Edge Hill University

The Annual Conference for Research in Education – ACRE

Beyond the Neoliberal University: Re-Thinking Higher Education

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Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University

Programme and Book of Abstracts

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TUESDAY AM

Keynote (1): Towards a moral university: critical theory, social justice and a commitment to the vicissitudes of human fate

Dr Jan McArthur, Lancaster University   **@JanMcArthur**

Thinking about the future university is mired in difficulties while we remain embedded in the status-quo of current arrangements and assumptions. This is especially so if we have an explicit commitment to greater social justice within and through higher education, as is the case with critical theory. How can we pursue greater social justice from within a prevailing, neo-liberal system imbued with injustice? Early critical theorists, Horkheimer and Adorno, were well attuned to this paradox of seeking to look beyond current social practices while so clearly situated within them.
In this keynote I look back to two rather different moments in the history of higher education in order to look forward to possibilities other than the continuance of the current manifestations of higher education, characterized by commodification, marketization and commercialization. The first of these is the Robbins Report of 1963 which has had such an influence on the shape of higher education in the UK. I will consider whether the Robbins Report did represent a radical shift in higher education and the extent to which it was successful in disrupting established interests and elites.

I will ask two inter-related questions: how radical was Robbins and how relevant to us today in this neoliberal climate? But to answer this question I want to go back even further to another document which outlines the purposes of an institution of higher education. Here I refer to the inaugural lecture that Horkheimer gave when he became Director of the Institute for social Research (also known as the Frankfurt School) in 1931. Here we have a philosophical telling of the purposes of this Institute clearly linked to it having a moral role focused on the furthering of social justice. This is, in Horkheimer's words, a dedication to the 'vicissitudes of human fate' – and this is the locale of our moral university which I shall explore.

Plenary Session: The idea of "the university": the search for quality?

Chair: Prof Saville Kushner   **Discussant: Prof John Diamond**

Prof Amanda Fulford, Edge Hill University   **@mjfulford**

The Blockchain University: New approaches to the idea of the university in neo-liberal times

The establishing of a new university is a relatively rare occurrence in the UK, particularly given the challenges of contemporary higher education. One recent exception is Woolf University - initiated by academics from the University of Oxford - which states that it: 'seeks to provide students anywhere in the world with a one-to-one education in the Oxford tradition of personal tutorials'.   Woolf will use blockchain - the technology behind crypto-currencies such as bitcoin - to provide a system of one-to-one education that will prove cheaper for students and pay more for teachers. By using blockchain technology, and smart contacts, Woolf will build a platform that will connect students directly with academics. Their approach will address escalating tuition fees, and make the best use of human resources by moving away from the increasing precarity of many academic contracts. By automating administration, it will target resources on personalised, bespoke, 1:1 teaching. Human administrative functions will be stripped out, and replaced by smart contracts that use units of code to track student progression, and release payment to academics.   This paper responds to the Woolf phenomenon by addressing two key questions: First, what does this radical approach to higher education say about the institution of the university, and second, what does it say about the very idea of the university? Using a philosophical approach, it looks to the etymology of 'university' as a starting point to show that the term is rooted in an idea of a universitas magistrorum et scholarium - a community of masters and scholars. But the idea of Woolf challenges this fundamental idea of what a university might, or should, consist in. The paper turns to consider the idea of a university through the work of the American philosopher, Stanley Cavell, and what he finds at stake in the idea of being in community. It concludes with reflections on the challenges that higher education may face from blockchain universities.

Laura Giovinazzi, Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, Italy

Managerial or Neoliberal state?   Reopening the debate over the rise of Quality Assessment criteria in the British Higher Education Sector

It is a challenge to trace the origins of the complex evaluation framework which drives the funding received by the British Higher Education (HE) sector. It is often suggested that the establishment of a state-controlled evaluation framework was a crucial component of the neoliberal reforms initiated in the 1980s. This brief article suggests for a problematization of these accounts through a radical historicist approach. Borrowing from Guy Neave's insights on the 'evaluative state'(1988), the intention is to open up this complex historical period of change in order to consider how non-state agents played a crucial role in shaping managerial instruments of evaluation such as Quality Assessment criteria. In particular, the attempt here is to suggest that although the state acted in a neoliberal manner, visible in the abolishment of the quinquennial grant system in 1976 and the consecutive attempts to shift the burden of higher education to 'customers', the development of managerial instruments owes more to the reactions to these cuts on behalf of university agents and the intermediate bodies (Neave, 1988) which were emerging at the time rather than to a clearly defined state strategy for implementing forms of evaluation. The implications of this are significant as they indicate that conceiving the origins and development of QA criteria as a mere case of 'centralization of state control' over the sector leaves an important part of distinct yet inevitably interwoven historical developments unexplored. Thus, this brief article will present the research and work carried out by university representative groups and other bodies in the mind 1980s in order to remedy the lack of a thorough analysis of managerialism within neoliberalism,

hoping to provide material for discussion on the effects of quality assessment criteria on the academic profession and on the theorization of how the latter is eroding under the slogan of accountability.

Idil Akdos and Antony Martel, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway

"The Neoliberal University as a Wicked Problem": Reverse engineering academia's siloed approach toward transdisciplinarity through an experimental design thinking course

Life is a university. As such it is worth understanding the role of university in our lives. This paper examines and reflects on the complex role of the university in today's society, functioning as a structure of capitalism during a period of climate crisis. This will be achieved by sharing the experiences of three master's students developing and coordinating a transdisciplinary design thinking course at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). With universities corporatizing their organizational model, increasingly burdening professors with administrative responsibilities, and accelerating the rate of publication, there is little time to find common ground between academic departments or assess the impact of university research. Often students are an after-thought. Addressing these concerns, three students from NMBU constructed a design thinking course called Design for Society, focusing on this conjunctural moment of political, economic, and environmental crisis, in collaboration with a community partner to plant a seed of transformation for the neoliberal model of higher education. Incorporating a critical pedagogical approach to this course, these three students eradicated the boundary between student and teachers, acting as course facilitators to rebel against the hierarchical status academics impose in a classroom setting of five students. Design for Society was about demonstrating that learning and research are highly compatible, problematizing the traditional distinction between research and education, offering intriguing possibilities for a synthesis between the classroom and research output. Moreover, the interdisciplinary student teams faced both opportunities and challenges in their approaches to the cases, but overall the intention of Design for Society was to put students in the driver's seat of systems transformation by applying just-in time learning to real cases provided by community partners. Ultimately, Design for Society is an experiment where the course facilitators accumulated a wealth of tacit knowledge about how the university functions beyond the rhetoric of excellence and sustainability.

