



British Early Childhood Education  
Research Association

# DOCUMENTATION FOR ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION: Testing the current agenda



**mac - Birmingham, Cannon Hill Park  
Birmingham**

17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015



**The 5th BECERA Conference is hosted by:**

Centre for Research in Early Childhood  
St. Thomas Children's Centre  
Bell Barn Road  
Attwood Green  
Birmingham  
B15 2AF

Tel.: +44 121 454 0020

**[www.crec.co.uk](http://www.crec.co.uk)**



The BECERA Conference is taking place at the **mac Birmingham**



# BRITISH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (BECERA)

BECERA is an independent organisation for those early childhood practitioners, researchers and practitioner researchers working in the British Isles who want a space to meet, enquire and discuss issues relevant to their work with young children and families.

BECERA aims to stimulate, support, create and disseminate rigorous, grounded and conceptual knowledge and its applications to our early childhood services. It does this through an annual conference where research is presented and subjected to peer-review. The knowledge generated from each conference will be made available in an on-line, searchable database.

## **WHAT ARE BECERA'S AIMS?**

BECERA is particularly interested in practitioner research and exploring paradigms and methodologies which impact directly on services.

BECERA is interested in how knowledge is constructed, who listens and who speaks and in capturing the voices of all, including parents and children.

BECERA will provide a unique British forum to bring together research, practice and policy and strengthen the early childhood research community in the vital contribution it makes to British practice and policy.

## **WHO RUNS BECERA?**

BECERA is an independent self-funding organisation run by the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) which has dedicated itself to improving services for young children and families in the UK for more than 25 years. CREC's Directors are Professor Tony Bertram and Professor Christine Pascal OBE.

## **HOW IS BECERA FUNDED?**

CREC has undertaken to cover start up costs and hopes to attract sponsorship from several major UK organisations.

## CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC)

CREC is a charitable organisation established in 2007 and located in the St Thomas Children's Centre, near the centre of Birmingham, in the UK. CREC is dedicated to raising the quality of early childhood and family provision in order to enhance outcomes for children. CREC's central focus, as expressed in its Governing Constitution, is *"to promote and carry out for public benefit, research into issues relevant to early childhood provision and to publish or otherwise disseminate the useful results of such research."* CREC achieves this objective by specialising in early childhood research which has relevant and meaningful outcomes for practice and policy. Some of its research is transformed into development programmes by its sister organisation Amber Publications and Training (APT). These programmes include:

- Effective Early Learning (EEL, 3-6 years)
- Baby Effective Early Learning (BEEL, birth to 3 years)
- Accounting Early for Life Long Learning (AcE, assessing and supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy from birth to 5 years)
- Opening Windows (creating open and equitable dialogues with parents)
- Leadership & Management in Early Childhood Settings

CREC also delivers postgraduate and research degrees through its close affiliations with Midlands universities, particularly Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University. It is also a strategic partner with the City of Birmingham's Children and Young People's Directorate. In partnership with the St. Thomas Centre Nursery and various Nursery and Primary schools across Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull, we have recently launched the CREC Early Years Partnership SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training), delivering Early Years focused Teacher Training with Qualified Teacher Status.

CREC has a strong reputation for undertaking reviews, reports, evaluations and consultancy with central government and many UK local authorities, NGOs and overseas countries. It has also made a significant contribution to Government policy for early childhood in England through its contributions to many national committees and professional associations.

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## WELCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the fifth BECERA Conference. Feedback from previous delegates reveals that BECERA has become a special place for those who are passionate about developing their knowledge and understanding about early childhood and care and who wish to collaborate in sharing and co-constructing ideas, thinking and dialogue. The conference is inclusive of all those who operate or who have an interest in the real world of service development and delivery. The harsh times we continue to experience economically makes the need for support and deep thinking about the future of early childhood services even more vital.

This fifth conference has as its theme:

### **DOCUMENTATION FOR ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION: Testing the Current Agenda**

This theme we hope will encourage delegates to explore a more ethically principled, democratic and participatory approach to assessment and evaluation in early childhood. The conference will emphasise the centrality of co-constructed pedagogical documentation in assessment and evaluation practices. In this approach, pedagogical documentation sets out to understand, acknowledge, and respect children's learning and make it visible and transparent for children themselves, parents, teachers, researchers and educational systems. It also aims to understand and facilitate children's agency in all learning processes, and especially in the powerful acts of assessment and evaluation. Keynote speakers will explore how pedagogical documentation and portfolios can be used within an ethical, principle oriented, mode of conducting assessment and evaluation.

In format and content we are again foregrounding the importance of Practice Based Research with the particular aim of encouraging and supporting the development of Practitioner Researchers who study in the 'real world' of early childhood services. It aims to make research meaningful and relevant to practice and to capture the perspectives and knowledge of professionals and other service participants in co-constructing our understanding of the quality of experience for families and young children. Reflective practitioners have wide-ranging knowledge and BECERA provides a forum where this can be presented and held for systematic peer-review and examined for its transferability and relevance to others.

BECERA offers you a wonderful opportunity to network and become part of a new sector wide 'community of learners' aiming to inform and enhance the quality of service to children and families. We are hoping that the conference will provide delegates with the confidence and skills to develop evidence based practice, which can show the impact and outcomes of this work. The knowledge we generate, including all presentation abstracts, will be posted on a new online database on the BECERA website for wider dissemination. Practice based inquiry has become increasingly important to policy makers and during this conference you will be able to explore it creatively, curiously and companionably.

We at BECERA believe that shared learning can be fun, rigorous and deeply ambitious for ourselves and the children and families for whom we work. We believe that learning is realised most effectively when we are both nurtured and deeply engaged. We hope this conference will challenge you, inspire you and support your development both personally and professionally.

Yours sincerely,

**Tony Bertram and Chris Pascal**

CREC Directors

## CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC),  
Birmingham, UK

Professor Chris Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC),  
Birmingham, UK

## LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham

Professor Christine Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham

## MAJOR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)  
& Amber Publications & Training Ltd (APT)  
[www.crec.co.uk](http://www.crec.co.uk)





## GENERAL INFORMATION

### HOST

The host of the fifth BECERA Conference is the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (<http://www.crec.co.uk>).

### REGISTRATION DETAILS

The conference fee for participants includes: admission to the conference, documentation, coffee breaks and lunches on 20th & 21st February 2013.

### COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCHES

Tea, coffee and lunches are served at the Midlands Arts Centre (**mac**) Arena Bar during morning registration, or the Foyle Studio (second floor) for the morning and afternoon scheduled coffee breaks.

During the last 5 minutes of your break, please move to the room in which your chosen symposium is located.

### CONFERENCE DINNER

This is taking place on Tuesday 17th February 2015 at Le Monde Restaurant (10-12F The Water's Edge, Brindley Place, Birmingham B1 2HL) Starting at 19:30. Places at the dinner need to be pre-booked.

### INFORMATION DESK

The 'Registration Desk'/'Help Desk' will be located in the foyer of the **mac**. After 10 am on both days queries should be directed to the CREC stand that is located in the Foyle Studio (2nd floor).

### STAFF ASSISTANCE

The CREC team will be happy to provide assistance with practical matters during the conference. The team will be stationed around the venue during the conference and there will always be one member of the team at the CREC stand.

### NOTE FOR PRESENTERS

Each symposium room is equipped with a PC and a data projector. We recommend you save your presentations as a Microsoft PowerPoint document, Office 2003 version to avoid any compatibility issues. We also recommend that you locate your symposium room in advance and arrive at your symposium room at least 15 minutes prior to your symposium start time in order to load your presentation and ensure a prompt start. All PCs are fitted with USB drives and we recommend you load your presentation on a USB memory stick (also known as a 'pen drive', or a 'flash drive'). We hope you will have dialogue with your symposium co-presenters and Chair before the Conference by email or a social network.

