to be of value because it revisits a significant psychological force in education and its implications for practice. Humanistic education emphasized the importance of affective development, which is seen to be facilitated through personal interaction between individuals. This vital dynamic between teachers and students is considered by some theorists as the major determiner of change in learners. Teachers who displayed certain personal attributes such as realness, acceptance, and empathy are more likely to promote growth in their students. Therefore, developing and maintaining these attributes in teachers is vital. The teacher's ability to display these is governed by their belief system as well as wider cultural forces. These dynamics are explored; taking into consideration measures that educators can take, such as, feeding one's own capacity to create. Further actions an effective person in the classroom might take are put forward. Educators at various levels of the system should consider the implications for classroom teaching.

Tran N. Tempeton, Columbia University,
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“Four-year-old free agents: experiences of agency in early childhood”

Abstract: Recent constructions of child-centred pedagogies in early childhood emphasize the agency and free will of young children. Newer models, including Developmentally Appropriate Practice, focus on the individual, self-determination, and self-governance. However, researchers working within a post-modern framework may argue that even self-proclaimed child-centred institutions mask forms of control within the illusions of liberty and choice. As teachers we hope to provide our young children with self-regulated opportunities to explore their identities within the communities, yet our unintended actions and underlying beliefs may actually undermine children's competencies. However, what are the consequences of children's free will over one another in the classroom? Using a case study approach (Yin, 2008) in which we gather observations, archives, and classroom documents for three months, we examine the ways in which three preschool children in a university childcare setting exert their agency within the classroom. Doing so allows us to see how these demonstrations of autonomy influence their social relationships and the classroom community. Through observations and reflections, the teacher-researcher in this study also discusses the challenges, which require reflexivity and a flexibility of thought, in the application of a post-modern lens to the classroom. During the course of the study, she comes to realize the delicate balancing acts involved in mediating perceived

conflict, de-marginalizing individuals, and allowing children to collectively make meaning from their shared problem solving experiences.

Kristin Aadland, University of Oslo,
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***Profile:** My research interests are storytelling, language, oral skills and literacy and learning identity. My PhD project is affiliated with a larger research project within the research group TransAction. The project is called 'Local literacies and community spaces- Investigating transitions and transfers in the 'learning lives' of Groruddalen'. Groruddalen is a multicultural area of Oslo and the location also for my project. My educational background is within child welfare and storytelling. I have earlier worked in nursery school and with children with learning disabilities and behavioural problems in institution, and have used storytelling wherever I have been.*

"Storytelling, oral skills and learning identity in school – a study on storytelling situations as a learning context in multicultural schools"

***Abstract:** My main aim for this project is to study professional oral storytelling as a phenomenon within a school context. I want to examine how this social practice can influence students' performance and positioning as learners in a group of children and youth with different cultural backgrounds. I plan to have a special focus on oral skills, which is one of five basic skills in the Norwegian national curriculum of 2006. After*

starting observations, I see that I will also need to focus more on identity and context of learning. My research questions so far are as follow: 1) how can the use of storytelling at school influence oral skills and literacy among youth? 2) What impact can storytelling have on young people's learning identity? The study is ethnographic, with use of video-observation, and interviews, to collect data throughout spring 2012. In my poster I will focus on a group of 14-15- year old youths who during a week in February 2012 had a course with professional storytellers, which led to a performance where about 70 youths one by one, were on stage telling stories from their own lives to an audience consisting of peers, parents and teachers. The course is developed after ideas from the American "Teaching Artists" and the British "Creative Partnerships", where the idea is to bring professional artists into classroom, with the purpose of inspiring young people to learn. The storyteller has no manuscript and improvises the wording of a known story. This facilitates a situation where listeners and storyteller through dialogue can create the understanding and make meaning through telling, listening and responding. Socio-cultural and dialogic research literature, with Bruner and Bakhtin as a base, will be drawn upon. Further I have a focus on orality, with Ong and others as a background and studies on evaluation of oral skills, such as Hertzberg (1999). Wardetzky and Weigel (2010) and Kuyvenhoven (2010), have done interesting studies of storytellers in multicultural schools. In addition I will look to studies on creative learning, through for instants Creative Partnerships and Teaching Artists.

