RESEARCH STUDENTS FORUM

Sydney School of Education and Social Work

Thursday 25 October 2018
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<td><strong>5.05 – 5.55pm</strong>&lt;br&gt;PAPER PRESENTATIONS&lt;br&gt;(see timetable for presentation titles &amp; room allocations)</td>
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<td>6.05PM</td>
<td><strong>6.05 – 6.50pm</strong>&lt;br&gt;WELCOME &amp; KEYNOTE ADDRESS&lt;br&gt;Associate Professor&lt;br&gt;Ruth Phillips, Associate Dean Research Education&lt;br&gt;&lt;i&gt;Neoliberalising Higher Degree Research: everchanging discourses, actors and expectations for research students.&lt;/i&gt;&lt;br&gt;LT 424</td>
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<td>6.55pm</td>
<td><strong>6.50-6.55pm</strong>&lt;br&gt;BEST RESEARCH PAPER AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT&lt;br&gt;Dr Ilektra Spandagou, Research Higher Degree Coordinator&lt;br&gt;LT 424</td>
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<td><strong>Eleni Smyrnis</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Does a drama-inspired ‘mirroring’ exercise enhance mathematical learning?</em>&lt;br&gt; Supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Ginns&lt;br&gt; Auxiliary Supervisor: Professor Janette Bobis</td>
<td><strong>Shafiza Mohamed</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Applying standard-referenced assessment for digital literacy in curriculum-based national examination.</em>&lt;br&gt; Supervisor: Professor Jim Tognolini&lt;br&gt; Auxiliary Supervisor: Professor Gordon Stanley</td>
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<td><strong>Ben Swanton</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Making politics visible: 'evidence' and 'results' in international development interventions to prevent violence against women and girls.</em>&lt;br&gt; Supervisor: Associate Professor Sue Goodwin&lt;br&gt; Auxiliary Supervisor: Dr Kellie Burns</td>
<td><strong>James Goulding</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Historical thinking online.</em>&lt;br&gt; Supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Ginns&lt;br&gt; Auxiliary Supervisor: Associate Professor Helen Proctor</td>
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The University of Sydney higher degree by research (HDR) environment has changed markedly over the past four to five years. This has been driven by both internal policy changes aimed at ‘modernising’ the PhD in particular, and shifting HDR into the education portfolio, away from its historical home of research. It has also been part of the organisational shift toward centralisation of all student services based on stated efficiencies and the drive to ensure a consistent student experience across the diverse disciplines within the university. The second driver for the overall change to HDR is the policy of the Australian government where it has slowly begun to assert very specific expectations on the value and purpose of HDR. These forces have combined to produce an increasingly institutionalised neoliberal subjectivity for anyone undertaking a higher degree in research. This paper explores the nature and direction of this process and interrogates the current and future impact on both students and HDR supervisors from an insider'/administrative point of view.

Ruth Phillips has been the Associate Dean for Research Education in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for nearly two years and was in a similar position for 1.5 years prior in the then Faculty of Education and Social Work. Ruth has as her service to the university, been involved in higher degree by research administration for nearly 10 years. She has supervised 20 HDR students to completion and teaches in Social Work and Policy Studies. Her research is in social policy, global social policy, third sector research and feminism.
ABSTRACTS

The practical impacts of regulating admission into undergraduate Education degrees.

Amanda Freeborn  5:05 pm, Room 530

The NSW Government’s “Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A Blueprint for Action” (GTIL) framework is part of a suite of recent reforms designed to regulate admission into initial teacher education degrees in NSW. By imposing academic restrictions upon those selected for admission into initial teacher education programs, the intention has been to improve both the status and quality of the teaching profession (Piccoli, 2013). This presentation critically explores these increased admissions requirements and reports on one aspect of a wider PhD study. Utilising a multiple case study methodology, academic and professional staff as well as first year education students at three very different universities were interviewed, to examine the practical impacts this policy is having on higher education institutions. The structure of undergraduate Education degrees, the quality, number and diversity of initial teacher education students as well as the possible exclusion of potential initial teacher education candidates are all areas that emerged as being affected.