## NOTE FOR CHAIRS

Please be present in your symposium room at least 15 minutes prior to your session. It is important that the sessions stay on schedule so that individuals who want to listen to a specific talk may do so, and each presenter gets an equal opportunity to present their work. If a presentation is cancelled you may either convene a general discussion or instead call a recess.

## SYMPOSIUM ROOMS

Symposiums will take place across 4 rooms. Depending on which room your intended symposium is in, it may take up to 2 minutes to walk between rooms. We recommend you make your way to the symposium rooms in advance to make sure you get there in good time and that you can find a seat.

## CONFERENCE BADGES

Your personal badge is your entry ticket to all keynotes, symposia, lunch, refreshments and workshops. We ask that you wear your badge at all times whilst at the venue.

## TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE CONFERENCE VENUE

The mac is located in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, opposite the County Cricket Ground on Edgbaston Road, off Pershore Road (A441) and Bristol Road. (A38). The **mac** is easily accessible using all the major city road routes and is served by a number of buses from Birmingham City Centre including 1, 35, 45, 47, 62 and 63. For more information on bus routes you can use [www.traveline.co.uk](http://www.traveline.co.uk) or other route-planning facilities.

For those who wish to call a taxi you can try the following local firms:

TOA taxis: 0121 427 8888

Castle Cars: 0121 472 2222

Falcon Cars: 0121 603 6666

## LIABILITY INSURANCE

The conference cannot accept any liability for personal injuries or for loss or damage to property belonging to the delegates, either during, or as a result of the meeting. Please check the validity of your own personal insurance before travelling.

## WIFI

The mac has free Wi-Fi throughout the venue – look for the network “mac public”.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

You can follow the BECERA conference on both Facebook (“BECERA”) and Twitter (“BECERAssoc”). Please post or tweet your comments during the conference and your photos using hashtag #BECERA2015

## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

### Day 1: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<b>8:00 – 9:30</b>	Registration & Refreshments	<i>Foyer (Registration) Arena Bar (Tea/Coffee)</i>
<b>9:30 – 11:00</b>	Opening Session & Keynote I	<i>Auditorium</i>
	KEYNOTE I: Jan Dubiel – Maps, Territories, Illumination and Distraction - The role(s) of documentation in Early Years pedagogy	
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	Coffee break	<i>Foyle Studio</i>
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	Symposium Set I	<i>A: Pinsent Mason 1 B: Bryant Room C:Pinsent Mason 2 D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	Lunch	<i>Foyle Studio</i>
<b>14:00 – 15:30</b>	Symposium Set II	<i>A: Pinsent Mason 1 B: Bryant Room C: Pinsent Mason 2 D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	Coffee break	<i>Foyle Studio</i>
<b>16:00 – 17:00</b>	Debate – “Do we need a new Baseline Assessment at the start of Reception?”	<i>Auditorium</i>
<b>19:30 onwards</b>	Social Programme – Conference Dinner	<i>Le Monde, Brindley Place</i>

## Day 2: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015

<b>8:00 – 9:30</b>	Registration & Refreshments	<i>Foyer (Registration) Arena Bar (Tea/Coffee)</i>
<b>9:30 – 10:15</b>	KEYNOTE II	<i>Cinema</i>
	KEYNOTE II: Julia Formosinho – “Pedagogic documentation: unrevealing solidary learning”	
<b>10:15 – 11:00</b>	KEYNOTE III	<i>Cinema</i>
	KEYNOTE III: Joana de Sousa - “Why do the Omo River’s children paint themselves?”	
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	Coffee break	<i>Foyle Studio</i>
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	SPECIAL WORKSHOP (Julia, Joana, Chris, Tony)	<i>A: Pinsent Mason 1</i>
		<i>B: Bryant Room</i>
		<i>C: Pinsent Mason 2</i>
		<i>D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	Lunch	<i>Foyle Studio</i>
<b>13:30 – 15:00</b>	Symposium Set III	<i>A: Pinsent Mason 1</i>
		<i>B: Bryant Room</i>
		<i>C: Pinsent Mason 2</i>
		<i>D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>	Coffee break	<i>Foyle Studio</i>
<b>15:30 – 16:30</b>	Plenary	<i>Cinema</i>

## 5<sup>th</sup> BECERA Conference

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Day 1: TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2015

**09:30 - 11:00 Opening Session & Keynote I**

**Auditorium**

**“Maps, Territories, Illumination and Distraction - The role(s) of documentation in Early Years pedagogy”**

*JAN DUBIEL – National Development Manager Early Excellence*

This keynote will examine the role and status of pedagogical documentation from an EYFS practitioner perspective. It will explore the position and perception of documentation within day to day practice and provision; identifying its location within ‘a negotiated place between truth and reality’.

After providing a brief overview of the recent development in the understanding and use of approaches to documentation, the keynote will identify how the interpretation and perception of a range of different approaches can either provide an empowering and informative ‘illumination’ of children as learners or a ‘distraction’ to effective interaction and pedagogy.

Finally, it will identify the key issues and considerations faced by Early Years practitioners when considering what and how to document; and review this within the context of supporting professional judgement, informed intuition and the practitioner as ‘critical reflector’ (Rose and Rogers 2012)

### **SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00**

	<b>Symposium Title</b>	<b>Room</b>
I/A	PLAY AND CHILD INITIATED ACTIVITY	Pinsent Mason 1
I/B	USING CONCEPT ANALYSIS IN RESEARCH	Bryant Room
I/C	DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM IN ECE	Pinsent Mason 2
I/D	SEEKING ETHICAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICE	Deloitte Room

## **SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30**

	<b>Symposium Title</b>	<b>Room</b>
II/A	PRACTITIONER VALUES AND PEDAGOGIC PHILISOPHY	Pinsent Mason 1
II/B	WORKING WITH POVERTY	Bryant Room
II/C	EXPLORING CHILDREN'S WORLDS	Pinsent Mason 2
II/D	WORKING IN "RISKY" AREAS	Deloitte Room

## **DEBATE: 16:00 – 17:00**

This year the BECERA conference will be hosting a debate on the subject of the proposed Baseline Assessment for 5 year olds. This will provide an opportunity to hear views from those on both sides of the debate.

The panel will include:

Joao Formosinho - Portuguese Catholic University

Jan Dubiel (Keynotes Speaker) - Early Excellence

Beatrice Merrick - Early Education

Chris Pascal - CREC

The debate will be chaired by Tony Bertram (CREC/ President of Early Education)

# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2015

**09:30 - 10:15 Keynote II**

**Cinema**

**“Pedagogic documentation: unrevealing solidary learning”**

**JÚLIA FORMOSINHO**, *Childhood Association and Catholic University of Portugal*  
(*Andreia Lima & Joana de Sousa, Aga Khan Foundation and Childhood Association*)

This Keynote sets out to present a holistic/complex approach to pedagogic documentation as a basis for assessment and evaluation.

The approach has been developed in multiple dialogues (epistemological, theoretical, praxeological) and sits specifically in the crossroads of Pedagogy-in-Participation (Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho, 2008, 2012) with the EEL Project (Bertram & Pascal, 2009).

It will uncover the deep relational nature of teaching and learning in the process of production of pedagogic documentation meaning that:

- documentation is pedagogically and culturally situated;
- documentation is referred to daily life in the classrooms;
- documentation is developed by the central pedagogic actors (children, educators, parents)

The conference envisages to demonstrate that pedagogic documentation developed with authenticity and rigour provides a wealth of information for assessment and evaluation.

**10:15 - 11:00 Keynote III**

**Cinema**

***“Why do the Omo River’s children paint themselves?”***

*Joana de Sousa, Aga Khan Foundation and Childhood Association*

*(Júlia Formosinho & Andreia Lima, Childhood Association and Catholic University of Portugal & Aga Khan Foundation)*

These two Keynotes are deeply woven together. The theoretical foundations that support the previous Keynote will be seen in the daily life of Andreia’s classroom which is the pedagogic context for the illustrative case study to be presented.

The case studies a group of children and their educational team researching the Omo River’s children (an African river in Ethiopia). The group motivation for the study of Omo River’s children came from a mother and a child that presented to Andreia, the educator, this possibility.