Optional: Workshop or Round Table

Dr Cassie Earl, Lancaster University   **@cassie_earl**

WORKSHOP: The 'Safe Space' of the Neoliberal University: Reframing academic 'freedom' through student interviews, within, against and beyond intellectual enclosure

This presentation and discussion will cover the themes of both clientism, consumerism and ethics in pedagogical relationships and competing approaches to social justice in the configuring of higher education. It does this by drawing on interviews with students for an upcoming book on nurturing dissent in the university. The presentation and discussion will examine what the students interviewed saw as the ideal university, in terms of pedagogy, politics, and ethos. The presentation and discussion, will introduce ideas of what the 'safe space' of a university is in light of these ideas, and problematise the notion of the enclosed 'safe space' universities have become, against ideas around the older notion of the university as an open 'safe space'. The ideas, questions, and provocations that the initial presentation will introduce are questions that emerged as constant themes in the interviews for the book. These interviews were carried out with both student activists and students who had never often even thought of what political views they might have, across both research and teaching intensive universities. The thoughts, questions and provocations they came up with will be put to attendees of this presentation to shape discussion about what it means to create a safe space in the university to move and manoeuvre within, against, and beyond the neoliberalisation of everyday life (Holloway, 2010) through the re-intellectualisation of the university, and importantly what this might mean for the life of the intellectual practitioner.

ROUNDTABLE: Sanctuary Universities, scholarships and refugee access to HE

Beyond #refugeeaccess: Universities of Sanctuary

Mike Stoddart (Convenor, EHU),

Aleks Palanac (Leicester), Sharon Sweeney (Dundee) Anna Jones (RefuAid)   **@AFRatEHU**

This panel brings together professionals from across the country to share good practice in supporting participation in Higher Education for refugees and asylum seekers who face multiple barriers, including most significantly for the neo-liberal project, financial barriers. The panel will explore ways in which changes to university's policies and practices have been made following action by internal and external groups. The panel will also explore ways in which notions of social justice and inclusion can help HE institutions to go beyond being providers of access to become enablers of equitable participation.

Aleks Palanac, Leicester University (by video)

Individuals at Leicester University's English Language Teaching Unit have started to critique the roles that they play in the neo-liberal university and have begun to actively facilitate access to HE for a group of students for whom HE is routinely inaccessible: refugees and asylum seekers (RASs). They have developed a three-tiered system of support for RASs: free general and academic English classes from beginner to advanced levels (in conjunction with local charity Leicester City of Sanctuary); free places on full-time pre-sessional EAP courses to facilitate progression from IELTS 4.0 to IELTS 6.5/7.0; further support and progression opportunities including access to further study (including scholarships) and careers guidance.

When being awarded University of Sanctuary status in November 2018, this model was hailed as one of good practice by the awarding committee. The strength of this bottom-up, needs-based approach is that it puts fundamental language needs at its centre, ensuring there is something available for every RAS who wishes to study, and there are

clear progression routes available. This represents a shift in the interpretation and application of the values and mechanisms of the neo-liberal university: there is a degree to which these can be re-purposed as a force for the facilitation of social justice and a return to some of the principles of humanistic education.

Sharon Sweeney, University of Dundee

The University of Dundee brought its humanitarian facing scholarships together in 2017 as our Humanitarian Scholarships. The initial model brought together HESPAL, CARA and Russ scholarships with an additional provision of full support - fees and stipends- for two other Refugee applicants. This has been an iterative process of development which now includes support for pre-sessional English language courses for local Refugees and support for legal advice for scholars who are legally stateless.

Mike Stoddart and Anna Jones (in absentia)

Action for Refugees and RefuAid: A case study in community and university engagement

This joint presentation will present a case study of the impact of the RefuAid seminar that took place at Edge Hill University in March 2019. It will explore the role of the university in community engagement and how values such as social justice and a commitment to inclusion can be enacted in meaningful action.

Action for Refugees was formed as a grouping of academics, support staff and students at Edge Hill University who felt a common need to respond to the plight of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and abroad. This prompted a multi-faceted response that has included fund-raising, volunteering, curriculum developments, and research and knowledge exchange. Notions of social justice, equity and equality are central to the work of Action for Refugees.

RefuAid was founded in 2015 in an effort to provide a practical response to forced migration for refugees and asylum-seekers living in the UK. Their primary focus is to provide solutions to the main barriers facing refugees trying to restart their life in the UK: finance, re-qualification and language tuition. The session will provide delegates with an insight into the work of both organisations and an opportunity to engage in discussion that will inform future developments.

Anna Jones, co-founder, RefuAid. "We identified 3 key barriers people with leave to remain were facing in becoming independent and starting their lives here in the UK: finance and re-qualification, language tuition and specialist employment advice. We now deliver programmes aimed at overcoming these barriers and supporting people to return to doing what they know and love.

Our Language: A Gateway programme focuses on supporting refugees with English language qualifications required for higher education and employment. We currently partner with over 70 English language schools and universities across the UK, who offer between 1 and 8 free spaces on their language courses. To date, we have supported over 300 students with access to tuition. We also cover the cost of expenses during their studies, including course materials, transportation and up to two exam fees.

Approximately 50% of the students on our language programme will go onto higher education and so far we have supported over 70 students in accessing university. The other 50% of language students will go onto our Equal Access loan programme, which offers interest-free loans of up to £10,000 for internationally-trained refugees to pay for UK accreditation and re-qualification, allowing them to return to employment in their prior professional fields. This includes doctors, dentists, lawyers, engineers and other skilled professionals and we currently have a 100% repayment rate. More recently we have launched our placement program, which provides an entry point for refugees to access internships and job positions, as a starting point for gaining valuable work experience and UK recognised references.