Dimitra Kaneva, University of Manchester,
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***Profile:** I am a PhD student at the University of Manchester investigating the experience and engagement of children with English as an additional language (EAL) in their transition from primary to secondary schools. My research interests are in bilingualism, identity, difference and diversity in education, school improvement, and creative research methods. I am involved in several research projects at the University, including Coalition of Research Schools looking into school improvement and outstanding schools collaboration and Leading Partners in EAL, funded by the TDA, targeting trainee teachers where I am producing a film of good practice in partnership with three local schools.*

“Creative research methods: exploring children's experiences and engagement in primary-secondary school transition”

***Abstract:** This poster will explore the use of creative research methods as part of a qualitative project looking into how children with English as an additional language (EAL) manage their experiences and engagement as they transfer from primary to secondary school. It draws upon findings of a previous study which explored children's perspectives on the support for learning available following international migration. The research revealed limited engagement of students in their own learning. My current project seeks to address issues of agency and engagement in the process of transition from primary to secondary education in the context of EAL in England where children from a primary school*

transfer to their new secondary schools. In creating understanding of how children with EAL experience and engage in transition, the main question is about their active participation in both formal and informal aspects of schooling. The perspectives of their teachers and peers will be also sought. The project is designed as a multiple case study following the stories of a group of children transferring from the same primary school into three different secondary schools. By using creative research methods such as paired discussions, learning walks, photographs and learning journals, I aim to capture crucial aspects of the experiences of this particular group of learners in English schools. I aim to explore the importance of student voice and engagement in schooling and the potential benefits for children with EAL and their teachers. I am currently at the stage of data generation in the primary school.

Charlotte D. Rochez, University of Cambridge,
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***Profile:** Charlotte Rochez began her studies with the University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education in 2005 reading for a BA in History with Education Studies. She went on to complete an MPhil in Education Research Methods and is now working towards a PhD. Her current research concerns the history of home education and schooling-at-home from the 1960s to the present in England, UK and British Columbia, Canada. This study is undertaken as a form of oral history. It explores the potential of online oral history and wider uses of the internet in research. For more information please visit: www.historyofhomebasededucation.blogspot.com.*

“Perceptions of agency: insights from researching the histories of home-based education and schooling-at-home”

Abstract: Many parents choose to exercise the right for their child to remain at home, rather than attending school. Reflection on home-based education and schooling-at-home may facilitate exploration of socio-political views of agency in education. Considering historical changes in attitudes regarding such provisions and in the numbers of families electing for them may afford insights into changes in popular perceptions of the roles of parents, families, children, the state and schools. Further insights may be gained through consideration of education policy initiatives relating, sometimes indirectly, to home-based education and schooling-at-home, and the role of parents in policy formation and execution. Such policies may not only reflect, but also alter notions of agency in education. This poster explores these issues through drawing on my current research into the histories of home-based education and schooling-at-home in British Columbia, Canada and England, UK from the 1960s to the present. Aspects of the research approach are explored, including the place of oral history and participatory research. The poster outlines the methods and sources employed to engage with the voices of those who have experienced such forms of education. Sources include typed monologues/testimonies, interviews (face-to-face, Skype and MSN), and documents (books, blogs, newsletters and others). Analysis is based on a process of ‘editing down’ which seeks to allow the emergence of themes whilst retaining an emic perspective. Particular consideration is given to the ethics of

‘online oral history’ and the use of social networking sites, blogs, websites and email as research tools.

Michael Fell, UCL Energy Institute,
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Profile: From 2007 to 2011, when I joined UCL, I was the energy commissioning editor at Earthscan (a publisher of books and journals in sustainability). I'm interested in how people learn and think about energy use in buildings. My current research focuses on children's role in this process.

“What role for home energy monitors in primary school energy education?”

