**Faculty of Education Research Seminar Series 2018/19**

**Teachers, Gender and the Feminisation Debate**

*Prof Marie-Pierre Moreau, Anglia Ruskin University*

Tuesday 18th September 2018 • 12.30-2.00pm • E15

Teaching is often constructed as a ‘feminised’ profession. Drawing on my forthcoming book (Teachers, gender and the feminisation debate, Routledge). I will critically engage with this claim and analyse the way gender and power play out in the lives of men and women teachers. Using a range of primary and secondary sources, I will assess a view of teaching as ‘feminised’ – a term with multiple meanings yet often undefined. In particular, I will explore the various discourses and debates about the feminisation of teaching which circulate in media and policy circles in a range of local, national and international contexts and question some of the claims underpinning these discourses.

*Marie-Pierre Moreau is Professor in Education, Department of Education and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University. Her research is at the nexus of education, work and equality issues, with specific reference to gender. She has particular interest in how gender, social class and ethnicity shape people's lives and in individuals' discursive construction of equality matters.*

**A Novel Multi-Sensory Approach to Letter Recognition and Literacy**

*Patricia Carson, James Cook University, Cairns, Australia*

Thursday 1st November 2018 • 12.45-2.00pm • E18

My presentation will focus on a novel multi-sensory approach to letter recognition and literacy through 1) a case study in two Prep Grades (Kindergarten in Canada), to observe if the provision of a multisensory approach to literacy instruction (Davis Learning Strategies™) when added to traditional phonics-based literacy instruction changes the outcome for some students.

Currently, I am in the second of three iterations, providing the Davis Learning Strategies™ to prep grades in an inner-city school in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The program is an Arts based reading and spelling program with three main components: 1) self regulating tools to prepare children for learning; 2) clay work to create the letters and visual representations of the words, definitions and spelling: and 3) a three-step reading program.

The first year of this action research focused on how program delivery was adapted and changed to meet the learning needs and experiences of the children. These adaptations included: movement activities, body awareness and stories, as well as, more time to explore the clay before using it to make and master letters and words. These adaptations have been incorporated into the second iteration which commenced in September 2018.

and

2) an autoethnographic case study focusing on my experiences as a dyslexic in the education system as – both a student, a mature age student, a Davis Learning Strategies™ provider and researcher and how these experiences influence my current experiences.

*Patricia Carson is working on her Doctor of Education (in Research) at James Cook University, Cairns, Australia. An experienced educator, she has taught in the early years of school in both Australia and Canada. Currently she is a private consultant working with special needs students in Alberta, Canada. Her research interests focus on working with Three Dimensional Visual Thinkers who are having trouble with spelling and reading, as well as exploring whether a novel multi-sensory approach to teaching these skills can be beneficial for these thinkers.*

**Women, Politics and Policy-making in Education: Mapping generations of activism**

*Prof Jane Martin, University of Birmingham*

Thursday 15th November 2018 • 12.45-2.00pm • H203 CANCELLED

A record number of women were elected to the British House of Commons in the 2017 general election. But while Westminster may look very different with an unprecedented high of 32 per cent women on the benches, progress toward more equal female representation has been slow. Women fought and won local government elections more than a century ago and lessons can be learned from their experience in London - the place where electorally, they were notably successful. In 1879, for instance, nine women (18 per cent of the membership) were elected serve on the London School Board, the world’s largest educational parliament, to help ensure the education of working-class children. For Victorian feminists, this breakthrough in political life was a spur to further social action. Today these pioneering municipal politicians are all but forgotten.

This paper takes the long view to ask what happened to the school board women and the women who came after. Women’s social action was an essential component to politics and policy making in the 120-year period that London had a single education authority, making this a good place to look for anyone interested in the question of female representation beyond Westminster. Starting in the 1870s, the contributions of successive generations of activist women are discussed, finishing with Caroline Benn, the American-born wife of British Labour party politician Tony Benn who entered British public life in the 1960s. From a shared office in the family home in London’s Holland Park, Caroline Benn secured an independent academic status through her work on educational politics. What did she do and how did she do it?