These solutions have proved both successful, scalable and cost-effective."

Panel Streams (1)

Chair: Prof Amanda Fulford

The life of the intellectual practitioner

Louise Hawxwell and Dr Christine Lewis, Edge Hill University   **@ehusci_louise @ChristineL_EHU**

'If the CAP fits', a methodological provocation: how self-study and autoethnographic processes impact on the life of the intellectual practitioner

Higher Education practice is presented in arbitrary and under theorised ways. Therefore, there is a need for more political and philosophical engagement through research both in and for Higher Education, which pushes against 'borders, boundaries and margins' (Hamilton et al 2009:18). Within the context of this 'methodologically contested present' (Lincoln and Denzin 2005:1116) research choices affect the inquiry. The two researchers in this study have engaged with different Creative Analytical Practices (CAP); Self-Study and Autoethnography, in order to expand the boundaries of knowledge generation and understanding.   Within both methodologies there are challenging issues and questions. The purpose of our provocation is to consider how these different CAPs diverge and augment, as well as considering the value of each. For example, both use critical self-reflection, dialogic processes (Anderson 2006) and life storying through narrative tools (Goodson, 2014; Goodson and Sikes 2001). However, the Autoethnographic researcher seeks an understanding of self and some aspect of life lived in context. Self-study researchers focus on studying their practice through exploring personal values and professional work.

The tools we will use to inform our provocation will refer to aspects of our own doctoral research. We pose the following challenging questions;

- Where am 'I' in the study?
- How have I used critical self-reflection to impact my life as a researcher?
- How have I used dialogic processes?
- How have I generated data?
- How has ethics impacted upon my life as a researcher?
- How researchers situate the self in their research is critical to the enhancement of knowledge.

Our provocation is not a discussion intended to limit approaches to research or to determine which is better, rather this space will be used to provoke when each of the methods presented might be more suitable

Pete Atherton, Edge Hill University/Liverpool John Moores University   **@PeteStarryid**

Autoethnography: How I became a tech double agent

This paper evaluates the initial findings of a small-scale research project into how one teacher trainer and portfolio careerist, is attempting to unpick his skillset in a period of swift change and marked transition. How can a multi-skilled practitioner make sense of their diverse but complementary skills, when the neoliberalist educator is arguably deskilled and multiskilled at the same time? One of the most natural ways to deconstruct this enigma is through autoethnography. One of the reasons for this is the freedom that autoethnography allows. Autoethnography is frequently dismissed as vague and self-indulgent as a method of social research. This paper will propose that a long and varied career in education lends itself to innovative methods of data collection, analysis and dissemination. Furthermore, the paper's discussion of the literature will naturally help interrogate debates around where autoethnography sits in the digital intellectual landscape. Conversely, the paper will propose a theory that unifies all of the researcher's work across four universities, publishing, freelance and corporate work. That theory is constructivism, which is, perhaps, one of the more grounded theories in relation to education. A complementary element to the research will incorporate an autoethnographic methodology to explore the idea that the researcher - a portfolio careerist by both choice and necessity - is surviving by acting as a double agent between the unconnected

worlds of technology and education. In doing this, the work will attempt to dissect the underlying social issues that are governing the researcher's situation, mindset, skillset and workflow.

Louise Mycroft and Kay Sidebottom, Independent   **@LouMycroft @KaySocLearn**

Nomadic Inquiry: the life of the intellectual practitioner in posthuman times

"The work is the organisation. The organisation is not the work." Rosi Braidotti, 2016   This provocation presents two contrasting approaches to working nomadically as intellectual practitioners in adult education. Connected by a commitment to finding fresh, 'posthuman' ways of working and being, we began a diffractive discourse in 2017 via dialogue, social media and co-writing, mapping a cartography of our own practice which we present here.   Our presentation will expand upon the notion of a posthuman cartography (Braidotti, 2018) and the (more or less) rhizomatic practice we create and re-create with each professional decision. 'Posthuman' in this sense suggests a departure from the kind of thinking that is rooted in limiting ideas of what it means to be human; it invites us to de-centre the Enlightenment ideal of 'Man' as humanity's universal representative. Re-imagining educational spaces within this paradigm requires us to make an ethical shift from external frameworks of 'morality' to 'walking the boundaries' of a new personal ethics (Montgomery and bergman, 2017). We will explore these attempts alongside our process of disaggregating conventional definitions of power in order to work with the potentia and potestas balance of our different situations - practising outwith and inside the academy and investigating the potential of each for anti-fascist work.   The challenges we pose to delegates are these: where is the world-changing work of unsettling structures and hegemonic thinking best done? What are the contradictions of working in formal, hierarchical organisations while maintaining a commitment to radical politics of difference? How can we best speak truth to power? And how can we support one another to smooth out spaces where action can be taken that lets newness into a fragmented, commodified education

Social justice and HE

Dr Clare Woolhouse and Dr Laura Nicholson, Edge Hill University   @ClareWoolhouse

"Peer support is excellent it really helps to build confidence." ***Rethinking HE based professional development for teaching assistants as a practice of freedom***

The use of peer mentoring is relatively familiar for colleagues who work within Faculties of Education and/or support teachers' professional development (Kaunisto, Estola & Leiman, 2013). However, there has been rather less focus upon the role of peer mentoring in developing other professionals working within schools, such as Teaching Assistants (TAs) (Nicholson, Rodriguez-Cuadrado & Woolhouse, 2019). This gap is problematic for us as there is a social justice aspect to ensuring that Higher Education offers professional development and other opportunities to the wider school workforce, because, as has been previously argued, "TAs have traditionally been, marginalised, undervalued and largely ignored members of the professional educational workforce" (Woolhouse, Dunne, and Goddard, 2009:766) and there has been only limited improvement in the intervening ten years.   In this presentation we will consider the reported experiences of a selection of TAs, derived from data collected via qualitative surveys completed by over 300 TAs who were training for a mathematics intervention (Every Child Counts, ECC) that they would deliver to underachieving pupils within mainstream schools. We will draw upon the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Friere's 'Practice of Freedom' (2000:41) to frame peer mentoring as a productive practice within professional development training. The Data from the TAs experiences will be explored under three key themes: shaping experiences, safe spaces for developing pedagogy, and increasing confidence, which we explore to locate a political approach to education. In doing so, we will address how the creation and maintenance of a supportive community of practice for a group of educational professionals who are often undervalued and overlooked is a socially just process.