This educational situation was developed through a brief project work that shows:

- children in action and interaction;
- children researching and learning how to learn;
- children using one hundred languages.

It becomes clear that the intercultural approach of Pedagogy-in-Participation (the educational perspective of Childhood Association) is developed in the daily life of the classroom and not as an add-on to the common practice.

This case study will allow reveal learning through pedagogic documentation.

**SPECIAL WORKSHOP: 11:30 – 12:30**

This workshop will provide an opportunity for discussion and reflection on the presentations seen before the coffee break.



# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

DAY 2: THURSDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2014

## SYMPOSIUM SET III: 13:30 – 15:00

	<b>Symposium Title</b>	<b>Room</b>
III/A	DEVELOPING PRACTICE IN SAUDI ARABIA	Pinsent Mason 1
III/B	DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE	Bryant Room
III/C	SEN AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICE	Pinsent Mason 2
III/D	PRACTITIONER VOICE IN RESEARCH	Deloitte Room

**15:30 - 16:30 PLENARY & CLOSE**

**Cinema**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY

SYMPOSIUM SET I: 11:30 – 13:00

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**SYMPOSIUM I/A**

PLAY AND CHILD INITIATED ACTIVITY

ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 1

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**CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM**, Manchester Metropolitan University

**Activity and the concealment of the true nature of being three**

Martin Needham, Manchester Metropolitan University

**Assessing and documenting child initiated play: illusion or reality?**

Ioanna Palaiologou, Canterbury Educational Services Ltd

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**SYMPOSIUM I/B**

USING CONCEPT ANALYSIS IN RESEARCH

ROOM: Bryant Room

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**CHAIR: HELEN LYNDON**, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

**Co-constructed concept analysis; defining the research theme**

Helen Lyndon, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

**What is a 'Mud Kitchen'? - The use of concept analysis as a research method**

Menna Godfrey, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

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**SYMPOSIUM I/C**

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM IN ECE

ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 2

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**CHAIR: ROSIE WALKER**, University of Worcester

**From theory to practice: the placement journey of level four childhood studies students**

Tracey Edwards & Zeta Brown, University of Wolverhampton

**Making practice visible: impact of FdA in early years**

Angela Hodgkins & Samantha Sutton-Tsang, University of Worcester & Birmingham Metropolitan College

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**SYMPOSIUM I/D**  
SEEKING ETHICAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICE  
ROOM: Deloitte Room

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**CHAIR: JOSEPHINE BLEACH**, National College of Ireland and University College Dublin

**Assessing early maths skills and concepts**

Josephine Bleach, William Kinsella, Terri Lalor, National College of Ireland and University College Dublin

**Assessment in the field of ECE: playing the game**

Jo Basford, Manchester Metropolitan University

**SYMPOSIUM SET II: 14:00 – 15:30**

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**SYMPOSIUM II/A**  
PRACTITIONER VALUES AND PEDAGOGIC PHILOSOPHY  
ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 1

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**CHAIR: FAYE STANLEY**, Wolverhampton University

**Research through dialogue**

Faye Stanley, Wolverhampton University

**Teaching and learning through pedagogic documentation in initial teacher education**

Suzanne Flannery Quinn, Lucy Parker & Michelle Palser, University of Roehampton

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**SYMPOSIUM II/B**  
WORKING WITH POVERTY  
ROOM: Bryant Room

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**CHAIR: EUNICE LUMSDEN**, University of Northampton

**"Mind the gap": documentation, "participatory imperative" and remediating the "poverty penalty" within the early years**

Donald Simpson, Eunice Lumsden & Rory McDowall Clark, Teesside University, University of Northampton & University of Worcester

**Competing conflicts: evaluating early childhood student perspectives on children in poverty**

Christian Winterbottom, The Ohio State University at Mansfield

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**SYMPOSIUM II/C**

EXPLORING CHILDREN'S WORLDS

ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 2

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**CHAIR: ESTELLE MARTIN**, University of East London

**Reframing and repositioning humour in early childhood practice: a case for considering how and why we should evaluate children's humour**

Laura Tallant, UEA

**Towards care-full, ethical assessment in early childhood education and care**

Estelle Martin and Paulette Luff, University of East London, Anglia Ruskin University

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**SYMPOSIUM II/D**

WORKING IN "RISKY" AREAS

ROOM: Deloitte Room

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**CHAIR: LIZ ROUSE**, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

**Family life education for young children: A study to investigate its importance and potential introduction within educational systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Amal Banunnah, Umm Al-Qura University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia & University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

**Questioning the concept of 'vulnerability' - the challenge of finding a new term**

Elizabeth Rouse, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2015  
SYMPOSIUM SET III: 13:30 – 15:00

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**SYMPOSIUM III/A**

DEVELOPING PRACTICE IN SAUDI ARABIA  
ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 1

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**CHAIR: IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU**, Canterbury Educational Services Ltd

**An investigation of behavioural problems in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia.**

Basma Alghufali, Canterbury Christ Church university

**Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Implications for Leaders**

Lubna Alshanqiti, Canterbury Christ Church University

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**SYMPOSIUM III/B**

DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE  
ROOM: Bryant Room

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**CHAIR: ALINE COLE-ALBECK**, CREC

**Accessing children's cultural worlds in a pre-school community of practice**

Frances Clerkin, Cork Institute of Technology

**Our community of practice - Learning Circle.**

Aline Cole-Albeck, Menna Godfrey, Helen Lyndon, Liz Rouse and Faye Stanley, CREC

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**SYMPOSIUM III/C**

SEN AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICE  
ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 2

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**CHAIR: KATE HAYWARD**, Pen Green

**Exploring social connections and friendships between children labelled with SEN and their peers in pre-school settings**

John Parry, The Open University

**Making children's learning visible**

Kate Hayward, Tracy Gallagher, Angela Prodger, Joanne Benford, Pen Green

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**SYMPOSIUM III/D**

PRACTITIONER VOICE IN RESEARCH

ROOM: Deloitte Room

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**CHAIR: MICHAEL REED**, University of Worcester

**Enabling the practitioner voice to be heard**

Michael Reed, University of Worcester

**Practice based research: why it is important and what does it look like?**

Rosie Walker, University of Worcester

# ABSTRACTS

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

**SYMPOSIUM SET I**

**11:30 – 13:00**

**SYMPOSIUM I/A**

## **PLAY AND CHILD INITIATED ACTIVITY**

**CHAIR: MARTIN NEEDHAM**, Manchester Metropolitan University

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 1**

### **Activity and the concealment of the true nature of being three**

**MARTIN NEEDHAM**, Manchester Metropolitan University

#### **Research aims and questions:**

This article, drawing on scoping visits and interviews at a small sample of Kindergartens in the Astana area of Kazakhstan, reflects on the place for child-led activity in the National Standards for preschools and in the kindergartens visited.

#### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The evidence from studies in a number of countries and brought together in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Starting Strong III report (OECD, 2012) suggest an international consensus advocating that allowing children greater control of some of their activities promotes personal responsibility and self-control and leads to longer lasting benefits resulting from preschool experiences.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The paper considers how the framing of activity (Engestrom, 1987) may serve to conceal the true nature of being (Heidegger, 1994) and considers how existing cultures of practice might be challenged through participatory research.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews with practitioners in the preschool environment and with national preschool experts were used to explore how the national standards policy document influenced the framing of the preschool learning environment.

**Ethical considerations:**

Ethical processes were monitored through Nazarbayev University. The paper reflects on the tensions between the cultural imposition of values and the rights of children.

**Main findings or discussion:**

The findings suggest that, as in other countries, the concept of child-led activity seems to be taking more time to take root in practice as compared to children's active participation.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The article considers the development of participatory research that might be taken to help increase awareness of the importance of child-led activity through establishing a dialogue with practitioners to explore their views of pedagogy .