Abstract: Home energy monitors – devices which provide real-time feedback on electricity use – have occasionally been employed in primary school energy education. Using them in this way is interesting because they afford children the opportunity to experiment with and reflect on energy use in their own home. Furthermore, because fitting a monitor requires some parental involvement their use provides fertile ground for the study of intergenerational education and influence. Such programmes may, however, be controversial in some respects. For example, they potentially provide the child with greater agency with regard to home energy use decisions (which in turn extends to home finances through energy bills), traditionally the domain of the parent or guardian – a potential source of conflict. With the aim of throwing light on this and other possible issues, this research asks the question: “What do children, parents/guardians and teachers think about the use of home energy monitors in primary school energy education?”

Working with two schools in the London area in April and May 2012, focus groups will be conducted with children aged 9-11, parents/guardians and teachers to help elicit a range of concerns and perceived benefits around the use of energy monitors in this context. Factors such as school location, housing types of participants and level environmental engagement will be taken into account. The results of this study will help inform future research into learning (both in children and adults) in relation to energy, and assist in the design of programmes which employ energy monitors.

Marja Liisa Samppala, University of Helsinki, marja-liisa.samppala@helsinki.fi

***Profile:** I graduated as a Master of Education and home economics teacher from the University of Helsinki in 2003. I started postgraduate studies in 2010. I am interested in workplace learning. I am focusing on students' conceptions of workplace learning, because I want to raise the voice of students' themselves, and thereby increase their agency. By my long practical experience (about 25 years) in working life and my education, I am able to evaluate workplace learning critically and from the viewpoint of adult learners. To my personal experience, workplace learning should be more developed in cooperation between the workplace and the school giving the formal education to the students.*

“Developing workplace learning, increasing adult learner’s agency”

***Abstract:** The main aim of my research is to develop workplace learning from the perspective of adult learners. I am focusing on their conceptions of workplace learning, because I want to raise the voice of students' themselves, and thereby increase their agency. The theoretical background of my research is based upon the socio-cultural approach. My research is a qualitative case study which also includes features of action research. The qualitative data is collected in three phases, which consist of interviews focusing on the experienced critical incidents on the workplace, workplace learning experiences and learning studio work. The first phase will focus on experts' (teachers' and workplace supervisors') conceptions of workplace learning. The second phase emphasizes students' conceptions of learning at work. The previous phases will be analysed with phenomenographic content analysis. The analysis focuses on the various ways people experience a phenomenon, with the aim of presenting both horizontal and vertical relationships. The final stage will focus on improving workplace learning through learning studio work which involves students, and workplace learning experts developing their activities in a joint manner. The results of this study will deepen our understanding about the phenomenon of workplace learning and they can be used developing learning practices, which are relevant to adult students' well-being and success of study. The results will also give practice-based examples how to cross the boundaries between working life and vocational education as well as how to develop individual learners' agency in the framework of lifelong learning.*

Maria Bastaki, University of Birmingham,
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***Abstract:** I am a full-time, 1st year postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham. I have been working with children and adults as an EFL teacher for 26 years, and currently I am on educational leave from my teaching post at Leonteio Lykeio Patission, a Greek private school. In the last few years I have been involved in School Model United Nations Conferences as an Advisor. Through my participatory action research project, I would like to examine how the MUN Conference can have an impact on my students' understanding of their identity as global citizens.*

“The impact of Model United Nations Conferences on global citizenship identity, in a Greek Senior High School environment”

***Abstract:** The extremely low levels of participation in elections around the world mark the beginning of a new area when the citizens play only a minor role in the shaping of the state management. School teachers should ideally rekindle trust and confidence in the political system, and promote democratic ideas and agency. A Model United Nations School Conference is a 3-day simulation, during which Senior High School students take on the roles of official delegates in various United Nations Committees. In the course of this participatory action research project, my small team of fifteen MUN students will engage in active and experiential learning. The study aims to: a) examine the strengths and limitations of the MUN Conference, in relation to the students' perception of global citizenship, b) understand how the students' social skills*

develop after their participation in the simulation, and c) find out whether political literacy and critical awareness, empowerment and sense of civil maturity might emerge within the context of the MUN Conference. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative approach techniques - questionnaires to all Conference participants, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, journal logs, photos and videos - will be used during the two cycles of the project, the first one in October 2012 and the second one in April 2013. The findings of this research, either positive or negative, might prove useful for teachers, curriculum designers or school directors who would like to urge their students to adopt a critical global mind-set.