Dr Julia Bennett, University of Chester

Decolonizing the neo-liberal university: views from teaching-led institutions

Calls to 'decolonize' university education have become something of a theme within some sectors of the HE landscape both nationally and internationally. The campaigns within the UK which have so far attracted the most attention have been those which have focused on, or developed out of, student led initiatives at older and higher status universities such as Cambridge and UCL. These have addressed issues relating to internationalization, the curriculum and whose knowledge counts.   Building on the original student-led momentum, this paper presents initial findings from a small-scale project looking at how to decolonize university curricula in more 'peripheral' universities in the English Higher Education system, with a particular focus on post-92 and Million+ Universities in the North West of England. Our discussion draws on feedback from a workshop organized at the University of Chester in which academics, student union organizers and student facing staff from a number of Higher Education providers from Northern England and Wales were invited to share knowledge and experiences of 'decolonization' at their institutions. As Raewyn Connell says '[c]ritique by itself is inadequate: one needs to show alternatives', therefore this is an on-going project to work across universities to transform ways of thinking about knowledge creation.   Using Raewyn Connell's approach to the sociology of knowledge (Connell 2011) we will unpack our terminology of 'neo-liberal' and 'post 92' universities before looking at key themes that arose in our workshop. These include pedagogic strategies for diversity and globalization of the curriculum, and experiencing and causing discomfort in academic spaces.

We would like our audience to contribute their experiences along these themes from across disciplines.

Dr Spyros Themelis, University of East Anglia   **@Spyth1**

Social movements for social justice in and beyond the neoliberal university

This paper aims to contribute to the discussion about competing approaches to social justice in the configuring of higher education. It focuses on educational movements as agents of a renewed conception of social justice aimed at the reduction in educational and socio-economic inequalities and the recovery of democracy. It draws on qualitative data, mainly in the form of interviews with activists in the Global North and South, who were involved in various movements, ranging from resistance to the marketisation of higher education in Chile to the reclaiming of public land by landless people in rural Brazil. The key research question this paper addresses is to what extend such movements have contributed to the debate about fairness and equality in higher education and what their wider social impact has been. The paper explores the conditions under which new social movements (can) become active agents in the production of political pedagogies for the future and create alternatives that can ultimately work for the humanisation of society. It finishes by discussing the how such movements turn solidarity into a counter-hegemonic form of knowing, which prioritises cooperation instead of competition and emancipation instead of regulation.

Rethinking Teacher Education (1)

Professor Fiona Hallett, Edge Hill University

Study support in higher education: the bifurcation of teaching and learning?

This presentation will utilize Bernstein's framework for conceptualizing curricula to analyse the knowledge bases that inform study support in higher education. The term 'study support', in this instance, relates to those structures that exist in universities that are designed to offer additional academic support to learners beyond the tutor-student relationship. Whilst recognizing the difficulties associated with conceptualizing models of study support based, in part, on their situated nature and the inconsistency of applied definitions, three common conceptualizations have been selected for analysis: skills focussed support; learner focussed support; and, practices that focus upon the academic literacy of a pedagogic community. Bernstein's framework illuminates these conceptualizations as it enables analysis of the power relations, discourses and pedagogic identities created by each. As such, the purpose of this presentation is to critique some of the practices and research interests that ultimately set study support apart from the broader field of teaching and learning in higher education, both in praxis and in theorisation. The presentation concludes with an examination of how the tensions and conflicts that arise through a lack of shared meaning and aspiration can serve to isolate the knower from the known and the teacher from the student.

Liana Beattie, Edge Hill University   **@lianabeattie**

When the postmodern shift hits the leadership fan. Disrupting the leader-follower dichotomy in educational leadership

Despite the fact that many studies on educational leadership consider the concept of leadership as a relational phenomenon that involves interactions between the leaders and the followers, this field of research continues to favour leader-centred theoretical approaches, whilst the study of follower-centred perspectives has been largely ignored. In addition, those studies, which do address the leadership-followership interrelations, tend to present followers as passive recipients of the leaders' influences and as vehicles for the actualisation of the leaders' missions and goals. Similar absence of interest in the followers' perspectives is obvious, specifically, in HE studies, where, despite the growth of interest in leadership in HE as a field of research, attention to date has focussed almost exclusively on the roles and experiences of people with formal managerial responsibilities. One of the key aims of this paper is to bring the followers' experiences of leadership to the forefront of the theoretical enquiry by moving away from the prevailing neoliberal perceptions of followership as a by-product of leadership, as well as to use a postmodern approach to disrupt and replace the familiar 'leader-follower' dichotomy with the valency of instability and ambiguity. The paper concludes that (1) the studies of followership can be represented by two main approaches: a matrix-based approach that categorises leaders and followers' behaviours and characteristics into static two-dimensional groups, and a continuum approach that places leaders and followers alongside a dynamic scale of shifting interchangeable behaviours and characteristics; (2) the dexterity of postmodernism to disrupt the leader-follower dichotomy can be deployed to the task of disclosing the paradoxical asymmetries and transecting roles of leaders and followers in the domain of a neoliberal university.

Anna Mariguddi, Edge Hill University   **@AnnaMariguddi**

Perceptions of informal learning: tensions and benefits

According to the literature, secondary school music lessons can be problematic. These problems include a lack of student motivation, inclusivity and authenticity, and the dominance of formal, traditional aspects within the subject area. The problems are multifaceted, and many are shared within an international context. Green's (2008) model of informal learning (IL) has been posed as a potential solution to some of these problems by increasing student inclusion, motivation, authenticity and participation. However, previous research has suggested that there are tensions and misalignment between IL and formal school ecologies.