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Learning environment, Curriculum*

**Assessing and documenting child initiated play: illusion or reality?**

**IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU**, Canterbury Educational Services Ltd

**Research aims and questions:**

This projects aims to identify:

1. elements of child initiated play with the practitioners
2. use of strategies to participate as partners in children's initiated play
3. ways of assessing and documenting children's initiated play

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This project is based on a vast amount of literature that examines play and exploration, active learning and child initiated play and learning (Bruce and Ockelford, 2010, Pugmire-Stoy, 1991 and Moyles, 2005, 2013, Greenfield 2002 Gmitrova and Gmitrov 2003, Hall 2005, Katz and Chard 2000)

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This work is based on Foucault's (1994:288) reluctance to dictate "how thing should be" and wrote provocatively to disrupt equilibrium and certainty , so that " all those who speak for others or to others" no longer know what to do. In that sense, Derrida's notion of testing "aporias" becomes relevant to this research project.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Poststructuralist interpretative paradigm and discourse analysis within the Foucauldian framework using observations, interviews, video/digital techniques.



**Ethical considerations:**

Based on the work of ethical symmetry (Christensen and Prout) and the notion ethical helix (Palaiologou 2014) this research obtained consent from all participants and aimed to enact “collective praxis approach” (Cahill 2007), respecting privacy and dignity.

**Main findings or discussion:**

Learning environments that encourage CIL offer opportunities, experiences, role models, expectations, motivation, and empowerment for children to make choices and decisions and are based on polyphony, interactions, commitment, confidence, flexibility, responsibility and expertise.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Investigating which environment encourages CIL, we allow opportunities for children to integrate imaginative materials, revisit activities and we encourage children and parents to contribute ideas, resources and expertise for a CIL curriculum.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Assessment, Practice based inquiry, Learning environment, Curriculum*

**SYMPOSIUM I/B****USING CONCEPT ANALYSIS IN RESEARCH**

**CHAIR:** HELEN LYNDON, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

**ROOM:** Bryant Room

**Co-constructed concept analysis; defining the research theme**

**HELEN LYNDON**, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

**Research aims and questions:**

This presentation will explore a co-constructed concept analysis of 'open listening' within early years education and care.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Concept analysis derives predominantly from research in their field of nursing and health. Nursing leaders see theory development, which can be achieved through concept analysis, as a means of clearly establishing nursing as a profession (Walker and Avant 1995).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Walker and Avant (2005) and Rodgers (1989) have provided nursing with two of its most popular concept analysis frameworks. This research draws upon these methods as well as the

work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) on grounded theory to propose a concept analysis framework which is suitable for co-constructed concept development in early years.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This qualitative, real world research sits within a praxeological framework which is participatory, authentically democratic and based fundamentally in the human action which seeks to transform (Pascal and Bertram 2012).

### **Ethical considerations:**

Confidentiality and anonymity are crucial as this researcher is operating within a cluster of settings. The approach to relationships with the settings has been afforded through pedagogic mediation which provides a platform of openness (Formosinho 2014).

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Through co-constructed dialogue with practitioners and observations in settings the concept of 'open listening' has been defined for the purpose of developing practice within the research settings.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Rigorous concept analysis can provide valuable information for theoretical advancement in the profession of early years.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Practice based inquiry, Case study, Real world*

## **What is a 'Mud Kitchen'? - The use of concept analysis as a research method**

**MENNA GODFREY**, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

### **Research aims and questions:**

This project is located at the start of PhD research which intends to investigate the 'Power' of the 'Mud Kitchen'

This presentation will discuss my use of the techniques employed in concept analysis as a tool to begin troubling the first of my questions, namely, 'What is a Mud Kitchen?'

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

'Mud Kitchens' are recent additions to the outdoor provision of a growing number of Early Years settings, I will be considering through the lens of affordance (Kernan 2010) Concept analysis is used in nursing (Rodgers 2000) and in education Raiskums (2008).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Employing constructivist learning theory concept analysis is described by Walker and Avant (2005) and Rogers (2000) amongst others this is supported by concept mapping (Hsu 2004).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The initial stages of this qualitative study employed concept analysis as a research method.

### **Ethical considerations:**

This element of the project has included gathering ideas from practitioners who currently have mud kitchens in their settings. Their data has been treated confidentially and has been gathered in such a way that they may remain anonymous should they so wish.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Concept analysis provides a powerful strategy through which to consider both the physical nature of the 'Mud Kitchen' and the concept itself.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

The significance of defining terminology at the outset of a research project is clear. The method of concept analysis has proved to provide a rigorous and robust structure when applied to the 'Mud Kitchen'. I anticipate using this method to develop clear definitions of other key terminology in this project, for example 'affordance' and 'exploratory'.

**Keywords:** *Methodological approaches, Outdoor Play, Learning environment*

## **SYMPOSIUM I/C**

### **DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM IN ECE**

**CHAIR: ROSIE WALKER**, University of Worcester

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 2**

### **From theory to practice: the placement journey of level four childhood studies students**

**TRACEY EDWARDS & ZETA BROWN**, University of Wolverhampton

### **Research aims and questions:**

Level four students' perspectives on the advantages and challenges of obtaining, maintaining and engaging theoretical links between modules content and placement experiences; developing professionalism in early years.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Research carried out by Dyer and Taylor (2012) and Osgood (2006) on professional identity states the need for students to link theory to practice.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The Childhood and Family team at UoW has re-designed the placement journey of our students this academic year. Instead of one placement module at level five, placement modules have now been embedded into every year of study. New modules have been developed at every level of study to encourage students to take the discussed theories on pedagogy and observe these theories in practice.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The overarching methodological design is a longitudinal study that will obtain this cohorts perspectives on their placement journey from level four to level six. At present we are currently collecting data on their perspectives at level four and would like to bring our initial questionnaire data analysis to the BECERA conference.

### **Ethical considerations:**

The study focuses on students' perspectives and concentrates on our level four students at UOW. Students were invited to be a participant in the study, but informed that participation is voluntary and students decided pseudonyms on completing the questionnaire.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Students highlighted links to specific module areas such as child development and the need to consider this theory in placement as well as seminars.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Implications to practice appears to be a need to intrinsically link student's placement experiences to all level four modules' taught content.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Practice based inquiry, Knowledge, Learning environment*

### **Making practice visible: impact of FdA in early years**

**ANGELA HODGKINS & SAMANTHA SUTTON-TSANG**, University of Worcester & Birmingham Metropolitan College

### **Research aims and questions:**

To work collaboratively as an Early Years Foundation Degree Partnership to develop understanding of how the Degree impacts on practice.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Walker, R. & Reed, M. (2012). Early Childhood Practitioners Developing an Academic Voice and Tutors Making Sense of the Research Process. *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, 15 pp. 137 - 149.

Reed, M. and Walker, R. (2014) Leading by Example: An Examination of Early Education Foundation Degree Students Completing Research Dissertations. *JECER* 3 (1), 2014, p. 51-64. [Online: available from: <http://jecer.org/issues/jecer-31-2014/>]

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The partnership worked with, and not on, students. The enthusiastic response from partners mirrored the commitment of students and can be described as a double loop hermeneutic. There was a culture that allowed students to articulate impact. The research process itself enabled a modelling of exploring the process of research.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A range of qualitative methods using content and relational analysis.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Research was scrutinized by a University Ethics Committee and underpinned by a protocol which included strategies for participation and withdrawal by participants.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Significant impact on personal confidence and professional actions. Students perceive 'knowledge' as having an underpinning impact on practice. Leadership was evident but requires further research.

For discussion: Did we ask the right questions?

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

The project has made visible the impact of the Foundation Degree in Early Years on students. Students are enthusiastic about disseminating their development further. There is further research to be done in order to examine the relationship between personal and professional development.