Supervisor: Dr Kelly Freebody
Auxiliary Supervisor: Associate Professor Nicole Mockler

Historical thinking online.

James Goulding  4:05pm, Room 530

Historical thinking is a complex activity that is deeply rooted in the way we know and understand the past. Existing research indicates that it is context dependent, with factors such as learning settings, learning communities, and learning tools mediating understandings of what constitutes credible historical information. Despite the emergence of the internet as a major site of historical learning, there has been little empirical research on how the medium itself may be shaping historical understanding.

This paper will report on the findings of a qualitative research project that investigated novice and expert evaluations of digital historical sources, and found that the type of thinking occurring did not fit neatly within existing models of either historical thinking or website evaluation.

Supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Ginns
Auxiliary Supervisor: Associate Professor Helen Proctor

**Tips for the trade: operationalising a Reciprocal Research methodology.**

Rebecca Howe  4:05pm, Room 325

This presentation describes the conceptualisation and operationalisation of a Reciprocal Research methodology for a PhD research project. Reciprocal research as a methodology emerged from the ethical challenges Eileen Pittaway, Linda Bartolomei & Richard Hugman (2010) faced in their work trying to integrate participatory research methods into their human rights-based work with refugees. Their methodology focuses on the process of returning something of use to participants in return for their contributions to the research. This PhD research project utilises a poststructural approach to policy analysis, to look at the representation of ‘access’ in three pathways for providing access to medical gender affirmations (i.e. gender affirming hormone therapy and/or surgery) for trans and gender diverse people. From there, it uses a collective co-researching process with a pre-existing group of practitioners. These practitioners are counsellors and psychologists who directly support trans and gender diverse people who are seeking access to medical gender affirmations. Through the use of cooperative inquiry, we as co-researchers will investigate how each model of access to affirming medical technologies engages in the notion of depathologising people who are trans and gender diverse.

In terms of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of a Reciprocal Research methodology, this presentation outlines the process of negotiation this researcher is embarking on. It outlines the thinking and preparation for a negotiation with potential participants about what they would like for/what the researcher can offer their group, in return for their participation in this research project.

Supervisor: Associate Professor Margot Rawsthorne
Auxiliary Supervisor: Dr Emma Tseris

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**Grieving through the waves: doctor and patient interaction after the loss of family members in a disaster.**

Rosaria Indah  5:05pm, Room 325

The death of family members in a disaster setting is often perplexing since it is likely to be unforeseen, abrupt and tragic. The long-term impacts of losing family members in disasters had been increasingly studied by researchers by exploring the symptoms of normal and complicated grieving process. However, there is a pause in the literature that use patients’ narratives to explore how medical doctors interact with the injured patients who were coping with the predicaments of family member's death.

This article draws on 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami-affected patients’ narratives to explore the doctor-patient interaction during the bereavement period. This study used ethnography as a methodology and it is informed by the postcolonial perspective, especially the subaltern theory (Spivak, 2007). Drawing from interviews from disaster-affected patients, I highlight two themes: first, the normal and complicated grieving processes, and second, the ways in which medical doctors play an important role of supporting the patients through the bereavement period.

In sum, listening to patients’ narratives offers an opportunity for health care providers to obtain knowledge, not only on the normal and complicated grieving process pattern but also the ways of providing a sufficient support for disaster-affected patients.

Supervisor: Dr Matthew A.M. Thomas
Auxiliary Supervisor: Associate Professor Ruth Phillips
Wonder: drama as a pedagogy for inclusion?

Olivia Karaolis  5:05pm, Room 547

Can drama create a meaningful and useful pedagogy to promote inclusion in Early Childhood Settings? This research has grown out of observations as an actor and teaching artist working with young children with and without additional needs. The aim of this research is to examine if drama can offer an ‘equal playing field’ for all children to express their ideas, learn together and interact with their peers.

Four preschool teachers working with children in inclusive preschools will participate in an 8-week pilot project. Teachers will participate in the identification of personal and whole class learning goals. Over the 8 weeks drama strategies will be implemented with the classroom teachers that aim to engage all students in their learning. Data collection will include observation, teacher reflection, children’s work and Likert scales to monitor the level of student participation before and after the program.