To explore these issues, a qualitative, interpretative study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved interviews with key figures linked to the implementation of the IL phenomenon. The second and main phase of the data collection consisted of four school case studies to gather teacher and student perceptions of IL. Elements of a co-research approach were adopted in the case studies. This co-research approach enabled the increased facilitation of dialogue and productive team-working between myself as a researcher based in a university and teachers based within school settings. Data was analysed thematically, and four key themes were identified in this study: IL theory is 'aspirational'; IL incites 'revolutionary change'; there is conflict between 'the influence of power (including aspects of neoliberalism and marketisation) versus the utopia of freedom'; and IL comes to life within 'the community'.

It is believed that these findings will be of interest to colleagues based within a variety of contexts as the benefits and tensions of IL are likely to be widespread. It could also be useful for those within a HE context to consider how they might prepare student teachers to implement an IL pedagogy.

Keynote (2) Practice, habitus and Adult Learning in Neighbourhood Houses in Australia

Dr Tracey Ollis, Deakin University **@traceollis**

Neighbourhood Houses and Centres are found across Australia, the majority of houses are in two states Victoria and New South Wales. Neighbourhood Houses provide local community-based adult education. The history of Neighbourhood Houses commenced in the 1960s and 1970s. Historically and currently, women are the majority of participants in the houses. Neighbourhood Houses have a commitment to social justice processes and community development practices, however, practices vary across the sector.

Adult learning is central to the practices in Neighbourhood Houses. All of the houses across the nation run adult education courses of some kind. In Neighbourhood Houses, learning occurs incidentally and informally through the day-to-day activities and socialisation within the houses. Learning also occurs formally through pre-accredited and accredited training. Early practices in the houses were informed by feminism and the women's movement with a focus on community development, anti-oppressive practice, advocacy and the empowerment of women. Issues such as women's work in the household (unpaid work), paid work, domestic violence and childcare were drivers for these initial spaces of social inclusion for women.

In this keynote I present case study research on learner experiences of Neighbourhood houses, many who have had negative learning experiences of schooling in a neoliberal model which sorts, assesses and ranks students according to their performance. I outline the complexity of adult education and learner experiences that occur in this dynamic space of learning, and examine the importance of this social space and the relationships that occur between the learners and tutors and the learners and staff, many who have been volunteers and learners in the Neighbourhood Houses themselves. I argue the pedagogy and practices that occur in these spaces of education, enable learners to reconstruct previously held negative views of themselves as not being capable or successful learners.

The outcomes for participants vary but include less social isolation as friendships and networks are built. Other outcomes include greater mastery of English language, improved foundational literacy, numeracy and computer skills, as well as increased understanding of civics and citizenship and Australian history, culture and society. Participation in the Neighbourhood Houses also increased work and employability skills with some learners transitioning from the houses to employment or further formal education in the Vocational Educational and Training system.

WEDNESDAY AM

Panel Streams (2)

Chair: Prof Liz Thomas

Community and university engagement

Dr Thomas Bryer, University of Central Florida   **@drbryer**

Promoting Civic Health through University-Community Partnerships: Global Experiences and Contexts
This is a presentation based on a [forthcoming book of the same title](), published by Palgrave Macmillan. With lessons from Americans, British, Estonians, Lithuanians, Russians, South Africans and beyond, the author describes the state of the practice and provide frameworks through which universities and people working within or in partnership with can affect change in communities and civic lives.

Ultimately, the author distinguishes between two kinds of universities: those we label as having a hard integration with community, which tend towards having a clear notion of communities being served, apart from academic communities, and where there is some level of being embedded; and, those we label as having a soft integration with community, which tend towards having a more loose or variable definition of community and more ad-hoc relations with community stakeholders that are driven potentially more by individual interests of academic staff than by institutional directive.   Within this context, the author considers the formal and informal mechanisms through which civic and community engaged practice becomes embedded to varying degrees within the fabric of the university. We define four types of civic campuses based on the level of formal institutionalization of and informal socialization to the idea and practice of civic and community engaged work. These four types of campuses are the grassroots civic campus, full-integrated civic campus, ad-hoc civic campus, and the decoupled civic campus.

Dr Mary McAteer, Edge Hill University   **@MaryMcAteer57**

Working in the interstices: University community engagement

This paper draws on work completed by Mary McAteer (Edge Hill University)and Lesley Wood (North-West University, South Africa) as part of the Newton Fellowship work.   This paper reflects holistically on a university–school-community project undertaken in a peri-urban area of Eastern Cape, South Africa. Throughout the project, the researchers, two white university academics, sought to work in participatory ways with teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) in the school, who would in turn work on a skills development programme with community members. Many issues of power and privilege were evident throughout the two-year project, and have been reported on previously. However, towards the end of the project, as the full team discussed sustainability of the work, it became evident that the model of training that we had provided for the TAs had potential for continuation, but would be more likely to succeed if issues of place and space were addressed. TA training during the project had taken place in the school, or in hired hotel rooms. During the final evaluation session, it was clear that the TAs had become more confident of their voice, and of the knowledge they brought to the project; during the final meeting, they raised the possibility of meeting with parents and carers in local pubs, or other centres, so that community members would not feel intimidated by unfamiliar surroundings.   Drawing on data generated (qualitatively, through oral and visual and diarying methodologies) throughout the project, the paper takes a holistic, reflective stance on university-community partnership working in the interstices, seeking to explore concepts of, and the necessity for the liminality that third spaces may provide.

Key theoretical frameworks informing the reflection will be framed in a post/de-colonial discourse and draw on Foucault's theory of heterotropia, language studies such as Bakhtin's heteroglossia, and poetics.

Cait Talbot-Landers, Edge Hill University

No Badge Required: A methodological provocation on how an external network of HE academics, teachers, environmental educators and coastal landowners seek to create their own curriculum and knowledge management through developing democratic principles and practices within Beach Schools

Olmedo (2016) identified the expansion of neoliberal practices into education and how the boundaries between public/private, process/results and commonwealth/individual profits have been made increasingly indistinguishable. Beach Schools is a new phenomenon, emerging post 2010 in the Uk from the success of Forest Schools (Horvath:2015) It is offered to schools as a brand that can be purchased as either a franchised self-delivery model or 'bought in' from accredited practitioners. In essence Beach Schools offer an approach to curriculum and knowledge management that situates learning within the natural environment of the coast, offering opportunities to draw upon a range of research informed approaches from the fields of outdoor learning (Blackwell:2015), sustainable development, environmental education (Wells and Lekkies:2006, Chawla 2015) and Place Based Education (Soebel:2014). This commercialisation of Beach Schools and its attempt to impose practices poses a number of challenges for practitioners that can significantly undermines their own self efficacy and limits access to the majority. The network seeks to challenge this undermining and to develop democratic practices. Fraire (1970) argued that curricula and pedagogy are generally imposed and seek to oppress and that only through inquiry, participation and discourse could a pedagogy be formed that could challenge this oppression.

This provocation will explore some of the challenges and issues that have emerged through the collaborative discourses and practices within the network.

- How do we define what is a Beach School?
- What are our key principles and practices for Beach Schools and how should they be decided?
- What role can HE have in supporting the other stakeholders within the network?

Constructions of 'quality provision' in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Quality provision is a phenomenon that is both confused and confusing for the ECEC workforce internationally. Curriculum policy, workforce reform, 'governance', compliance and perceptions of neoliberal 'top-down' accountability is shaping provision and pedagogy for very young children, against the flow of the professional workforce and their autonomy. This symposium draws on four different research projects which demonstrate how the policy discourse of assessment and accountability influences pedagogy and consequently impacts on the quality of provision.

Dr Karen Boardman, Edge Hill University   **@KMBoardman67**

Myriad of discourse to support quality approaches for early reading with under-threes
This paper outlines the findings of an empirical research study exploring how Early Years Educators (EYEs) support under-threes with their early reading development. The data was collected through a mixed methodological approach of an initial survey, five semi-structured interviews and six reflective Zines to explore the experiences of EYEs working with under-threes. The findings highlight that the accountability policy agenda and the school readiness agenda not only influences the EYEs views and beliefs about early reading, but also the quality of their practice with under-threes. This myriad of discourse is confusing for EYEs, given that their accounts document advice given from primary teachers, focussed on getting children ready for school and ready for the literate world.

Dr Jo Albin-Clark, Edge Hill University

What is documentation doing?
This paper asks the question of what documentation *does*, rather than what documentation *means* in the context of early childhood education to probe how teachers navigate assessment and accountability agendas to emphasise what matters in their relationships with children and families. By focusing upon data fragments from a doctoral study of documentation practice, I put to work new materialist theories to ponder the agentive capacities and intra-activities of everyday documentation to trace performances and affects. I argue that documentation is generating powerful creating and resisting actions that produce senses of belonging for families. As a consequence, I propose that teachers can move their focus from matters of fact to matters of concern. The implication is that documentation can be put to work in powerful ways when its actions within spaces (rather than interpretations) are foregrounded. This article offers original contributions to contemporary debates regarding agentive readings of documentation practices that I argue can influence forms of ethical and flourishing pedagogies in a policy climate that can otherwise confine.

Alicia Blanco-Bayo, Edge Hill University   **@AliciaBlancoBay**

"I am 4, what should assessment do for me?" The moral dimension of assessment: where emotions fit in Early Childhood Education
The consequences of using assessment methods in Early Childhood in England to gather numerical data to measure performance and without considering emotional needs, are concerning. Following Buzzelli's recent research on the moral connection between assessment and development in Early Childhood Education, this paper considers whether enough attention is given to emotions prior to choosing Early Childhood assessment methods. This study expands on Sen's (1999) capability approach and identifies the dimension of assessment that creates a moral cycle between assessment and human development based on Piaget's (1932) definition of moral development. Collective case studies were used to collect qualitative data through interviews with a small number of participants to explore how they approach assessment. An interpretive approach confirmed that the observational methods of assessment used by the participants consider emotional needs during the assessment process and provide information that supports

the development of individual capabilities. This discussion leads the argument that suggests further research to develop assessment systems that inform practice that prioritises emotional needs.

Gillian Cockbain

Playful Pedagogy – Philosophy of Early Years Teaching and Learning
The essential importance that teachers understand how children learn through play is widely acknowledged, alongside the debate of quality provision. Whilst what children learn is important - how children learn is even more crucial if we are to equip them with positive learning dispositions and skills to become learners for life. However, there are increasing tensions between play-based approaches and the structured curriculum goals. Additionally, some teachers admit they do not know how to support play. Therefore, rather than seeing Reception as preparing children for school, teachers have a responsibility to ensure settings are ready for children; with an all-inclusive, play-based curriculum which supports children's holistic development.

Panel streams (3)

Rethinking Teacher Education (2)

Peter Cranie, Edge Hill University   **@PeterCranie**

Have the climate strikes by school children raised trainee teacher knowledge of climate change issues and reduced misconceptions?

This research draws on a Freirian critical investigation into attitudes towards Climate Change of a cohort of Further Education student teachers undertaken for PGCTHE in 2016. In 2018, Greta Thunberg initiated the climate strikes, with young people in schools across the world now regularly participating in strike action to challenge societal inertia on climate action. The 2016 submission identified the persistence of common misconceptions consistent with previous research about anthropogenic climate change (Oreskes, 2004; Doran, 2009; Anderegg, 2010; Capstick et al, 2013), misconceptions identified in research on the attitudes of primary and secondary school pupils (Boyes & Stanisstreet, 1993; Thapa et al, 2013; Boyes & Stanisstreet, 2001; Boyes, Stanisstreet, & Papantondou, 1999; Pekel & Ozay, 2005) and pre-service teachers or teachers (Boyes and Stanisstreet, 1992; Groves & Pugh, 1999; Matkins & Bell, 2007; Papadimitriou, 2004; Pekel & Ozay, 2005). For example, most trainee teachers recognise the impact of CO_2 as a greenhouse gas but continue to view Ozone Layer depletion as a causal factor for Climate Change. Trainee teacher perceptions lend support to Boykoff's (2016) findings that media representation of Climate Change that gives weight to the outlier or sceptic views has led to "illusory, misleading, and counterproductive debates". The proposal for further research (to be discussed at ACRE and subsequently submitted to the EHU faculty ethics committee for the 2019/20 academic year) will re-examine the questions with a new cohort four years on, to assess whether the climate strikes have resulted in increased awareness and a reduction in misunderstanding by trainee teachers.