**Keywords:** *Action Research, Data gathering, Early Childhood Professionalism, Impacts, Knowledge*

## **SYMPOSIUM I/D**

### **SEEKING ETHICAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICE**

**CHAIR: JOSEPHINE BLEACH**, National College of Ireland and University College Dublin

**ROOM: Deloitte Room**

#### **Assessing early maths skills and concepts**

**JOSEPHINE BLEACH, WILLIAM KINSELLA, TERRI LALOR**, National College of Ireland and University College Dublin

#### **Research aims and questions:**

The aim was to design a test that assesses the early Mathematical skills and concepts (AEMSC) of pre-school children (aged 3-4 years).

#### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Research findings consistently highlight the importance of early numeracy, in particular, as an indicator of future academic success. However, it is difficult to find an assessment instrument that measures children's numeracy outcomes in a child-friendly, play based and culturally appropriate way. As part of the Dublin Docklands Early Numeracy Programme, the AEMSC, which is a non-parametric criterion-referenced test, was developed to measure children's early maths language, skills and concepts.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The design was based on the two approaches to Assessment in Ireland: Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning (NCCA 2007, 2009)

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The action research cycle (McNiff and Whitehead 2006) informed the development and use of the AEMSC, which can be used in a pre and post-test situation.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

University College Dublin and the National College of Ireland's ethical guidelines were observed. Good practice in relation to assessment and action research was followed. As the participants were within a vulnerable category (under 18 years of age) explicit consent was obtained from parents / guardians. Through the administration of the assessment anonymity was strictly controlled. Specific consideration was given to participants who exhibited learning and behavioural difficulties which may have been construed as presenting an ethical dilemma. The risk assessment was categorised as minimal due to the participants being in their own natural environment and appropriately trained test administrators. Confidentiality and data protection standards were strictly adhered to.

**Main findings or discussion:**

The AEMSC provides early years services with regular, reliable and comprehensive data on children's Mathematical development, which can be shared with parents and other professionals. It also provides evidence of programme impact and enables the developers to monitor progress and address programme weaknesses.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The AEMSC provides a working framework in which pre-school children's abilities in Mathematics are recognised, learning needs are identified and action plans devised to support their learning. The data for individual pupils, programmes and services can then be used to improve children's Mathematical outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Action Research, Data gathering, Mathematics, Assessment, Outcomes*

**Assessment in the field of ECE: playing the game**

**JO BASFORD**, Manchester Metropolitan University

**Research aims and questions:**

To examine the extent to which graduates working in the PVI sector are able to mediate their professional habitus concerning assessment practice with their workplace, and the wider political discourses.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Recent research for example by Bradbury (2011;2013;2014); Cottle & Alexander (2012); Roberts-Holmes (2014) highlights how the demands of curriculum and regulatory frameworks limits the opportunities for the adoption of a sociocultural approach to assessment.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Bourdieu's "thinking tools" of habitus/practice and forms of capital/social fields were used as a framework for analysis.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The research was located within a critical social constructionist paradigm. A Focus group and "closed" social media site were created to provide a space for collaborative, reflective discussion and sharing of practice.

**Ethical considerations:**

It was important to agree a code of conduct to ensure anonymity and ensure a "safe" space was created for participants to share their experiences.

**Main findings or discussion:**

Rich and nuanced narratives regarding children's learning and development became "surplus to requirements" as a result of dominant and sometimes misinterpreted discourses related to performative assessment practices.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

It seems that practitioners have limited power to transform assessment practices that are inscribed in ECE policy documents in ways that are in line with their values and beliefs. Assessment is therefore one area of struggle within the wider field of ECE, and as such, is an area of ethical and political concern that is worthy of further examination

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Assessment, Authenticity, Focus groups*

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015  
SYMPOSIUM SET II  
14:00 – 15:30****SYMPOSIUM II/A****PRACTITIONER VALUES AND PEDAGOGIC PHILOSOPHY**

**CHAIR:** FAYE STANLEY, Wolverhampton University

**ROOM:** Pinsent Mason Room 1

**Research through dialogue**

FAYE STANLEY, Wolverhampton University

**Research aims and questions:**

This research will report on a pre pilot study as part of a PhD methodology and research design in gaining practitioners values about the experiences and their role when working with children aged three to four years in English and Swedish settings. The use of polyvocal ethnography will be explored and the challenges and what went well when using this data collection tool.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The links to literature around values education and the work of Brostrom et al 2014 and Thornberg 2010 and Habermas 1995. This research design is also based on the work of Tobin et al, 2012 and Arnold and Brennan, 2013.



### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This research takes a sociocultural approach (Hedeegaard and Fler, 2008) and is culturally anthropological. "In order to understand children we must be cognisant of the social and cultural historical practices in which they live and learn" thus a dialectical view of research.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This is an interpretative and qualitative study based phenomenological principles and on how life is experienced. It also deals with the way people interpret events and make sense of their personal experiences. Praxis acknowledges "phronesis", the wisdom of experience and therefore respecting and valuing practitioners' experiences and values. (Pascal and Bertram, 2012)

### **Ethical considerations:**

Working with preschool children the ethical considerations remain paramount. BERA and EECERA ethical guidelines have been implemented and informed consent, confidentiality and valuing all opinions within a praxeological framework.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

The findings of this will formulate the methodological and research design for the researcher's PhD.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

To consolidate PhD research design for pilot study.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Multiple narratives, Knowledge, Learning environment, Curriculum*

## **Teaching and learning through pedagogic documentation in initial teacher education**

**SUZANNE FLANNERY QUINN, LUCY PARKER & MICHELLE PALSER**, University of Roehampton

### **Research aims and questions:**

The aim of this research is to examine how early years teacher trainees develop and articulate pedagogic principles by using pedagogic documentation techniques (specifically photography and reflective narrative writing). This research is an examination of both pedagogy and pedagogic documentation techniques in initial teacher education.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This research builds on prior work related to pedagogy as well as pedagogic documentation (Abramson, 2006; Edwards, Churchill, Gabriel, Heaton, Jones-Branch, Marvin & Ruper., 2007;

Flannery Quinn & Schwartz, 2011; Hong & Trepanier-Street, 2004; Kline, 2008; Kroeger & Cardy, 2006; Lemon, 2007; Moran & Tegano, 2005; Oh, 2008; Tarr, 2010).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This research uses a socio-cultural approach to understanding teaching and learning as embedded social practice.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Data sources include reflective commentaries of 14 teacher trainees and analysis of pedagogic documentation panels.

**Ethical considerations:**

Participants have given informed consent to participate. Reports from the data use pseudonyms. This project has been approved by the ethics committee of the University of Roehampton London.

**Main findings or discussion:**

Teaching and learning through pedagogic documentation is found to be effective when based on broad pedagogic themes (such as pedagogy of unity, pedagogy of play, pedagogy of heart, pedagogy of mind) that allow the trainees to see their work as related to a broader pedagogical 'project' of lifelong learning. Teacher trainees benefit from examples of previous student work, professional exemplars, and the opportunity to work with others in collaboration.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

We will discuss the specific approaches to teaching and learning through pedagogic documentation. These techniques can be applied in other initial teacher education programmes or in CPD.