Megan Louise McCall, Saint Louis University,
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***Profile:** Megan McCall is a doctoral student in the Experimental Psychology program at Saint Louis University. She has received degrees from Scripps College (Bachelor of Arts) and the University of Missouri – St Louis (Master of Arts). She specializes in moral development, and is particularly interested in the construction of moral meaning, moral self-perceptions, self-conscious emotions in moral behaviour, and the socialization of moral values within family, school, and religious-community systems. She is also interested in moral development measurement issues. She is a member of the Association for Moral Education and the Jean Piaget Society.*

“Empowering friendships: planting seeds of moral and civic agency within a Diversity Awareness school curriculum”

Abstract: The tasks and obligations of friendship have long been believed to be important for the childhood development of cognitive skills and social-emotional understandings (e.g., Hartup, 1996; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1996; Piaget, 1948). For this reason, educators have worked to promote children’s friendships. In particular, cooperative learning techniques have been successfully employed to inspire compassion and a respect for diversity, broaden students’ scope of justice to those who would otherwise be considered outsiders, and increase personal commitment to moral virtues (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Against this backdrop, two school principals approached our research team requesting assistance with the development of a diversity and civil rights awareness educational program (called Readers 2 Leaders, or R2L) to foster the development of friendships between African-American middle-school students and Caucasian third-grade students. The principals believed that the program would provide students with much-needed multicultural exposure and inspire a nascent sense of civic agency based upon an antipathy for racial inequality. The program took the form of cooperative learning exercises, occurring twice a week over a 6-week period. Activities required that students rely upon the unique strengths of every group member to successfully complete tasks, thereby augmenting each child’s felt agency. Qualitative data on students’ perceptions of diversity and civic action will be presented. These findings were collected as part of the R2L program evaluation, and were obtained in accordance with our university’s ethical code. Participation in

the program was voluntary. Data were stripped of identifying markers by the schools prior to our team’s analyses.

Shona McIntosh, University of Bath, spm25@bath.ac.uk

Profile: *I taught English & Drama for a decade in London secondary schools, apart from two years in Spain, completing a Master’s at the Institute of Education. The dissertation focused on building a learning community in a highly-competitive secondary school environment and left me with questions about how school culture influences teachers’ agency. I left teaching to look after my young family and do a PhD exploring the beginnings of teacher agency, following trainee teachers who, in the very different contexts of their placement schools, develop situated agency: individuals’ choices deemed apt by them for that moment and that place.*

“Trainee teachers on placement; an exploration of contextual influences on the development of situated agency in the process of becoming a teacher”

Abstract: My research aims, from a socio-cultural stance, to better understand ways in which trainee teachers experience the highly individualistic contexts of their placement schools, and specifically how this affects their development of situated agency. Situated agency refers to the choices which individuals deem apt for that place and that time. It is hoped one contribution of the study will be to offer a pluralistic insight into contextual, early-stage, professional career influences. The research questions investigate trainees’ perceptions of possible

ways to be a teacher in placement schools through their descriptions of key influences within these contexts, asking them to identify the range of choices available to them at key moments in becoming a teacher, and exploring the relationship between practice contexts and situated agency. Adopting a holistic multiple-case study, I am constructing descriptions of trainees' trajectories derived from a "within-case analysis" (Creswell, 1998, p. 63) of emerging themes. Through cross-case analysis of those trajectories, I construct a holistic consideration of the influences perceived by trainee participants upon their becoming a teacher and, in particular, upon their development of situated agency. Conducting semi-structured interviews with volunteer participants after each of their teaching practices, I incorporate visual methods to augment trainees' articulation of their practice experiences, including photos of schools and trainees 'drawing' their placements as graphs. Additional data from a variety of sources aim to access descriptions of those potent mediators of culture, schools' values and beliefs, to build a complex picture of the school contexts in which trainees are becoming teachers.