*Jane Martin is Professor of Social History of Education at the University of Birmingham, where she teaches and researches on gender and history, education policy and social justice, and research methods in education. Her publications cover politics and policy-making in education in historical and contemporary perspectives and her first book, ‘Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England’, won the History of Education Society (UK) Book Prize in 2002. She is co-editor of Progressive Education: Policy, Politics and Practice – a Routledge book series and her most recent book is ‘Making Socialists: Mary Bridges Adams and the Fight for Knowledge and Power, 1855-1939’ (Manchester University Press). Currently she is completing a manuscript for ‘Gender and History a Palgrave book series: Gender and Education in England since 1770: a social history’. Future publications include a biography of the educationalist Caroline Benn (1926-2000).*

**Systematic Synthetic Phonics: A possible cause of pupils’ literacy difficulties**

*Dr Jonathan Solity, University College London*

Tuesday 11th December 2018 • 3.45-5.00pm • E5

Since 2010 the Government has adopted systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) as the fundamental approach to teaching reading. It subsequently approved several commercial SSP programmes that were recommended to schools. The first part of the talk will describe the theory and research that has informed the use of real books in teaching reading and demonstrate that, contrary to conventional wisdom, they provide children with more opportunities to apply their phonic skills to reading that highly decodable reading schemes. The second part of the talk will present the results of a study that investigated the merits and limitations of commercial, Government approved SSP programmes. A database was created of approximately 1400 ‘real books,’ for students aged between 4-8 years of age, containing over 1.3 million words. An algorithm was developed to analyse the content of each book in terms of the individual words and GPCs required to read each book. This made it possible to identify the percentage of each book that a pupil would be able to read if they had mastered all the ‘tricky words’ and GPCs in four Government recommended SSP programmes (Jolly Phonics, Read Write Inc, Letters & Sounds and THRASS). The analysis indicated that: (i) approximately a third of the GPCs taught by commercial SSP programmes are low frequency in children’s literature and so teaching them is questionable; (ii) teaching more than one phoneme for a grapheme creates too many plausible phonically decodable pronunciations; (iii) SSPs ignore the role of vocabulary knowledge in phonic decoding and (iv) phonically decodable texts do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in a diverse range of contexts. These flaws in commercial SSPs are potentially a major cause of pupils’ difficulties in learning to read. The seminar will conclude with suggestions on how best to overcome these problems to promote pupils‘ future progress.

*Jonathan Solity worked as a teacher in a first school in Bradford, as an educational psychologist in Walsall and for 23 years was an associate professor at the University of Warwick lecturing in educational psychology. He is one of the country’s leading experts on instructional psychology and has written seven books and over 40 articles in refereed journals as well as contributing to edited books. His co-authored book (Teachers in Control: Cracking the Code) on what is now known as ‘fake news’ was reissued by Routledge in June 2018 and the Learning Revolution explained how the principles and teaching methods associated with instructional psychology can be applied to teaching foreign languages. Jonathan is currently an Optima Psychology and Honorary Research Fellow at University College London.*

*Jonathan has received over £1m in funding to conduct research into raising attainments and preventing difficulties in reading, writing, spelling and maths. His literacy research is unique in teaching reading through a combination of ‘real books’ and systematic synthetic phonics. The research has been conducted over a 25 year and demonstrated (i) how best to raise pupil attainments; (ii) that the incidence of reading difficulties can be reduced from the usual 20-25% to less than 3%; (iii) that differentiated whole class teaching is more effective for lower achieving pupils than 1-1 or small group teaching and (iv) that real books give pupils more opportunities to apply their phonic skills when reading than phonically decodable reading schemes.*

**Is the English school curriculum white? British Values curriculum policy and colonial discourses: The case of Geography**

*Dr Christine Winter, University of Sheffield*

Monday 14th January 2019 • 12.45-2.00pm • E22

This presentation draws on a recent curriculum policy in English schools, Promoting Fundamental British Values (BV), to disrupt colonial discourses in a popular school GCSE Geography text. British Values policy forms part of the British Government’s anti-terrorism policy ‘Prevent’. Schools are required by law to actively promote BV, including tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions, appreciation of and respect for other cultures and a balance of opposing political views. The inquiry examines a textbook chapter for evidence that may support or challenge these goals. I construct a methodology to analyse textbook pages about global development. The analysis reveals three key problematical concepts: ‘development’, ‘numerical indicators’ and ‘learning to divide the world’. At first, the analysis illuminates an incompatibility between BV policy goals of ‘respect’, ‘tolerance’, and ‘harmony’ and the ‘white curriculum’ of the Geography textbook. But, further probing signals BV policy as another example of white colonial power.