**Keywords:** *Life of inquiry, Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism*

**SYMPOSIUM II/B**

**WORKING WITH POVERTY**

**CHAIR: EUNICE LUMSDEN**, University of Northampton

**ROOM: Bryant Room**

**"Mind the gap": documentation, "participatory imperative" and remediating the "poverty penalty" within the early years**

**DONALD SIMPSON, EUNICE LUMSDEN & RORY MCDOWALL CLARK**, Teesside University, University of Northampton & University of Worcester

### **Research aims and questions:**

This research project aimed to identify pre-school practitioners' perspectives on child poverty and how they engage with children in poverty.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

There is a persistent attainment gap between children in poverty and their peers by the age of 5 (Coghlan et al, 2009; Hansen et al, 2010). If this gap is to be reduced then effective use of documentation for on-going assessment of children is felt important (Carter and Nutbrown, 2014). Our research raises questions about its contribution in this respect (Simpson et al, 2015).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Ecological theory of the child (Bronfenbrenner) and theory of complexity and diversity reduction (Moss) will provide insight.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The research fell within the interpretive paradigm and involved interviews with practitioners about their efforts to remediate child poverty in 3 geographic areas of England.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Ethical approval was obtained from the School of Social Sciences, Business and Law's Research Ethics Committee at Teesside University. The Statement of Ethical Practice issued by the British Educational Research Association underpinned the day-to-day conduct throughout the project. Informed consent was gained from all practitioners interviewed. A consent form and information sheet were provided to participants. The research ensured the anonymity and privacy of all participants. Pseudonyms have replaced all actual names of participants and their work settings and only information which forms a useful and justifiable element of the project was collected. All physical materials (e.g. paper transcripts) are stored within secure premises. Electronic (digital) data is also securely stored, accessible only via password-protected networks.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

The findings raise concerns about the use of documentation to inform particularized and tailored approaches when working with individuals and groups of children in poverty. Rather a tendency to use such evidence for classification against norms via a process in which the child becomes passive and there is the potential for diversity reduction is highlighted.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Practice of using documentation requires an ethically legitimate "participatory imperative" which involves space for the child's perspective. In the context of early years pupil premium, can a poverty proofing toolkit provide an answer?

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Personal social and emotional development, Multiple narratives, Knowledge*

## **Competing conflicts: evaluating early childhood student perspectives on children in poverty**

**CHRISTIAN WINTERBOTTOM**, The Ohio State University at Mansfield

### **Research aims and questions:**

This study examines the competing discourse of early childhood students' perspectives on child poverty and how they engage with children in poverty.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Children exposed to poverty suffer from a wide range of educational deficiencies (Murnane, 2007). General educational gaps associated with poverty are evident in the early years and only widen with age (Lee & Burkman, 2002).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Dominant theories of poverty opinions focus on the extent to which poverty is attributed to internal/dispositional factors like laziness, or external/situational factors such a faltering economy (Weiner, Osborne & Rudolph, 2011).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The research falls within both positivist and interpretive paradigms adopting a qualitative methodology to consult with practitioners in Ohio.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Responsibility to the participants, the research profession and to the public are considered (see BERA, 2005). Moreover, consent and assurances of confidentiality were obtained from all participants and any possible risks to anonymity were explored where relevant and appropriate.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

The findings raise concerns about the implementation of standards (documentation) to inform tailored approaches when working with individuals/groups of children in poverty. Rather a tendency to use such evidence (teach to the test) for classification against norms via a process in which the child became passive was highlighted.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Practice of using documentation requires an ethically legitimate "participatory imperative", which involves space for the student's voice to emerge. To the extent that poverty is explained as the results of individual factors, there is the potential for negative perceptions of students to develop, which can cause harm to children in early and later educational contexts.

**Keywords:** *Applications, Early Childhood Professionalism, Assessment, Practice based inquiry, Research paradigms*

## **SYMPOSIUM II/C**

### **EXPLORING CHILDREN'S WORLDS**

**CHAIR: ESTELLE MARTIN**, University of East London

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 2**

#### **Reframing and repositioning humour in early childhood practice: a case for considering how and why we should evaluate children's humour**

**LAURA TALLANT**, UEA

##### **Research aims and questions:**

This paper presents findings from a doctoral pilot study offering an alternative, Bakhtinian framing of children's humour and laughter in an early childhood education setting. It suggests that further research in the area is imperative, in order that we gain a better understanding of the place and significance of children's humour within early childhood practice, and how it might be documented and evaluated.

##### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The paper relates to several studies of the carnivalesque within ECE research including those of Varga (2000), Alcock (2007), White (2009, 2013), Cohen (2011) and Brennan in White (2013).

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The paper employs a Bakhtinian carnivalesque (1984) lens to examine children's humour and draws on Bakhtin more widely for the dialogic analysis of the data.

##### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A dialogic methodology was employed based on Bakhtinian dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981). Data were collected via static cameras and one head camera worn by a practitioner, and loosely structured interviews/consultations with practitioners and children.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

The study was predicated upon a Bakhtinian understanding of the essential nature of ethics (Bakhtin, 1981) and received full ethical consent from the UEA ethics committee.

##### **Main findings or discussion:**

There were many findings, including that young children's actions and behaviours can be classified as embodying the spirit of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, and that this offers potentially valuable insights into the nature and significance of their humour.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

It was discovered that helping practitioners to recognise their practice as potentially underpinned by multiple and conflicting discourses may aid their understanding of children's motivations, and warrants serious consideration.

**Keywords:** *Data gathering, Pedagogy, Methodological approaches, Children's perspectives, Research paradigms*

**Towards care-full, ethical assessment in early childhood education and care**

**ESTELLE MARTIN AND PAULETTE LUFF**, University of East London, Anglia Ruskin University

**Research aims and questions:**

To explore the process of observation and documentation of children's learning through ethics of care.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This paper draws upon feminist care ethics, notably the work of Noddings and Ruddick, and studies of relational pedagogy.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Concepts of care and maternal thinking inform the research together with sociocultural theory, particularly Vygotskian perspectives of child participation in dialogue with significant others to mediate and co-construct understandings of learning, with and for children.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The paper utilises examples taken from different case studies enquiring into children's experiences and learning. Dialogic consultations with children, their drawings, and modes of observation and documentation are explored; and the facilitation of practitioner response is discussed.

**Ethical considerations:**

The projects were approved by relevant university ethics panels. Additionally ethics of care are reflected in how the work was undertaken as well as the topic. Communities that are collaborative, and within which children are valued and respected, underpin the ethics of care represented in the studies.

**Main findings or discussion:**

Approaches to observation and documentation embedded in ethics of care are identified and exemplified. Practitioners' capacity for caring responses to children are highlighted and an

argument made for the recognition of intuition and emotion as key aspects of relational pedagogy in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The place of care and emotion in acts of observing and documenting children is to be promoted as feature of effective practice in ECEC. Inclusion of ethics of care in initial training, professional development and early childhood research is needed to develop responsive, culturally sensitive and participative processes of assessment.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Ethics*

**SYMPOSIUM II/D**

**WORKING IN "RISKY" AREAS**

**CHAIR:** LIZ ROUSE, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

**ROOM:** Deloitte Room

**Family life education for young children: A study to investigate its importance and potential introduction within educational systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**AMAL BANUNNAH**, Umm Al-Qura University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia & University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

**Research aims and questions:**

This paper explores specialists' attitudes towards the possible provision of family life education in the early years curriculum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Different governments and school authorities, and different individuals, seem to have varying perceptions of the aims and purpose of sex education during childhood. Dilworth (2009) discusses family life educators as aiming to improve overall wellbeing through addressing sexuality and family life. In the KSA, sex education would be more likely delivered as part of family life education, emphasizing the religious dimensions of these roles and the religious law that underpins all aspects of society (Doumato, 2003; Al-Qadi, 2006).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This research draws on sociocultural concepts of sexual education for children in the KSA.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This is an interpretive research, with Mixed Methods research that are used to provide useful insights regarding specialists' perspectives on the significance of sensitive topic "sex education" in early childhood in the KSA.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Approval was obtained from the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee. Furthermore, a full information letter was provided to all participants, assuring them that their participation in the study would be kept completely confidential, and that all the data would have identifying information removed before analysis. More than this, the letters explain and justify the main aims and research questions of the study, for increased transparency and to ensure consent is informed.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Children need to learn about sex education, which is very important for them, parents and teachers. There was strong agreement from specialists that this topic should be provided for children in the educational system of KSA to aware and protect children.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Early years education should provide sex education topics within family life education curriculum to discuss.

**Keywords:** *Life of inquiry, Early Childhood Professionalism, Personal social and emotional development, Curriculum*

## **Questioning the concept of 'vulnerability' - the challenge of finding a new term**

**ELIZABETH ROUSE**, CREC and University of Wolverhampton

### **Research aims and questions:**

The presentation links directly to my PhD research project which examines the use of infant massage as a pedagogical tool in infant-carer dyads:-

Can infant massage enhance pedagogical attachment between vulnerable children and their carers in a children's centre context?