Jo Albin-Clark and Jennie Swift, Edge Hill University

Holding onto the playfulness: Discomfort, challenge and change in the pedagogies and curricula of early childhood specialist teachers

Our paper explores our ruminations, discomforts and fascinations with the pedagogical step changes we make teaching undergraduate teacher educators who specialise in early childhood education. As we ponder the content and knowledge within our present curricula and modules, we trace the reasons and influences on our desire to constantly reflect and adapt our teaching approaches. Undergraduate student teachers start university with views of the teacher role that are shaped by their own schooling models but shaped by discourses entrenched in school readiness, accountability and datafication narratives that can lead to a narrowing of the pedagogical offer. In addition, we reflect on our mature students who are sometimes troubled in their own experiences of parenting children entering the school system. At times, this problematises our deeply held convictions about young children's agency and entitlement to playful pedagogies and leaves us feeling senses of discomfort. So how might we rework modules using pedagogies of discomfort as a catalyst to find authentic dialogic spaces in-between that challenge ideas, assumptions and modes of thinking about the teacher role? We trace the ways humour, playfulness and our relationships with students shift through pedagogical and curricula approaches. We illuminate our continuing questioning about how we can learn from each other to find shared understandings and reworkings of the teacher role that feels ethically appropriate in an intensifying English curriculum policy context

Dr Annabel Yale, Edge Hill University   **@AnnabelYale**

Quality Matters: Personal Tutoring in a UK Higher Education Context from the Student Perspective

In the context of an increasingly marketised UK Higher Education (HE) context, research on personal tutoring is crucial given its potential to positively influence both student outcomes and institutional measures of success. For example, students who experience poor personal tutor (PT) experiences may question the value of their degree in more economic terms and consider leaving university. Investigating the quality and nature of the student-personal tutor (PT) relationship is therefore of great importance to anyone working in HE.

Specifically the current research explores first year student experiences of their PTs, through detailed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of interview data. The analysis revealed a number of antecedents to the student-PT relationship which impact on students' expectations and experiences of their PT. Second, the findings reveal insights into how the relationship develops and the importance of the first interaction. Third, the analysis elucidated the nature and quality of student-PT interactions and how these have consequences to the students' overall PT experience. The implications for HE and the potential impact on PT practice and provision are discussed. Notably, this research highlights the need for institutions to consider the implicit message underlying student support mechanisms as these can create conflicting around notions around independence, which some students will struggle to overcome.

Widening participation, changing the landscape: student choice in the neoliberal university

Dr Richard Budd, Lancaster University   **@ddubdrahcir**

Universities as Landscapes?

This paper overlaps between the community and access themes of the conference in that it relates to group and individual engagement with universities, as well as those universities' organizational setting in terms of its culture and location. It offers the suggestion that we can more usefully understand – and research – universities as landscapes. As Wylie (2007, p.95) describes, landscapes can be conceptualised as 'circulating system[s] of cultural meaning, encoded in images, texts and discourses'. From this perspective, landscapes are social as much as they are material and visual, serving as structures for understanding and action while simultaneously re-/producing themselves. What this means in real terms, when applied to higher education, is that the activities of staff and students are channeled by, but also constitute, their university. It also means that while universities within national contexts will be somewhat similar due to those countries' regulatory and cultural settings (Hüther & Krücken, 2016), they are individually unique and constantly changing.   This raises interesting questions for researching the contemporary student experience in that it offers a wide variety of potential comparative dimensions. At present, neoliberally-informed metrics such as student satisfaction, final degree classifications, and post-degree income, are perhaps the most dominant framing, but these reductive, proxy measures do not capture the nature of what university life is actually like for students. This paper presents the theoretical and methodological basis for a project which explores how students from different social groups, at three contrasting UK universities, describe their university landscapes. In specific terms, it seeks to elicit and analyse how they see and experience its physical spaces, its organisational culture, and their position in relation to its broader student body. Some initial findings may be presented as the data collection is due to commence in May 2019.

Jon Rainford, Open University   **@jonrainford**

From problems to solutions: How studies of widening participation practices can inform practical change

Widening participation is a key feature of policy and strategy of universities within the English Higher Education system with the ability to charge higher tuition fees being contingent on compliance with Access and Participation regulation. Whilst there is a policy imperative to comply with the demands placed on institutions by the Office for Students, there are also competing economic and moral imperatives that act in tension to drive institutional approaches to this work. This session draws upon my doctoral research which involved using practitioner interviews and analysis of institutional policy documents to explore pre-entry widening participation policy and practice in both pre and post-92 universities. Adopting the form of a provocation, this session will draw on the findings and recommendations of the study. Through a focus on the research-informed comic developed as part of this process, the challenges and opportunities presented by widening participation in an increasingly marketised environment will be discussed including issues such as the enduring rhetoric of 'raising aspirations' and problematising the notion of 'potential'. Debate about who should go to university has underpinned policy positions for over half a century since the Robbins Principle mandated that 'courses of higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so' (The Committee on Higher Education, 1963, p. 8). This session aims to spark dialog between participants about what can and should be done to address enduring issues. Whilst the study was focused on pre-entry widening participation, participants will be encouraged to reflect from their own experiences and roles on the recommendations of the project and critique and propose possible alternatives at a national, institutional and practitioner level aiming to inform the development of future outputs of the project to help inform practice.

POSTERS

Jonathan Blundell, Edge Hill University

Mentoring in Initial Teacher Education: Matching the model to the mentee

Wendy Dixon, Edge Hill University

The construction of a professional identity: from Teaching Assistant to Teacher

Elizabeth Dunn, Edge Hill University

Embedding Theory & Practice: do exemplar visits in school support trainee teachers in their understanding of the wider role of the teacher?

Eri Mountbatten, Edge Hill University

Human flourishing: a conceptual analysis

Sara Muršić, Edge Hill University

Learning with the Flow: Exploring engagement with learning between year groups in an undergraduate course

Rachael Sackville-Jones, Edge Hill University

Enabling children on the Autism Spectrum to have an effective voice in their own educational provision

OPPORTUNITIES TO PUBLISH FOLLOWING ACRE 19

As part of a commitment to building a research and dissemination culture in the faculty and beyond there will be two publication opportunities arising from conference presentations at ACRE 19.

Conference Proceedings

Last year saw the launch of the first annual Conference Proceedings:
https://issuu.com/edge_hill_university/docs/acre_conference_proceedings

This is an edited, though not peer-reviewed publication, which enables us to share and celebrate all the work of the conference in a timely way.

Contributions are welcome to our second volume, ACRE 2019 Conference Proceedings as follows:

- Thinkpieces/provocations based on your presentation
- Research reports based on your presentation
- Reflections/experiences of presenting and sharing
- Visual/multimedia pieces
- Other papers or commentaries from the conference

New Researcher Award

For those presenters who are new to academic publication (that is, two or fewer journal articles), you may apply for the New Researcher Award which will entitle you, on the production of an extended abstract, to mentoring and support by members of the conference planning team in order to help you turn your conference paper into an article for a relevant journal. We would like to award at least one New Researcher Award.

To express interest in one or both of these opportunities contact educationresearch@edgehill.ac.uk, stating your choice(s), and we will then be in touch with you to provide more details.

Mary McAteer / Vicky Duckworth (Editors)

Wednesday July 17th

Time	Session	Details	Location
09.00	Registration & refreshments	Tea, coffee and pastries	
09.15	Introduction to second day	Prof John Diamond	Lecture theatre
09.30	Panel streams (2)	**Chair: Prof Liz Thomas Room A** **Community and university engagement** • Promoting Civic Health through University-Community Partnerships: Global Experiences and Contexts • Working in the interstices • No Badge Required: A methodological provocation… **Chair: Dr Clare Woolhouse Room B** **Early Years Symposium:** Constructions of 'quality provision' in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) • Myriad of discourse to support quality approaches for early reading with under-threes • What is documentation *doing?* • "I am 4, what should assessment do for me?" The moral dimension of assessment: where emotions fit in Early Childhood Education • Playful Pedagogy – Philosophy of Early Years Teaching and Learning	Breakout rooms
11.00	Coffee break		
11.30	Panel streams (3)	**Chair: Prof Fiona Hallett Room A** **Rethinking Teacher Education (2)** • Have the climate strikes by school children raised trainee teacher knowledge of climate change issues and reduced misconceptions? • Holding onto the playfulness: Discomfort, challenge and change in the pedagogies and curricula of early childhood specialist teachers • Quality Matters: Personal Tutoring in a UK Higher Education Context from the Student Perspective **Chair: Prof Ming Cheng Room B** **Widening participation, changing the landscape: student choice in the neoliberal university** • Universities as Landscapes? • From problems to solutions: How studies of widening participation practices can inform practical change	Breakout rooms
13:00	Plenary Session	Future Prospects: discussion of post-conference publication and ACRE 2020	Lecture theatre
13:30	Lunch		Foyer
14:00		**Conference close**	

Tuesday July 16th (…cont.)

Time	Session	Room A	Room B	Room C	Location
13.30	Workshop / Roundtable sessions	**Workshop: Room A** The 'Safe Space' of the Neoliberal University: Reframing academic 'freedom' through student interviews, within, against and beyond intellectual enclosure.	**Roundtable: Room B** Sanctuary Universities, scholarships and refugee access to HE		Break out rooms
14.15	Coffee Break				Foyer
14.30	Panel streams (1)	Chair: Prof Amanda Fulford **Room A** **The life of the intellectual practitioner** • 'If the CAP fits', a methodological provocation: how self-study and autoethnographic processes impact on the life of the intellectual practitioner. • Autoethnography: how I became a tech double agent • Nomadic Inquiry: the life of the intellectual practitioner in posthuman times	Chair: Prof Vicky Duckworth **Room B** **Social justice and HE** • "Peer support is excellent it really helps to build confidence." Rethinking HE based professional development for teaching assistants as a practice of freedom • Social movements for social justice in and beyond the neoliberal university • Decolonizing the neo-liberal university: views from teaching-led institutions	Chair: Prof John Diamond **Room C** **Rethinking Teacher Education (1)** • Study support in higher education: the bifurcation of teaching and learning? • When the postmodern shift hits the leadership fan. Disrupting the leader-follower dichotomy in educational leadership. • Perceptions of Informal Learning	
16.15	Keynote (2)	**Practice, habitus and Adult Learning in Neighbourhood Houses in Australia** Dr Tracey Ollis, Deakin University			Lecture theatre
17:15	Reception	Book launch & poster competition			Foyer
19:00	Dinner	Option to join colleagues for a meal in local restaurant. Please speak to conference team on arrival to join the group.			

'Beyond the Neoliberal University': ACRE 2019 Conference Programme

Monday July 15th

	External delegates staying on campus arrive (check-in from 17:00) The conference takes place in the University's Business School (#16 on the campus map) Please note this document is also available in a fully searchable format via www.edgehill.ac.uk/education/research/acre-2019/	
17:00	Reception	Conference & Doctoral Study Day Reception & Book launch with wine & canapes	Foyer, Business School

Tuesday July 16th

09.00	Registration & refreshments	Tea, coffee and pastries	Foyer
09.30	Welcome	Dr Jane Moore, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Education	Lecture theatre
09.45	Keynote (1)	**Towards a moral university: critical theory, social justice and a commitment to the vicissitudes of human fate** Dr Jan McArthur, Lancaster University	Lecture theatre
10.45	Coffee Break		
11.00	Plenary Session	**The idea of "the university": the search for quality?** Chair: Prof Saville Kushner • The Blockchain University: New approaches to the idea of the university in neo-liberal times • Managerial or Neoliberal state? Reopening the debate over the rise of Quality Assessment criteria in the British Higher Education Sector • "The Neoliberal University as a Wicked Problem": Reverse engineering academia's siloed approach toward transdisciplinarity through an experimental design thinking course Discussant: Prof John Diamond	Lecture theatre
12.45	Lunch		Foyer