*Christine Winter is Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, University of Sheffield, where she co-directs the Centre for Critical Psychology and Education. Her research focuses on the school curriculum with specific interests in curriculum knowledge, politics, policy and practice. She is Deputy Director of the Education, Childhood and Youth Pathway of the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership, a post graduate training consortium across seven Northern Universities. She recently published, with China Mills: ‘The Psy-Security-Curriculum ensemble: British Values curriculum policy in English schools’ in Journal of Education Policy.*

**Using policy-informed evidence in early childhood education:**

**Bold beginnings, bias and circular discourses**

*Prof Elizabeth Wood, University of Sheffield*

Thursday 7th February 2019 • 3.45-5.00pm • E7

In this seminar, I will critically examine the 2016 Ofsted document ‘Bold Beginnings’ which looks at the Reception curriculum from the perspective of ‘school readiness’, specifically the extent to which the Reception year was preparing four- and five-year-olds for their years of schooling and life ahead. Although based on a purposive and relatively small sample, Bold Beginnings makes assertive recommendations for preschool and Primary schools, Initial Teacher Education, the DfE and OFSTED’s new (2019) inspection framework. Drawing on critical discourse analysis, I will argue that the basis for this survey is methodologically flawed. Furthermore, the underpinning ‘research’ on which it draws includes government statistics for EYFS outcomes, HMCI commentary, government ‘standards’, and selected reports that match or reinforce the OFSTED perspective. Thus Bold Beginnings creates a circular policy logic in which it names the crisis (school readiness) presents the solutions. Bold Beginnings is, however, biased in its methods, in its selection of ‘evidence’, and in its recommendations, which calls into question the broad generalisations made from the ‘findings’. This is one of many documents where OFSTED has extended its remit to providing specific guidance on what constitutes ‘good’ or ‘effective’ practice, and therefore what OFSTED expect to see during inspections. The circular policy logic in similar documents serves to legitimize direct intervention of OFSTED in matters of curriculum and pedagogy, thereby reinforcing the standards and performance agenda at the expense of a broad and balanced education for young children.

My seminar will address the following questions:

What is the crisis/problem that OFSTED is addressing in Bold Beginnings?

What are the proposed reasons for this crisis?

What are the proposed solutions, and on what evidence are these based?

What is absent and what/who has been silenced?

What are the power effects of Bold Beginnings, and the wider trend towards policy-based evidence?

How can the ECE community act back, and act against this circular policy logic?

*Dr Elizabeth Wood is Professor of Education at the University of Sheffield. Her research interests include play in early childhood, specifically children’s social relationships, how they exercise choice and agency, the meaning of freedom, and the relationship between play and learning. Her recent research looks at how children blend traditional and digital forms of play, and the potential that this offers for developing curriculum and pedagogy. She is also working with Dr Liz Chesworth on a project looking at children’s interests in a multi-diverse setting, and with Dr Louise Kay and colleagues in Australian Catholic University on educational leadership in early childhood. Elizabeth is also interested in policy analysis and critique, the il(logic) of policy discourses, and their power effects.*

**Teachers’ Beings and Doings: Identity and agency in teachers in English secondary schools**

*Dr Janet Lord, Manchester Metropolitan University*

Tuesday 12th March 2019• 12.45-2.00pm • E20

Teachers’ professional lives are situated at the intersection of local, national and global educational policy contexts. What they purposefully do (agency) and how they see themselves and their roles as teachers (identity) dynamically interact with such contexts. This research argues that in order to understand the meaningful professional development work of teachers, it is important to have an understanding of this interplay. Current dominant policy discourses fail to take into account the complexities of factors and discourses that affect the beings and doings of teachers, and are therefore inadequate. Four teachers, from different types of English secondary schools, participated in the study.