Parallel Workshops Session

Nicola De Martini Ugolotti, University of Amsterdam,
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***Profile:** I am a transcultural psychologist and a medical anthropologist. My professional experience includes street education work with disadvantaged youth in Brazil and with unaccompanied minors and immigrant youth in Turin, Italy. My professional background and experience influenced my current research in Italy on children of immigrant's use of the body and public spaces. My research aims to look at how body practices and public spaces can represent, for children of immigrants in urban contexts in Italy, tools to reproduce, but also contest and challenge, social inequalities, and to express informal but critical political commentaries on contemporary Italian society.*

"Climbing walls, making bridges in Turin, Italy: migrant youth agency in informal educational settings"

***Abstract:** Youth, born to migrants in Italy are challenged to negotiate the position of invisibility and subordination often given to migrants in Europe. Public policies and mass media discourse position them largely as a problem, a population to be controlled and contained (Lipsitz 2005: x). Periodic waves of *moral panic* (Dal Lago 1999; Palmas 2009) depict them alternatively and exclusively as: "a risk" or "at risk" in/for the "host" society. In Italy, over the last few years, government*

cuts to public education funding have seriously influenced the quality of public school services from primary school to university. Youth born to migrants often see their access to the tools and opportunities of integration and upward social mobility, normally offered by traditional educational settings, as severely constrained. My ethnographic study of youth born to migrants in Turin, Italy, practicing *capoeira* and *parkour* in public spaces, aimed to provide insights on how migrant youth between 12 and 20, are able to transform, through bodily practices and creative use of public spaces, in-between urban spaces in places for informal peer education. The research bears witness to the youth's agency as they create a space outside of schools to shape their "self and identity" within different cultures and reach personal targets of social mobility and well-being. By this action, the youth transform public spaces (i.e. street corners, public parks, parking lots) into informal educational settings. The study was guided by the theoretical concepts of "technologies of the self", "social navigation" and human geography contributions on space. By observing the physical activities, expression, and forms of teaching *capoeira* and *parkour* to young migrant youth by more experienced young practitioners, I highlight the visual and participatory tools required to investigate youth agency in an alternative educational setting. Finally, I call for scholarship that examines both informal and traditional educational settings as connected spaces where children of migrants constantly re-create new forms of identity and self-expression, in the continuous effort to challenge their invisibility and subordination in Italian society and to shape their present and future lives.

Nici Long, University of Manchester,
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***Profile:** I have a background in mental health, initially in clinical psychology and then as a community practitioner using dance and other creative arts to facilitate the personal development of members of an excluded community on the West Coast of Cumbria. I am now completing my Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at the University of Manchester. My research and passion is working with children and young people who have been excluded from school and who attend Pupil Referral Units. My Thesis RQ is "How do 'hard to reach' young people make use of therapeutic storytelling workshops," utilising discussion and creative approaches.*

"Reaching the 'hard to reach' through stories"

***Abstract:** This workshop will reflect upon an on-going research project focusing upon the experiences of 18 'hard to reach' young people who have attended a therapeutic storytelling programme. In particular, it focuses upon the ways in which young people actively utilise the sessions for their benefit. The broad exploratory research question for the project is: How do 'hard to reach' young people make use of therapeutic storytelling workshops? The main bodies of literature that this workshop draws upon are the use of *storytelling* and *creative therapies* to enhance *emotional literacy* in the classroom when working with *'hard to reach' young people*. In addition it draws upon *attachment theory*, *humanistic* and *psychodynamic therapies* and *neuropsychology*.*

This project is harnessed around the heuristic research process

as outlined by Moustakas (1990). This encourages the researcher to view those involved in the project as co-researchers engaged in a co-created dynamic and interactive process. The aim of this research is to understand what this process of engagement is like for the co-creators. All participants are invited to go through a process of 'immersion', 'incubation' and 'illumination' to elicit key personally meaningful themes about their engagement with the storytelling programme. 18 participants have been recruited from two Pupil Referral Units in Manchester (one KS2 and one KS3). They have been asked to participate in a storytelling programme which will engage them in the creative and therapeutic processing of stories. The researcher is also the storyteller. Participants in the research project will meet in their respective groups for 12 two hour sessions over the term where they will hear and work on a story through discussion and other creative techniques. Each week the young people will be invited to respond to their experience of the storytelling workshop in verbal or other creative forms. At the end of the Programme they will be facilitated to co-create an individual depiction of how they have made use of the storytelling workshops. This engages the young people in their own heuristic analysis comprising the stages of immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. The individual depictions created by the young people will be analysed by the researcher following the same heuristic stages as above, resulting in a composite depiction and then a final creative synthesis. These latter two stages will be member checked in an attempt to stay as true as possible to the participants' experience. This project has gained ethical approval from the University of Manchester research Ethics

Committee. This will be an experiential workshop in which individuals will be asked to take part in a storytelling activity, similar to that engaged in by the research participants. This will allow the workshop participants to experience the benefits of personal development through story as well as participating in the heuristic analysis and data collection process. Participants will produce their own data from which they can create their own individual depiction and as a group we will aim to create a composite depiction and potentially a final creative synthesis. This will be an original synthesis of the data reflecting the researchers' intuition, imagination and essential meanings of the experience (Moustakas, 1990).

Rosamund Payne, The Clifton Children's House,
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Profile: I originally trained as a nurse, but later became interested in Montessori Education when our first child attended a Montessori nursery in 1978 in Cape Town. After qualifying as a Montessori teacher, I opened The Clifton Children's House in 1989 in Bristol. For the last 20 years the school has been our family home. In 2007, I was awarded Montessorian of the Year for my involvement in training pre-school teachers in Nicaragua. I have had the privilege of working with children for 30 years and have witnessed first hand the positive aspects of this method of education.

“Self-regulation in a Montessori setting – “Help me to do it by myself””

Abstract: *“The child is a truly miraculous being and this must be deeply felt by the educator”* – Maria Montessori, 1870 – 1952.

The Montessori Method is based on the principle that children want to be active in their own learning. Young children need freedom of choice. They learn by doing and they need to go at their own pace. The method teaches that too much instruction and adult control can make children dependent. This interactive workshop will centre on the Montessori Method as a theory of teaching and learning. The workshop will contain a brief introduction to Montessori and her method and short video clips and photographs of the children in my Montessori Nursery School. I hope these may provide stimulation for a group discussion. The main focus will be on exploring the idea of autonomy development by giving examples of activities and practices we do to encourage self-regulation and independence. This will include describing the school schedule, the way we introduce the youngest children (2 ½ year olds) to the activities and the principle of freedom of choice and uninterrupted work time. These are central to the Montessori philosophy. I will also be demonstrating some of the Montessori activities such as the pink tower, grading colour tablets as well as more practical activities such as pouring and spooning, and cleaning a table. Through these demonstrations I hope to highlight ways in which teachers could be hindering or encouraging the child's sense of agency. I would really like the participants at the workshop to explore the materials and ask questions.

Daniela Jadue & Jaakko Hilppö “Children as agents in research: contributions of visual data & participatory research”

This workshop reflects upon two approaches to agency in young children and how they relate to each other: (1) agency as a theoretical stand; and (2) agency as a methodological approach to research. The two studies presented in this workshop acknowledge young children's agency in their educational and life experiences and have sought? Seek forms of researching and understanding their exercise and development of agency. The most appropriate and consistent research approach seemed to be a project using participatory methods, which acknowledge the relevance of the voice of the child in research concerning them. This workshop will exemplify two different qualitative research designs that aim to explore young children's agency and educational experiences in early years settings by carrying out participatory research gathering different forms of visual data. The first study, carried out in Chile, will depict the contributions of photograph sessions and photograph interviews with young children and the use of a coding framework and a video analysis software. The second study, carried out in Finland with a similar design, will provide conceptual tools for analysis by describing the process of 'progressive refinement of hypothesis' (Engle, Conant & Greeno, 2008) as a disciplined way into the data sources generated with the children. The workshop is divided in four sections: (1) introduction to the projects; (2) small

groups activities with examples of data provided to explore and analyse; (3) discussion (methodological issues, ethical issues, establishing validity and reliability of data, power issues, etc.); and (4) conclusions and challenges for further research. The aim is to discuss the benefits and limitations of these types of data, possible ways of analysis and potential of outcomes. This will give a deeper insight of how participatory methods with young children allow to research educational issues in an agentic way, by acknowledging young children's voices in their experiences.