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Bennett, Underdown and Barlow (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 34 studies of infant massage with a view to understanding whether or not the practice could be linked to improved outcomes for young babies. The authors challenged both the quality and bias of the majority (20) of the studies in the sample, suggesting that future work should examine "...higher-risk groups...demographically and socially deprived parent-infant dyads..." (Bennett, Underdown and Barlow, 2013, p. 2). I am committed to contributing a piece of "trustworthy" research



(Lincoln and Guba, 1985) to early childhood research. However, it is also critical that we work alongside participants using methods and vocabulary that celebrates strengths.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Appreciative Inquiry - Cooperrider and Whitney

Infant Intersubjectivity - Trevarthen, Stern, Murray

Attachment Theory - Bowlby, Salter-Ainsworth

Vulnerability - Barlow, Howe

Social Constructivism – Vygotsky

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

My PhD project is situated in a naturalistic research paradigm. The methodological approaches will be phenomenology and case study. The research design is layered, with methods including video, unstructured interviews, creative consultations, and questionnaires.

**Ethical considerations:**

Is it ethical to use the word 'vulnerable' in our work with children and families?

Are terms such as "troubled families" (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2014) detrimental?

**Main findings or discussion:**

The discussion will explore the following issues:-

What effects do terms such as 'troubled' and 'vulnerable' have on families' self-perceptions?

Are there alternative terms that recognise families' strengths?

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The presentation will question the use of, and stimulate debate around, the term 'vulnerable'.

**Keywords:** *Life of inquiry, Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Ethics*

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015**  
**SYMPOSIUM SET III**  
**13:30 – 15:00**

**SYMPOSIUM III/A**

**DEVELOPING PRACTICE IN SAUDI ARABIA**

**CHAIR: IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU**, Canterbury Educational Services Ltd

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason Room 1**

**An investigation of behavioural problems in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia.**

**BASMA ALGHUFALI**, Canterbury Christ Church university

**Research aims and questions:**

This study aims to investigate early childhood teachers' and parents' perceptions on what they perceive as behavioural problems

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The literature review demonstrates confusion and a lack of clear understanding of behaviour problems (BP) in ECE in Saudi . There is also not a real code of practice or policy on BP in the country. Thus this study builds on western literature (Woololk et.al 2008, Timimi 2005, Sutton et al, 2006, Baumrind, 1975, 1991) to sheds light on issues around behavioural problems in preschool children in Saudi, and it aims to provides a new definition of BP in Saudi context.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This research is based on Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) socio cultural theory that suggests that behaviour and family life are social constructions. Thus behaviour is constructed through culture and should be viewed in the child's social and cultural environment.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This is a mixed methods study. It will employ post positivist and interpretative paradigms.

**Ethical considerations:**

The researcher has already obtained ethical approval for the current study from the Faculty of Education, Ethics Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University. All participants (children, their parents and teachers) will be provided with an information sheet about the study. The agreement of potential participants will be requested with regard to recording the observations in pre-school settings.

**Main findings or discussion:**

The work is in progress. The key finding so far is that there is a lack of clear understanding of the meaning of behavioural problems in SA and a miscommunication between parents and teachers.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

To further the understanding of children's behaviour in the Saudi context and support relationships between parents and teachers in terms of child's assessment.

**Keywords:** *behavioural problems, socio cultural theory, learning environments mixed methods, Early Childhood Professionalism, Methods*

**Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Implications for Leaders**

LUBNA ALSHANQITI, Canterbury Christ Church University

**Research aims and questions:**

Exploring early childhood curriculum and assessment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: implications for leaders.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Research is limited in this area in the Saudi context. However, previous studies focus on issues of curriculum and assessment in Saudi such as Nyland and Alfayez (2012) and leadership Sergiovanni (1998) and Heikka & Waniganayake (2011).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Early childhood education in Saudi is subject to reform, including curriculum, policies and leadership (Tatweer, 2014). Assessment of children's learning in Saudi early childhood programs is based on portfolios, rating scales and anecdotal records. The use of learning stories as an observational method, however, is relatively newly developed (Nyland and Alfayez, 2012).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This research employs an interpretive inductive approach and adopts qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty four preschool leaders.

**Ethical considerations:**

Important ethical aspects were considered: following the University ethical procedures, ethical approval was also obtained through the Saudi Ministry of Education to facilitate access to participants. In terms of participants: informed consent, the right to withdraw, confidentiality,

anonymity and access to their interviews were considered. Findings are reported fairly and honestly.

**Main findings or discussion:**

Results revealed a number of aspects influencing early childhood curriculum and assessment in Saudi. In terms of assessment, it was considered as a factor that influences leaders' behavior, for example, sudden changes on the MoE assessment documentations and request for implementation. This could be associated with the bureaucracy of the education system in the Kingdom, in which leaders are taking an operational role instead of participating on setting strategies such as for children's assessment and evaluation.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Advocating a participatory approach in setting strategies for early childhood sector by involving leaders and practitioners.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Leadership, Curriculum*

**SYMPOSIUM III/B**

**DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE**

**CHAIR:** ALINE COLE-ALBECK, CREC

**ROOM:** Bryant Room

**Accessing children's cultural worlds in a pre-school community of practice**

**FRANCES CLERKIN**, Cork Institute of Technology

**Research aims and questions:**

A sociocultural framework located within a Pre-School Community of Practice, adopts multiple perspectives (children, parents, practitioners, researchers) in order to gain insights into children's cultural worlds. Children's transitions from novice to experienced membership of their pre-school community are tracked as are adult mediating roles.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The study links to research acknowledging children's expertise in their play and learning worlds. It draws on Corsaro's understanding (1998) that in play children interpret and creatively reproduce the adult world. Access to children's perspectives may require adults to listen, hear, see and imagine how such worlds may feel from a child's perspective (Rogoff 1990, Carr 2001). It also links to research on transitions and the changing participatory identities inferred at such times (Dunlop 2002, O'Kane 2007).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Transition from novice to mastery is understood (in a COP) as influenced by how the participant is viewed, how he/she views him/herself and the availability of opportunities to participate on different levels within the study context.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The sociocultural paradigm adopted supported a participant observer approach reflecting multiple perspectives.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Institutional guidelines were followed and ethical clearance obtained. Written consent was received from all adult participants. Assent of child participants (verbal and non-verbal) was constantly negotiated.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Findings indicated that affording children, and adults greater participatory identities in preschool opens the possibility of developing identities that bridge new social and cultural settings. Such experiences, at key times of transition appear to support diverse developmental paths extending across the life cycle.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Inference for increased societal investment in all aspects of Early Years Care and Education.

**Keywords:** *Play, Multiple narratives, Children's perspectives, Creativity, Transitions*

### **Our community of practice - Learning Circle.**

**ALINE COLE-ALBECK, MENNA GODFREY, HELEN LYNDON, LIZ ROUSE AND FAYE STANLEY, CREC**

### **Research aims and questions:**

This presentation aims to explore the community of practice (Wenger 2002) that has developed at CREC through regular meetings of Learning Circle.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Communities of practice (following Lave and Wenger) discuss domain, community and practice elements. Learning circle is shaped by its members to provide support during Masters and PhD study; students and those who have recently studied are welcome to share experiences and practice and co-construct understanding (Vygotsky 1978, Buber 1970).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

There are many theoretical and conceptual elements which underpin the work of learning circle such as trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba 1985), praxeology (Pascal and Bertram 2012), reciprocity (Buber 1970), guided participation (Rogoff 1990) and many more.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Many of the practitioner researchers who attend the group are from a qualitative background. The forum is often used to share creative methodologies.