Drawing on Archer’s work (e.g. 2012) on reflexivity, the ways in which teachers’ thinking mediated the links between their agency and structure are considered. The different modes of reflexivity that teachers employ and the ways in which teachers determine and facilitate personal projects of concern to them were found to be important to their professional identity and agency. The essence of the daily work of teachers appeared to reflect an intersection of personal biography and the situational structures and cultures of schools in which teachers operated, which brought about differences in professional thinking and doing.

*Dr Janet Lord started working in HE in 1990 when she was a MRC funded research fellow at the University of Sheffield, working on adult learning. Subsequently, after some years teaching in FE and sixth form colleges and schools, she was appointed Director of Undergraduate Matters, School of Psychological Sciences, University of Manchester. After having a baby in 2008, she set up her own education consultancy business and simultaneously worked in a number of part time roles as well as continuing to be principal examiner for the AQA examination board. In 2016 she completed her EdD at the University of Manchester. Janet is now Head of Education for the Faculty of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University.*

**Decolonizing Pedagogies: Black feminist reflections on race, faith and culture in higher education**

*Prof Heidi Mirza, Goldsmiths University of London*

Friday 29th March 2019 • 12.45-2.00pm • GEO 002

In this talk I draw on black and postcolonial feminist perspectives to explore ways in which women of colour in higher education engage in ‘embodied’ work towards decolonizing dominant knowledges and regimes of ‘diversity’ in higher education. In the context of the significant numbers of Muslim, Black and Asian students who are now entering British higher education I unpack the ways in which ‘just being there’ can create spaces of contestation in our still overwhelmingly white and male universities. Drawing on my research on the pedagogic practices of teacher educators and their dilemmas of teaching race, faith and culture, I search for radical approaches which can offer us the possibility of transcending the ‘stuck’ institutional discourses of race equality and social inclusion in higher education.

*Heidi Safia Mirza is Visiting Professor of Race, Faith and Culture at Goldsmith College, University of London and Emeritus Professor of Equalities Studies in Education at UCL Institute of Education. She is known for her pioneering intersectional research on race, gender and identity in education. She is author of several best-selling books including, ‘Young Female and Black’, which was voted in BERA’s top 40 most influential educational studies in Britain. Her other publications include ‘Black British Feminism, Race Gender and Educational Desire: Why black women succeed and fail’, and ‘Respecting Difference: Race, faith, and culture for teacher educators’. Her most recent co-edited book is ‘Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy’.*

**Spinning Plates whilst Jumping Through Hoops – Did Barbie Have to Do This?**

*Dr Sarah Misra, Staffordshire University*

Thursday 4th April 2019 • 3.45-5.00pm • B005

Sarah believes that auto-ethnography is not only about telling the stories of others but also about reflecting on our own lived experiences as co-creators of knowledge and comparing these to our own stories in order to explore personal experience and endeavour and connect this to wider cultural, political and social meanings and understanding. In studying female experience she argues that we cannot relegate important aspects of women’s lives to the periphery and that very often these aspects are experienced in the ordinary and everyday rather than in milestone moments. The award-winning Plastic Ceiling Project (which was chosen to feature in a week-long exhibition of artist-researchers in the Tate Liverpool in 2018) is an art-based research project that playfully subverts feminist iconography by using visual images of Barbie to contrast the hyper-feminine mother archetype with the realities of mothering as described by participants. Through its light-hearted imagery it aims to encourage women to tell their own often much darker and rarely discussed stories of the emotional challenges which are routinely inherent in juggling multiple roles of mothering, work and study.

*For as long as she can remember, Sarah has harboured an infatuation for people’s stories and would argue that her work as an auto-ethnographer is first and foremost about storytelling. Sarah is a Senior Lecturer in Education for Staffordshire University and is passionate about social justice, wellbeing, gender equality and the role of education within these areas. She has a particular interest in the lived experience of mothers and has a passion for mythology, folklore and feminine spiritual practices. She is the founder of the Staffordshire Red Tent and Motherwork both of which aim to support and empower women of all ages.*

**COOCS, Campfires and Gonzo Pedagogy: An exploration of the learning landscape when we go barefoot beyond the walls of the institution**

*Dr Peter Shukie, Blackburn College*

Monday 20th May 2019 • 12.45-2.00pm • E7

The revolutionary rhetoric surrounding the influence of digital technology has shaped discourse in many facets of life including, art, commerce, public services and education. Any evidence of the ways in which the changes are revolutionary can often be left in the shadows of rhetorical evocations of golden utopias or gloomy dystopias. In this seminar, we explore one project located in digital space which explores how education might alter in digital, open spaces. The project was developed in response to early excitement around Massive Open Online Courses and a belief that how we teach and learn was undergoing fundamental change. The response was triggered through recognition that these spaces appeared dominated by people, discourses and positions of power familiar to real-world universities and academia. In response, we generated a space that remained open and online, but replaced massive with community. Community Open Online Courses (COOCs) offer anyone that registers the opportunity to create courses on any subject, create communities and share learning for free. The platform was created to be intentionally non-institutional, and allowed anyone access. Over the first two years of the project a Participatory Action Research approach helped us record and reflect on what was created and experienced. This involved early challenges in developing learning space outside institutions while also revealing exciting developments in how people responded to teaching and learning. Initial influences of Freirean popular education remained throughout, while later encouragement came from rhizomatic conceptions of power in a multiplicity – of distributed and often seemingly chaotic notions of what it means to know, of what knowledge is.

In this seminar, we focus the glow of our lamps on the ways that participants discussed teaching and learning. We will not ignore the organisational and contextual challenges, nor the technologies and the challenges to common-sense we witnessed. Instead, these influences are considered as we illuminate emergent ideas of gonzo pedagogy and campfires of creativity, it is these key terms we hold our flame to as we encounter participant responses and experiences to learning outside the campus walls. We welcome anyone with an interest in learning and the spaces beyond the light at the centre to come and join us as we illuminate the shadows.

*Dr Peter Shukie is a lecturer in Education Studies at a college-based Higher Education institute in Blackburn. Peter’s work is focussed on creating critical pathways to engage with technology that emphasise praxis, a forging of theory and practice to create purposeful learning and teaching. Peter was the founder of COOCS.CO.UK and works with institutional and community educators to explore ways of teaching & learning beyond familiar and traditional spaces. He was awarded second place in the ALT Learning Technologist of the Year Award (2018) and his technology modules were shortlisted for the TES FE Award for Outstanding use of Technology in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (2018); despite winning neither of these awards he remains upbeat about the possibilities of using technology to renew interest and engagement with learning in wide and diverse spaces.*

***Taking yourself seriously: Arts methodologies for social cohesion***

*Prof Kate Pahl, Manchester Metropolitan University*

Tuesday 11th June 2019 • 3.45-5.00pm • E7

In this talk I describe a number of projects that have drawn on artistic methodologies to explore modes of inclusion with young people. I have a particular interest in the co-production of research and finding ways in which communities can author their own publications and write books and articles together. Artistic methodologies can involve drawing, music, poetry and visual approaches and can enable different kinds of communicative practices to flourish. Drawing on a number of projects, including the AHRC follow-on funded project, ‘Taking Yourself Seriously’, I describe how these practices can unfold in interesting and surprising ways to co-create ‘living knowledge’ with communities (Facer and Enright 2016).

*Kate Pahl is Professor of Arts and Literacy at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is currently involved in a number of projects, including a project called ‘Feeling Odd in the World of Education’ (AHRC funded) and a new GCRF/AHRC project called' Belonging and learning' exploring the use of arts methods with policy makers and practitioners to look at the experiences of street-connected young people in Uganda, Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo. She has written books on literacy in communities and her most recent books have included thinking on co-production and creative methodologies.*

*To book your place, please contact educationresearch@edgehill.ac.uk*