This documentation will be used to analyse the benefits of including process drama techniques into the Early Childhood curriculum to promote participation of all students.

Supervisor: Professor Robyn Ewing
Auxiliary Supervisor: Dr Cathy Little

"I don't even feel like I'm Asian" - lived experience of Australian adults adopted from Taiwan.

Sarah King  5:05pm, Room 325

Transracial intercountry adoptees (TRIA's) face unique challenges in identity formation. If family and social relationships are the most significant influences in childhood and adolescence, what does this mean for children who are placed with a family with a different cultural and racial background very early in life? This paper explores this question through the phenomenon of intercountry adoption.

Using 11 narrative-based interviews with adults who were adopted from Taiwan to Australia, the study aimed to understand the extent of connection that adoptee's felt towards their country of birth, and their own cultural identity.

The majority of participants saw themselves as 'Australian' and expressed some ambivalence towards their desire to connect with their Taiwanese heritage. While participants observed a change through time as they entered different phases of their life, experiences of casual and overt racism seemed to remain consistent. Social perceptions of who they are based on physical characteristics often did not match how they felt inside, which caused identity disruption, confusion as well as strategic re-framing. Rather than a connection to 'Australian culture' or 'Taiwanese culture', participants seemed to contain a hybridity of identities that were socially useful and relevant to them.

Supervisor: Associate Professor Amy Conley Wright
Auxiliary Supervisor: Dr Sonja Van Wichelen
The role of parents in higher education and career choices of women of Arab descent: a comparative study of Australia and the UAE.

Nada Labib 5:05pm, Room 530

In this presentation, I draw on the constructivist grounded theory study of the role of parents in the higher education and career choices of women of Arab descent. The study is comparative and was conducted in two countries, UAE and Australia, on a total of 38 Arab women, taking into account the effect of the distinct socio-cultural contexts on Arab women’s career decision-making and aspirations.

Findings from this research study found that parents of Arab women play a huge role in their daughters’ career decision-making. Parental roles, however, cannot be considered outside of the wider socio-cultural contexts of both sample sets of Arab women. There is a clear interplay of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion and social class, and these factors are inextricably linked to parental influences on daughters’ career decision-making. Across both sample sets, parents played similar influential roles. However, in the UAE, there was a strong theme of ‘moving towards modernity’ amongst participants’ career aspirations, while, contrastingly, in Australia, participants were eagerly ‘holding on to their culture’.

Supervisor: Professor Anthony Welch
Auxiliary Supervisor: Associate Professor Nigel Bagnall

Applying standard-referenced assessment for digital literacy in curriculum-based national examination.

Shafiza Mohamed 4:05pm, Room 547

The Malaysia Eleventh Plan (2016-2020) has digital literacy as one of the key drivers to support the pillar of “leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to scale up quality learning”. To achieve this goal, in 2015, a Digital Competency Standard (DCS) was developed to measure and provide a national framework for the reporting of student performance particularly in digital skills. As in most countries, the traditional national high-stakes examination has a large impact on what is taught and learned in schools. If it is not assessed in this examination, it is generally ignored in the schools’ taught curriculum.

One of the primary purposes of this study is to develop a procedure to embed the assessment of digital literacy into the national high-stake examination that student proficiency in digital literacy can be assessed and used to locate a student’s performance along a measurement scale that represents the construct of digital literacy. One of the characteristics of the procedure is that a rubric is constructed to describe levels of performance in digital literacy. The measurement model that underpins the construction of the scale gives meaning to marks by comparing the evidence obtained from the student’s performance on an assessment task to the “rubrics” (or standards).

This presentation will discuss the latest advances in measurement theory to govern the development of a process to measure the skill of digital literacy within a standards-referencing paradigm.

Supervisor: Professor Jim Tognolini
Auxiliary Supervisor: Professor Gordon Stanley
Civics and Citizenship Education in New South Wales primary schools.

Jia Ying Neoh  4:05pm, Room 547

How are schools in New South Wales practising Civics and Citizenship Education? What are schools teaching and what experiences do they provide to develop ‘active and informed’ citizens? In the first national Australian Curriculum, the Civics and Citizenship curriculum in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning area assumed the important role of ensuring that ‘students have the skills and values to become active and informed citizens’ (ACARA, 2018). This paper aims to answer the above questions by exploring how the Civics and Citizenship Education is addressed through the HASS curriculum in New South Wales primary schools through four case studies. The paper examines how CCE as taught in NSW primary schools reflects the ACCC and some of the issues and challenges involved in the curriculum implementation in NSW primary schools.

Supervisor: Professor Murray Print
Auxiliary Supervisor: Dr Yeow-Tong Chia

Does a drama-inspired ‘mirroring’ exercise enhance mathematical learning?

Eleni Smyrnis  4:05pm, Room 530

Recent neuroscientific research into human modular structures, including the ‘mirror neuron system’ provides insights to the neural basis of learning through observation and imitation (Van Gog, Paas, Marcus, Ayres, & Sweller, 2009). The act of “mirroring”, where a student pairs with a teacher and mirrors their movements, may be a form of biologically primary knowledge that can likewise improve biologically secondary knowledge such as learning mathematics (Paas & Sweller, 2012).

This exploratory study investigated the effects of a mirroring intervention on motivation, cognitive load, and problem solving performance. 46 primary school students engaged in an embodied mirroring activity during learning the topic of ‘order of operations’. Student motivation was measured using Richmond’s (1990) State Motivation Scale. Leppink, Paas, Van der Vleuten, Van Gog and Van Merriënboer’s (2013) recently developed 10-item psychometric instrument which was used to measure intrinsic and extraneous cognitive load experienced by learners. Prior knowledge and mirroring’s effects on problem-solving respectively were evaluated using two mathematical problem-solving tests adapted from Byrne (2013), comprising a cloze test for order of operations questions as a pre-test, and 12-item problem-solving questions as a post-test. Results indicated that students in the experimental condition outperformed students in the control conditions with simple test questions and total test questions. This study stipulates great potential for a mirroring intervention during a mathematical lesson, to enhance mathematical problem-solving performance.

Supervisor: Associate Professor Paul Ginns
Auxiliary Supervisor: Professor Janette Bobis
Making politics visible: ‘evidence’ and ‘results’ in international development interventions to prevent violence against women and girls.

Ben Swanton 4:05pm, Room 325

International development (aid) policies and programs are increasingly planned, managed and evaluated using narrow definitions of ‘evidence’ and ‘results’ (Eyben, 2015). This presentation explores the political function of these concepts in aid programs that aim to prevent violence against women and girls in the Global South. It does this by analysing how ‘evidence’ and ‘results’ manifest in concrete rules and tools used to manage the flagship prevention program of the (UK) Department for International Development, What Works. It is argued that these rules and tools, justified in apolitical terms of assessing performance and capturing impact, serve political functions that go beyond their stated aims.

The presentation concludes by highlighting some implications for prevention practice.

Supervisor: Associate Professor Sue Goodwin
Auxiliary Supervisor: Dr Kellie Burns

Creativity in the primary school classroom.

Sarah Wells 5:05pm, Room 547

Creativity is represented in Australian educational policy with perplexing duality, where aspirational claims and abstract vagueness coexist alongside each other. Positioned as a “general capability” in the Australian curriculum, creativity is said to have the potential to build, “…the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation” (ACARA, 2013, Cross-curriculum priorities, para.1). Yet a clear, implementable definition of the word itself is absent. This lack of interpretative clarity can be partially explained by the intricate layers of meaning within the concept itself.

This research project investigated whether a disparity exists between the policy aspirations for creativity in Australian education and the conceptualisations of creativity held and implemented by primary teachers. Through a case study methodology and using action learning as a professional learning process, this research explored whether the concept of creative dispositions (Lucas, Claxton & Spencer, 2014) influenced five primary school teachers’ conceptualisations of creativity.

The research findings suggest that a reimagined, operationalised creativity may positively influence teachers’ approaches to creative teaching and learning by bridging the interpretative gap.

Supervisor: Dr Jon Callow
Auxiliary Supervisor: Professor Robyn Ewing AM