### **Ethical considerations:**

CREC's learning contract provides members with a safe environment within which to share ideas and discuss challenges. EECERA ethical guidelines are often referred to in sessions.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

Those presenting have accessed the group from different circumstances and members will discuss the activities from which they have benefitted and their level participation with the group. This will be linked to Wenger's outline of the activities of a community of practice as well as other seminal influences on individuals.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Through sessions at LC many researchers have been supported in one phase or another of their research. This collaborative approach would benefit those new to academic research and those undertaking PhD study where isolation is often cited as factor contributing to non-completion.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Multiprofessional collaboration, Knowledge*

## **SYMPOSIUM III/C**

### **SEN AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICE**

**CHAIR:** KATE HAYWARD, Pen Green

**ROOM:** Pinsent Mason Room 2

### **Exploring social connections and friendships between children labelled with SEN and their peers in pre-school settings**

**JOHN PARRY**, The Open University

### **Research aims and questions:**

To examine social connections and friendships between children labelled with SEN and their peers in pre-school settings.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The variables shaping children's relationships (Meyer 2001); the investigation of friendships between young disabled children and their peers (Dietrich 2005); and the study of pre-school peer cultures (Lofdhal 2006).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The research takes the co-construction of social cultures (Corsaro 2005) and the social model of disability (Oliver 1996) as theoretical frameworks.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The research utilised elements of the mosaic approach (Clark 2005) and the "In the Picture" method (Rix and Paige-Smith 2011). It involved: recording observations of focus children's interactions with their peers as a first person narrative; photographing the observed interactions; and sharing the photographic record of the session with the child. The study focused on six children in three different settings and also interviewed staff about the children's friendships.

**Ethical considerations:**

The practitioners and children's parents gave informed consent . The children's consent was monitored during the sessions. Observations were discontinued on advice of key practitioners if the child was showing any adverse response to participation.

**Main findings or discussion:**

All the focus children were actively making connections with others and their interactions were not solely dependent on adult support. Compatible play interests and personalities were prime factors that attracted children to one another.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The importance of recognising the focus child's own choices regarding playmates and their individual styles of engaging with peers. The potential for using the "In the Picture" approach to document and evaluate young children's social interactions was highlighted by the practitioners involved in the study.

**Keywords:** *Personal social and emotional development, Case study, Children's perspectives*

## **Making children's learning visible**

**KATE HAYWARD, TRACY GALLAGHER, ANGELA PRODGER, JOANNE BENFORD, Pen Green**

### **Research aims and questions:**

To use summative assessment data to stimulate dialogue and improve pedagogical practice with children aged 0-4 years with a particular focus on children who have Additional Needs and/or Special Needs.

### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The paper is part of a series of conference presentations and papers on "Making Children's Learning Visible: Uncovering the Curriculum in the Child" (Hayward and McKinnon, 2014).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This paper describes pedagogical reflection and dialogue within a small study involving workers, children and families at the Pen Green Centre through the development and use of a summative assessment tool with parents for children aged 0-4 years. The focus of the study was to develop rich pedagogical engagement using the techniques of polyvocal ethnography (Tobin, 1989) and pedagogical reflection (Pen Green 2005) in dialogue with professional peers and the child's family. We subsequently identified children who maybe experiencing developmental delay and reflected on their progress against developmental statements within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This is a practitioner action research project, using a case study approach.

### **Ethical considerations:**

This was a participatory study and informed consent was negotiated and renegotiated at critical stages during the project.

### **Main findings or discussion:**

This paper describes how practice development was supported through reflecting on the assessment data of individual children, groups and the cohort and the impact this process had on pedagogical interventions, particularly for children experiencing developmental delay.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

The importance of raising questions about children's development and progress at specific points in the year is discussed. The impact of the inclusion of this data in moderation discussions between FS1 (Nursery - 3-4 year olds) staff and FS2 (Reception - 5-6 year olds) staff at transition is also explored. The study has led to the development of a pedagogical framework for peer to peer video observations and the mapping and tracking of children's outcomes within and across services.



## **SYMPOSIUM III/D**

### **PRACTITIONER VOICE IN RESEARCH**

**CHAIR: MICHAEL REED**, University of Worcester

**ROOM: Deloitte Room**

#### **Enabling the practitioner voice to be heard**

**MICHAEL REED**, University of Worcester

#### **Research aims and questions:**

To develop methodologies and instruments that would reveal ways of articulating the professional and personal voice of ECEC practitioners

#### **Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Walker, R., & Reed, M. (2012). Early Childhood Practitioners Developing an Academic Voice and Tutors Making Sense of the Research Process. *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, 15 pp. 137 – 149.

Reed, M. and Walker, R. (2014) Leading by Example: An Examination of Early Education Foundation Degree Students Completing Research Dissertations. *JECER* 3 (1), 2014, p. 51–64. [Online: available from: <http://jecer.org/issues/jecer-31-2014/>]

Kubiak, C., Fenton-O’Creevy, M., Appleby, K., Kempster, M., Reed, M., Solvason, C. and Thorpe, M. (2014) ‘Brokering boundary encounters’ In: Wenger-Trayner, E. and others, eds. *Learning in Landscapes of Practice*, Oxon: Routledge.(pp 81-97)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

ECEC practitioners have developed skills, in particular reflective meaningful views on practice. The research attempts to explain the methodologies involved and the instruments of inquiry used to articulate those views.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A range of qualitative research methods using content and relational analysis.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

Research scrutinized by a University Ethics Committee underpinned by a protocol which included strategies for participation and withdrawal by participants.

#### **Main findings or discussion:**

Practitioners are acquiring knowledge and constructing knowledge and their voice can have an impact for practice and in practice.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Changes in teaching and learning in Higher Education as a result.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological approaches, Practice based inquiry, Leadership*

**Practice based research: why it is important and what does it look like?**

**ROSIE WALKER**, University of Worcester

**Research aims and questions:**

How the process of practice based inquiry influences personal and professional refinements to practice and the voices of practitioners can develop understanding of quality provision.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Walker, R. & Reed, M. (2012). Early Childhood Practitioners Developing an Academic Voice and Tutors Making Sense of the Research Process. *NZ Research in Early Childhood Education Journal*, 15 pp. 137-149.

Reed, M. and Walker, R. (2014) Leading by Example: An Examination of Early Education Foundation Degree Students Completing Research Dissertations. *JECER* 3 (1), 2014, p. 51-64. [Online: available from: <http://jecer.org/issues/jecer-31-2014/>]

Walker, R. and Solvason, C. (2014) *Success with your early years research project*. London, Sage.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Locating practice based enquiry within the context of perspective transformation empowering the voice of practitioner in academic recognition of work based enquiry.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Methodology is qualitative and develops a praxeological stance of working with and not on practitioners. Listening to the voices of those most closely involved and using this to make practice visible.

**Ethical considerations:**

Ethical consent from students in using examples of their practice based enquiry.

**Main findings or discussion:**

Offers perspectives of work based research through enabling students to see it as an intrinsic part of daily practice through which practitioners are constructing knowledge within the learning and work environment.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Work-based learning is embedded in both student's practice and studies throughout their early years experience. Research is an intrinsic part of daily practice through which practitioners are constructing knowledge within the learning and work environment.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Authenticity, Impacts, Real world, Outcomes*

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

# EECERA2015 – Call for Papers



**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

This year, the prestigious 25th EECERA Annual Conference will be held 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 in Barcelona, Spain, hosted by the Autonomous University of Barcelona. The theme of this year's conference is **“Innovation, Experimentation and Adventure in Early Childhood”**.

We warmly invite you to respond to this 25th conference call of papers and hope you will be able to participate in this year's conference scientific activity. Full guidance and details of how to register online and submit a proposal for a conference paper or poster can be found on the conference website: <http://www.eecera2015.org>.

Proposals should be submitted online before 27<sup>th</sup> February and successful applications will be notified by late May 2015, following the meeting of the Scientific Committee. There is a full programme of social activities for those who want to network.

We really are looking forward to welcoming you in Barcelona and encourage you to participate and contribute to what is acknowledged as the European early childhood research community's most important forum.

With warm regards,

*Dr. Sílvia Blanch Gelabert & Dr. Mequé Edo i Basté*, Conference Chairs 2015  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona