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University of Warwick

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STOP PRESS

Research impact through drama? Why not?

Thursday 7th 12.45 – 1.30pm, Ramphal 0.03/0.04

Theatr lolo and TLRP's Home-School Knowledge Exchange project in an 'engaging' experiment

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Welcome to BERA 2006 and to this compendium of abstracts of TLRP presentations

At a glance guide to TLRP projects presenting:

Wednesday 6th September

3.15 – 4.45pm: Community-based Learning; Interplay; Entering E-society

Thursday 7th September

9.00 – 10.30am: Learning Lives

12.45 – 1.30pm: Home-School Knowledge Exchange

12.45 – 2.15pm: VITAE

2.30 – 4.00pm: Home-School Knowledge Exchange; Bilingual Literacies; Diversity and Difference in HE; Literacies for Learning

4.30 – 6.00pm: Learning Lives; EPPE 3–11; Interagency Working; Early Professional Learning

Friday 8th September

9.00 – 10.30am: TLRP/CARET Team; Changing Teacher Roles

12.15 – 1.45pm: Techno-maths Literacies

3.00 – 4.30pm: Early Professional Learning; Changing Teachers' Roles; Learning as Work; Degrees of Success; Quantitative Analysis of HE; Access in FE-HE

5.00 – 6.30pm: Interactive Teaching; Learning and Skills; Research and Professionalism

Wednesday
6th September
3.15 – 4.45pm

Expanding our understanding of the learning cultures of community-based further Education

Presenters: *Jim Gallacher, Beth Crossan, Terry Mayes and Paula Cleary, Glasgow Caledonian University; David Watson, Anniesland College; Lorna Smith, James Watt College*

Abstract: This paper presents arguments for distinctive features of the learning cultures present within community-based further education. The paper draws on data generated through a qualitative study of two community learning centres (CLCs). The overall aim of the project is to achieve enhancement of the teaching and learning experience, shared across all participants in the research, through a deeper understanding of the learning cultures. These participants include the CLC tutors and support staff, learners, college managers and members of the research team (which itself includes College Research Fellows, as well as the University-based team). Through a series of group and one-to-one interviews with staff and learners in two CLCs, as well as informal observations, a large qualitative data-set has been produced. The principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) have informed generation and analysis of these data. This approach draws on both psychological and sociological traditions. It aims to capture and explore the meanings that participants assign to their experiences.

Drawing on the work of Bourdieu and of situated learning theory, we argue that the CLCs can be understood as sub-fields operating in relation to two superordinate fields: those of the local community and the main further education college to which the CLC is attached. The cultures of CLCs are ones where much more of learners' social and emotional lives are explicitly brought into the learning sites than happens in more formal learning settings. As a result, the undertaking of 'emotional labour' is a core part of the 'habitus' of the lecturers and other CLC staff – centre managers and support staff – who help shape the work practices and learning cultures of the CLCs. Furthermore, the two superordinate fields shape individual human relationships – which we term 'learning relationships' – within the CLCs in complex and at times conflicting ways.

We conclude that our analysis is taking us deeper into a depiction of learning cultures as a constellation of affective variables centred around feelings, attitudes and relationships, and moving us further from conventional constructs of pedagogy and learner support. Our work is illuminating aspects of an under-researched area of post-compulsory education and training. The research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It is a collaboration between a university-based research centre and two partner further education colleges.

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

The next generation: new technologies at home and in pre-school settings

Chair: *Joanna McPake, University of Stirling*

Discussant: *Greg Mannion, University of Stirling*

Abstract: This symposium brings together work from three studies investigating the experiences of young children (age 3–5) as they learn to use a range of information communication technologies (ICT) at home and in pre-school settings. *Interplay*, funded as part of the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme, explored ways in which practitioners can support 3- and 4-year-old children's learning with ICT. *Already at a Disadvantage?*, a small-scale study funded by BECTA, looked at children's use of ICT at home, particularly at the potential impact of digital divides on children's experiences. This pilot study has developed into *Entering e-Society*, funded as part of the ESRC's e-Society Research Programme, on children's development of 'e-literacy' at home. Together these projects allow us to identify and contrast children's learning with ICT at home and in pre-school playrooms, and the perspectives of parents, pre-school practitioners and schoolteachers on what counts as valued learning.

The three papers focus on three key areas in the research. The first looks at the nature of children's learning as they use and play with ICT, and the ways in which learning with ICT is

constructed in educational settings and at home. The second addresses ways in which young children's encounters with ICT are supported by family members, pre-school practitioners, peers and other helpers. The third considers whether digital divides have an impact on young children's experiences and opportunities to learn to use ICT in the home context.

The discussant will draw out the implications of the papers when taken as a whole – regarding the place of ICT in the construction of childhoods and child-adult relations at home and in pre-school contexts. Taken together, the significance of the papers lies in the weight they add to findings emerging from other studies: that the potential for IT-based literacies to mediate between home and school (as with many other forms of literacy) is underestimated. They are distinctive in exploring this issue through the lens of learning and adult support for learning. Each paper sheds a different light on this issue. The discussion will explore the sorts of roles and relations likely to be of most use in enhancing learning across and within home and pre-school contexts and how we might develop better resonances between home-based and pre-school-based literacies.

Paper 1

Learning in context: learning outcomes at home and in the playroom

Presenter: *Christine Stephen, University of Stirling*

Abstract: This paper considers evidence from *Interplay*, *Already at a Disadvantage?* and *Entering e-Society* about children's learning as they use ICT at home and in pre-school educational settings. It focuses on learning outcomes observed in these contexts and ways in which learning with ICT is constructed by parents and pre-school practitioners. What counts as learning will reflect the expectations of adults involved and opportunities afforded by the resources and the support for learning offered (support for learning with ICT is considered in the third paper in this symposium).

Research methods and theoretical framework

Interplay was based in eight pre-school settings where we used a process of guided enquiry with practitioners. Evidence on children's learning in pre-school playrooms was generated by practitioners from their records of observations, children's profiles and diary accounts and self-evaluations of interventions prompted through guided enquiry. Our data about learning with ICT at home comes from interviews and observations carried out with 16 case study families for *Already at a Disadvantage?* and a further 24 families visited at home up to eight times over the course of one year during the *Entering e-Society* project. In addition we draw on a small number of interviews with primary schoolteachers.

We have thought about learning from a socio-cognitive perspective (Vygotsky, 1978; Edwards, 2005) and about accounts of learning as reflecting the socio-cultural context in which they occur (Rogoff, 2003; Edwards, 2005). Our understanding of the perspective on learning held by the communities of practitioners has been influenced by earlier work on cultures of practice (Stephen and Brown, 2004) and we have drawn on the work of Brooker (2002) when considering the habitus of the home environment and cultural capital acquired there.

Findings

Our analysis of practitioners' accounts of children's learning in the playroom suggests that they see encounters with ICT as promoting three areas of learning:

- developing a disposition to learn, e.g. increasing confidence, independence and persistence
- knowledge of the world, including aspects of mathematics, language, understanding of living things and using some forms of ICT for communication and self-expression
- operational skills, encompassing operational ability as well as functional understanding.

The accounts about children's learning about and through ICT at home can be categorised in similar ways to their playroom learning but with different emphases and with differences in the specific content of the learning. Practitioners' evidence about children's learning was

Wednesday
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3.15 – 4.45pm

heavily weighted towards developing a disposition to learn but parents were more likely to focus on children's operational skills, while neither parents nor practitioners paid particular attention to the learning that might be described as 'subject content'. Young children acquired technical and operational competence at home and in the playroom, although they may learn to use different resources in each context. They added to their knowledge of the world at home as they did in the playroom, but the domestic context offers more opportunities to develop an understanding of the role that ICT can play in social communication, entertainment, self-expression and work. Dispositions that promote learning are developed at home and in the playroom but using ICT in family settings affords opportunities for sustained attention, learning to follow instructions and exploration that may be more limited in group settings.

Already at a Disadvantage? yielded initial evidence about the perspectives of primary teachers on children's learning before they begin school and *Entering e-Society* will add to this data. Interim evidence suggests that teachers expect only operational competence on the part of children beginning school and that even within this area they underestimate the outcomes of learning at home and pre-school.

Paper 2

The impact of digital divides on young children's experiences with new technologies

Presenter: Joanna McPake, University of Stirling

Abstract:

Context

The term *digital divide* refers to socio-economic differences between communities in terms of access to computers and the internet, and of abilities to use ICT effectively. In early commentaries on this phenomenon, the divide was seen principally as an economic issue. More recent discussions have identified a series of *divides*, not only economic but also along other familiar social fault-lines, including gender, race, class and disability.

These divides have been explored in several contexts, including education (BECTA, 2001), but there has been little discussion of the issue in relation to pre-schoolers (Plowman and Stephen, 2003; Sefton-Green, 2004). Yet many children first experience ICT at this age, at home and in pre-school settings. Given the increasingly important role of ICT in all aspects of social and cultural life, including education and employment, these early experiences are, potentially, as important as young children's early experiences of literacy.

Focus

Two of our studies have focused on the impact of digital divides on young children's ICT experiences, and the implications for children's learning. *Already at a Disadvantage?* was mainly concerned with the potential impact of economic disadvantage. *Entering e-Society* builds on the more complex understanding of 'digital divides' emerging from this study, and seeks to link these to our conceptualisation of the learning competences children are acquiring through their early experiences with ICT (see the first paper in this symposium) and to the role of guided interaction (see the third paper).

Methods

Already at a Disadvantage? and *Entering e-Society* are both based on case studies of young children, from 'disadvantaged' and 'more advantaged' homes. They involve a series of home visits in which parents are interviewed about their children's experiences with ICT and on their views on the role of ICT in the home, in education, in work and in wider society. We have also talked to the children themselves and observed them using computers, games consoles, mobile phones, electronic toys and other technological items.

Theoretical framework

Analysis focuses on barriers and facilitators to children's learning, considering a range of potential digital divides such as economic disadvantage, class and gender, but at the same time seeking to avoid the development of a deficit model.

Our thinking has been influenced by the work of *new literacies* researchers (e.g. Heath, 1983; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Gregory and Williams, 2000), concerning ways in which people use their literacies, largely outwith academic domains. The relevance of this work to our research lies in its focus on informal literacy practices, which may have parallels with children's ICT (or *e-literacy*) practices at home; and in its recognition of literacy practices as culturally situated. In understanding how children from different social backgrounds develop *e-literacies*, we seek to understand how these are culturally situated, and to consider the implications for children's learning, in informal and formal contexts.

Findings

We have found that children's experiences and opportunities to learn to use ICT are influenced by digital divides to some degree, but in ways more complex than have been envisaged by the largely quantitative studies which have addressed this issue (with older children and adults) to date.

Our work also suggests that pre-school and early years practitioners are largely unaware of the *e-literacy* competences many (but not all) children are developing at home. They are therefore not in a good position either to build on these or to provide appropriate support for those whose opportunities have been limited. The longer-term implications of these early experiences for children's educational development remain to be investigated.

Paper 3

Guided interaction at home and in the playroom

Presenter: Lydia Plowman, University of Stirling

Abstract:

Context

This paper draws on findings from the *Interplay* and *Entering e-Society* projects to discuss the ways in which young children's encounters with technologies are supported in the different learning environments of pre-school settings and the home. Guided interaction is a term that describes the role of situated human help in guiding interaction with ICT. Our research suggests that human help can be provided by adults, such as practitioners or family members, or other children, such as siblings or peers, but the prevalence of this help and the forms it takes varies from one context to another.

Focus

Whilst practitioners are expert at providing tailored responses to children, this did not always extend to children's play with ICT. Opportunities for learning could be missed because children rarely asked for help, while supervision of computer play was limited and competed with other duties. We wanted to identify ways in which pedagogical actions by adults could support children's learning with ICT in the playroom. Later on, we wanted to take our well-developed understanding of guided interaction in this context and test its relevance in children's homes.

Theoretical framework and methods

The characteristics of *guided interaction* were identified through a process of guided enquiry, a practitioner-generated cycle of planning, action and review that was facilitated by the research team and is familiar to practitioners as a way of structuring learning activities and their own work in the playroom. Further information on the design of *Interplay* can be found in the first paper in this symposium and further information on *Entering e-Society* in the second paper.

We have taken a socio-cultural approach because children's competences with computers and other technologies are not simply operational but encompass an understanding of the roles of technologies in work and play and are developed in a social context. The technology is seen as an artefact in a socio-cultural system that encompasses the users, their interactions and the wider cultural context (Wertsch, 1991). The research can be situated within other theories of supported learning with a Vygotskian orientation including scaffolding (Wood *et al.*, 1976), assisted performance (Tharp and Gallimore, 1989), dialogic inquiry (Wells, 1999) and guided participation (Rogoff *et al.*, 1993).

Findings

We found very few examples of peer support for interactions with ICT in pre-school settings and, until the interventions introduced as part of the *Interplay* project, few examples of adult guidance. The examples we found took place in two dimensions: the proximal and the distal. Direct, or proximal, guided interaction takes place in a face-to-face situation and may be enacted through gesture, touch, language or emotional support. Because practitioners tend to associate direct support with being teacherly or too directive we found that guided interaction more often took place indirectly, or in the distal dimension. Indirect guided interaction included activities such as planning, making resources available and recording children's progress with ICT. In terms of the outcomes indicated in the first symposium paper, learning was mainly conceptualised as developing dispositions to learn.

These examples of guided interaction in pre-school settings contrast sharply with the examples we found in children's homes. Here, guided interaction was as likely to be provided by other children as by adults. Helpers felt no inhibitions about being teacherly and children's operational skills were therefore developed in ways that were explicitly instructional. The paper will outline other key differences in the types of support offered, including the role of modelling authentic activities and the influence of exposure to different helpers and technologies.

Thursday
7th September
9.00 – 10.30am

Dynamics of adult participation in learning and determinants of transitions in and out of learning: results from the British Household Panel Survey

Presenters: Flora Macleod and Paul Lambe, University of Exeter

Abstract: Participation in adult education and training has been largely explored using successive surveys which have, regardless of how participation has been measured, typically shown little change in the characteristics of participants and non-participants. Thus an impression has been formulated that the same people are participating from one year to the next or from one survey wave to the next. In contrast, our paper uses six waves of the British Household Panel Survey (1998–2003) to explore the dynamics of part-time participation in formal learning by adults in the UK and its constituent countries. Analysis of this panel data using event history techniques and controlling for class and gender, has allowed us to demonstrate the extent among different age groups of transitory participation, persistent participation and non-participation, the differentials in maximum likelihood of participation, and identify and evaluate the influence of significant predictors of the likelihood of participation. Our paper thus gives new insights into the ratios and patterns of adult participation in formal learning opportunities including period, cohort and age effects by identifying the clusters of variable that are associated with different states of participation and transitions from being a participant to becoming a non-participant and vice versa.



Thursday
7th September
12.45 – 1.30pm

Ready or not? Facing up to the challenge of transfer from primary to secondary school

Presenters: Theatr lolo, Cardiff and the Home-School Knowledge Exchange project team, University of Bristol

Abstract: This session will feature a live drama performance in which members of the Cardiff-based educational theatre group Theatr lolo will portray some of the issues facing children as they transfer from primary to secondary school. The performance is one of the outcomes of an ESRC-TLRP funded project in which members of the Home-School Knowledge Exchange project are exploring innovative ways of disseminating their research findings through drama. The performance has arisen directly from drama workshops in which Year 6 children, their teachers and their parents explore their hopes, expectations and concerns about their impending transfer to secondary school. After the performance there will be opportunities for the audience to discuss issues raised by the drama and the project with members of the cast and the research team.

Venue: Ramphal 0.03/0.04

Thursday
7th September
12.45 – 2.15pm

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

Variations in teachers' work, lives and their effects on pupils (VITAE): the findings

Chair: Judy Sebba, University of Sussex

Discussant: Lesley Saunders, General Teaching Council of England

Abstract: The VITAE project, a four-year research study, was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and conducted in seven local education authorities (LEAs) in England. The main aim of the project was to identify factors that may affect teachers' work and lives over time and how these factors may, in turn, impact on their teaching and subsequent pupil progress and outcomes. In order to achieve this, the study involved over 300 teachers in 100 primary and secondary schools, and employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis.

The purpose of this symposium is to allow a discussion of the findings from the study and includes the following papers: Paper 1 begins by briefly explaining the aims and

Can a drama performance help research impact?

The Home-School Knowledge Exchange project and Theatr lolo present:

Ready or not?

Facing up to the challenges of transfer from primary to secondary school.



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organisation of the study, summarising the relevant literature that has informed the research, and providing an overview of the research design and methodology. This is followed by four papers which present findings based on the main overarching strands of the research.

Paper 2 focuses on teachers' professional life phases and identifies key influences on teachers' work in different phases of their careers and the differential impact of these on their motivation, commitment and perceived effectiveness. Having explored the key characteristics of teachers' professional life phases, Paper 3 focuses upon an analysis of the interactions between teachers' identities, their work and life scenarios and emotional well-being.

This is followed by Paper 4, which discusses the connections between professional life phase, teacher identity, commitment and effectiveness as measured by pupil attainment. This paper draws on the concept of 'value added' (a form of analysis that seeks to measure the school or teachers' contribution to pupils' progress or social behavioural or affective outcomes). Paper 5 concludes by examining the significant relationships between levels of commitment, teacher resilience, agency and effectiveness.

Paper 1

Variations in teachers' work, lives and their effects on pupils

Authors: *Chris Day and Pam Sammons, University of Nottingham; Gordon Stobart, Institute of Education, University of London*

Abstract: The VITAE project aimed to identify those factors that affect teachers' work and lives and how these impact upon them and their pupils over time. VITAE adopted a multi-method design which combined a range of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis over a three-year period from 300 primary and secondary teachers in 100 schools located in different geographical and socio-economic contexts. The teachers were representative of the national teacher profile in terms of age, experience and gender. The schools were also representative of the national profile of phase, SES and size. They were sampled from seven local education authorities (LEAs) in England, which varied from large shire to small city LEAs.

The VITAE project was designed against a set of specifications in a competitive tender issued by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) which defined its overarching aim



as being 'to assess variations over time in teacher effectiveness, between different teachers and for particular teachers, and to identify factors that contribute to variations. The Department wants to understand how teachers become more effective over time' (DfES Tender No: 4/RP/173/99). In designing an appropriate methodology for this project, three key issues were addressed:

- 1 How to measure the effectiveness of teachers working within different phases, contexts and at different points in their careers in terms of pupil progress and achievement outcomes.
- 2 How to identify and assess the variations in effectiveness between teachers at different career points over time.
- 3 How to differentiate between, and assess the significance of, the key factors associated with variations in teachers' effectiveness.

Finally, the design had to facilitate the enquiry of a range of potential influences on teacher effectiveness, including personal, contextual, socio-cultural, societal and structural factors, which operate at micro, meso and macro levels (Day *et al.*, 2005).

This paper describes the context of the research, relevant literature and methods adopted. It explains how the study sought to analyse in detail the relationships between pupil attainment and teacher effectiveness over time, as well as the influence of a range of factors, including personal and professional biography, situational, broad cultural and policy contexts, psychological factors, classroom organisation and teaching approaches, and the characteristics and backgrounds of pupils.

Paper 2

Teachers' professional life phases

Author: *Qing Gu, University of Nottingham*

Abstract: A key focus of our research was on variations in teachers' work, lives, perceived effectiveness and possible futures within and between particular phases of their professional lives. The analysis identified key influences on teachers' work in different phases of their careers and the differential impact of these on their motivation, commitment and perceived effectiveness. Drawing on Huberman's seminal study on the lives of Swiss secondary school teachers, which has been widely cited for its development of a non-linear empirically based schematic model of a five-phase teaching career cycle, as well as an extensive review of previous studies on teachers' careers and professional development, VITAE divided teachers into one of six 'professional life phases' based on the number of years in teaching.

This paper centres around the analysis of teachers' professional life phases and suggests that the teachers' professional life progression is based upon factors not only within the organisational settings but also on the interaction and management of these factors in conjunction with issues arising in teachers' personal lives. The paper discusses a number of common influences which have been found to affect teachers positively or negatively across the six professional life phases, in addition to the potential variations in the impact of these influences on teachers' professional lives and their diverse professional life trajectories.

It has been established that teachers are subject to a combination of influences that impact on their work, lives, identities and effectiveness over the course of their careers. These influences call for responsive, differentiated support if teachers are to sustain their effectiveness. Our identification of professional life-phase scenarios shows groupings of the key critical influences that impact on teachers and the relative intensity of the tensions that they face as a result of the combined impact of these. In addition, teachers' professional life phases are by no means static; they are dynamic in nature. Although teachers cannot physically choose the phases of their professional lives, the interactions between teachers' commitment, resilience and a range of influential factors in their work and personal contexts is a sophisticated and continuous process and impacts differentially on teachers' motivation, commitment and perceived effectiveness within the same and across different

Paper 3

The emotional context of teaching: teacher identity

Author: Alison Kington, University of Nottingham

Abstract: Teachers' sense of professional and personal identity are key variables in their motivation, job fulfilment, commitment and self-efficacy; and these will themselves be affected by the extent to which teachers' own needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are met. Indeed, the effectiveness of teachers in different professional life phases and the relationships between these, working conditions, organisational contexts, pupils and life events both influenced and was found to be influenced by teachers' identities, regardless of whether identities are positively or negatively stable, or positively or negatively unstable.

The analysis of teachers' identities identified three individual, yet interacting, dimensions that form a composite of teacher identity. These dimensions, individually or in combination, can become dominant as events which have a professional, situated and/or personal emphasis occur in teachers' work and lives. Based on the interaction between these dimensions, teachers experience one of four scenarios (based on the dominance of the dimension(s)). The evidence supports the claim that teacher identities change over time and as a result of different experiences and school contexts.

The empirical research from VITAE provides a more holistic picture of variations in teachers' lives, work and effectiveness across macro-, meso- and micro-level contexts and different biographical and experience phases. The evidence revealed that teachers' sense of professional and personal identity and their personal and organisational contexts are key variables in their motivation, job fulfilment, commitment and self-efficacy, which are themselves affected by the extent to which teachers' own needs for agency (autonomy, competence and relatedness) are met and managed.

This paper, therefore, demonstrates the notion that identities are neither intrinsically stable nor intrinsically fragmented, but that they can be more or less stable and more or less fragmented at different times and in different ways according to a number of personal, professional and situated factors. It discusses the ways in which some teachers seek and find, in different ways, their own sense of stability within what appears *from the outside* to be fragmented identities, and that neither stability nor instability necessarily influence teachers' effectiveness.

Paper 4

Measuring teachers' relative effectiveness

Author: Pam Sammons, University of Nottingham

Abstract: An important feature of the VITAE research was the use of external indicators of effectiveness based on the study of pupil outcomes. The multilevel analysis component of the VITAE research adopted an 'educational effectiveness' design to investigate pupils' attainment/progress in three year groups in classes taught by the 300 teacher participants in the sample. Multilevel analysis was primarily used to identify, measure and categorise teachers' relative effectiveness in promoting pupil progress across three consecutive school years (2002/03 to 2004/05).

Analyses revealed that the intake characteristics of different classes differ widely, making it essential that pupil characteristics that show a statistically significant association with attainment are adjusted for before comparing teachers or schools in terms of the progress made by their pupils' attainment and progress. In this way VITAE compared the impact of teachers who were teaching very different pupil groups. Multilevel modelling identified the significant factors and produced 'value added scores' that were statistically adjusted to take them into account.

This paper provides a brief account of the value added study of teacher effectiveness adopted for the VITAE research. It illustrates, using teacher cameos, the complexity of

differences and perceptions of teachers in the study and indicates the main conclusion from the systematic comparisons of the more and less effective teacher groups, and discusses the finding that there is no single explanation for the extent of variation in terms of personal, pupil, professional or policy factors.

Paper 5

Teachers' sustained commitment and resilience

Authors: Chris Day and Alison Kington, University of Nottingham

Abstract: Commitment is a key factor in teachers' perceived effectiveness and effectiveness by value added measures of pupil attainment. Analyses of questionnaire and interview data identified three broad groups of teachers: those who had sustained commitment; those who had sustained commitment despite challenging circumstances; and those whose commitment had declined.

Those who had sustained their commitment were determined to remain in the teaching profession and appreciated the important role of motivation and commitment in remaining in the job. Data suggested that some teachers were managing to sustain their level of commitment despite working under considerable persistent and negative pressures largely connected to deteriorating pupil behaviour and attitudes, lack of parental support and the effects of government policies. For some, these negative pressures were mediated by one or more types of support: internal (values related), situated (in the school and/or department) and external (family, friends). Those whose commitment had declined were often considering leaving the teaching profession for a new career, and were either looking for promotion to advisory roles or, having suffered health problems connected to the stress of teaching, were seeking different kinds of work.

This paper discusses these three groups of teachers, commenting upon the complex interplay of professional, situated and personal factors that affect teachers' commitment and resilience, and illustrates how, for many participating teachers, commitment and resilience is mediated by other factors (e.g. leadership, pupils, peer and personal support), the result of which can have either positive or negative outcomes. The paper also examines the connections between professional life phase, identity, relative effectiveness (discussed previously), and commitment and resilience.

Thursday
7th September
2.30 – 4.00pm

Enhancing user engagement: engaging emotions in research dissemination through drama

Presenters: Jane Andrews, Wan Ching Yee and Martin Hughes, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol

Abstract: This paper describes an experiment with an innovative method of communication in attempting to broaden the basis of user engagement in educational research. It provides a reflexive account of the potential of using drama to disseminate research and discusses the methodology and outcomes of a newly funded experimental project on the dissemination of research through the medium of drama in collaboration with a professional drama group.

The inclusion of users in the dissemination of research has been a fundamental plank of many funding organisations, and in educational research 'users' have often meant the policy-makers and practitioners of education who have traditionally engaged with research dissemination through conventional methods such as the written text. In the Home-School Knowledge Exchange (HSKE) project, our work with children and their families raised issues that often had a strong emotional content, and were not easy to communicate using conventional dissemination. In engaging children and their families and teachers as users of educational research, we explore communication and impact approaches which allow us to present difficult and potentially emotional issues to a range of different audiences. In particular, we explore how drama can create situations which embody the tensions and conflicts identified by our research and enable the voices of the research participants to be heard.

Dissemination to parents is particularly timely. For example, there is currently much interest in the DfES in how parents can be involved in raising their children's attainment (e.g. Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003), and partnership with parents is a key component of the personalised learning agenda (DfES, 2004). Many of the issues raised by the HSKE project are concerned with understanding the different cultures and practices of home and school, in challenging misconceptions about these cultures and practices, and in dealing with issues that arise when home and school are brought more closely together. These include, for example, conflicts arising for children because of different teaching approaches used at home and school; parents' feelings that their home culture is not recognised or respected in school; children's feelings of both pride and embarrassment when aspects of their home lives are brought into school; parents' and children's concerns about bullying in the secondary school.

At present, drama is rarely used to communicate issues and findings arising from research in the social sciences. There are however a growing number of exceptions to this, particularly when the issues involved are emotionally charged, e.g. Gray and Sinding (2002). Within educational research, there are a few examples where researchers have drawn on readers' theatre techniques to communicate issues from their research, e.g. the Commission on Research in Black Education mounted a readers' theatre production at AERA 2000; more recently, Davis, Sumara and their colleagues have developed a readers' theatre production from their research on the experiences of student and practising teachers who do not see themselves as 'good teachers' (e.g. Davis et al., in press). Examples such as these rest on the potential of drama to engage both audience and participants in issues which can be emotionally difficult, and to change their thinking and attitudes as a result of such engagement. In this paper we aim to explore how this potential of drama can be used to raise and communicate issues arising directly from our research on home-school knowledge exchange.

This paper thus explores a fundamental communication issue of 'user engagement' both in the context of distinctive types of users (parents and children/students) and in the context of a distinctive kind of engagement (the dramatisation of difficult and sometimes emotional issues). The work thus aims to significantly enrich and extend the notion of 'user engagement'.



Thursday
7th September
2.30 – 4.00pm

Bilingual literacies in the working/learning lives of young Welsh speakers in a rural context in North Wales

Authors: *Marilyn Martin-Jones and B. Griffith, University of Birmingham; A. Williams, Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor*

Abstract: This paper is based on ethnographic research on literacy currently in progress with young people in two rural settings in North Wales. The work is being carried out as part of a wider research project entitled 'Bilingual literacies for learning in further education'. Our main focus in this first year of our project is on 36 young Welsh speakers (in the 16–19 age range), on the ways in which they draw on literacies in different languages in their everyday lives and on the social identities and cultural values associated with these literacies. We are documenting a broad range of literacy practices, including reading, writing, the use and/or production of texts in different media and the use of different technologies.

In this paper, we present case studies of students who are enrolled in a Level 3 course leading to a BTEC National Diploma in Agriculture. The course is offered at a further education (FE) college which is the leading post-16 provider of bilingual and Welsh-medium education in Wales. While pursuing their studies at this FE college, the students are also running their own small agricultural businesses. We provide an account of the specific ways in which literacies are embedded in the working/learning lives of these young people and we examine the nature and scope of the reading and writing that they do at work and at college.

The questions guiding our fieldwork and data analysis are as follows: What kinds of texts, in what languages, do these young people use and/or produce in these two domains of their lives? How do they use and/or produce them? Have they taken on new literacies in their working/learning lives? What are the commonalities and differences between college literacies and the literacies they draw on in running their businesses? How do the literacy practices associated with these young people's working/learning lives reflect wider changes taking place in the agriculture sector in Wales?

Thursday
7th September
2.30 – 4.00pm

Re-reading literacy practice research: the construction or the discovery of realities and contexts.

Author: *Karen Miller, Stirling University*

Abstract: This paper examines some of the ongoing methodological issues that are arising from the 'Literacies for Learning in Further Education' (LlLFE) TLRP project. It considers the nature of participatory literacy practice research relating to the relationship between theory, methodology and the co-construction of contexts and realities. It considers some of the resulting implications for research practices.

The theoretical orientation of the project comes from situated approaches to learning. Literacy is viewed as a situated social practice and draws on New Literacy Studies (Barton et al. 2000; Gee 2003). Empirically we distinguish between literacy events, those instantiated, observable moments of interaction with the text, and literacy practices, the ways of using texts that inform and shape each literacy event. Viewing literacy practices as socially situated results in a focus on context and forms of participation for learning. Theoretical conceptualisations of context from Communities of Practice, Actor Network theory and Activity theory are drawn on in order to illuminate the uneasy relationship between theory, method, changes in social practice and the co-construction of contexts and realities.

The theoretical framing of a research project has consequences for the unit of analysis and the units of data. The methodological approach and methods used to investigate the research questions reflect the theoretical orientation of the research. The research methodologies used in the LlLFE project have been ethnographic, hermeneutic, participatory and reflexive. We have tried to describe in as much detail as possible the literacy practices required by the study of particular subjects, in becoming a further education student and those that learners manifest in the diverse contexts of their lives. One of the tasks of the project is to develop and research the impact of changes in

practice that seek to mobilise what we initially termed 'border literacies'. As the project has progressed analysis has prompted an iterative process of reframing some of our theoretical orientation towards learning contexts and mobilisation of literacy practices. Examining issues of context also reflexively brings to the fore important questions for research practices. This paper addresses some of these issues: What are the contexts of educational research and how are those contexts framed? How are units of data collection and analysis contextualised?

The focus of the paper is on the interaction of the literacy practices associated with the research, and those gathered in the data, for the co-construction of contexts and realities for all involved. The practitioner researchers are presently implementing changes in practice based on research findings. Students who have participated in the research project have expressed changes in attitude to their own literacy practices and learning in general. The paper draws on some of this data.

It is fast becoming common place to assert that literacy practices are not ideologically innocent. They do not merely meet cultural and individual needs: rather they shape both the ways in which cultures develop socio-economic arrangements and the ways in which literate individuals develop 'adaptive' psychological dispositions and cognitive strategies. Literacy practices reflect and themselves build dominant political and socio-cultural experience. Similarly, there are no innocent 'methods'; all involve forms of social practice that in some way or another interfere with the patterns of the physical or the social world. This paper explores the implications of research methods as being performative in the sense that they have effects; they make differences, they enact realities; and they can help to bring into being what they also discover (Law and Urry, 2002).

Thursday
7th September
2.30 – 4.00pm

The relationship between 'time' and students' levels of engagement with the literacy demands of their courses (Literacies for Learning in Further Education (LlLFE) project)

Author: Angela Brzeski, A Preston College

Thursday
7th September
2.30 – 4.00pm

A three dimensional analysis of the factors influencing student engagement among socially and academically diverse students within a widening participation context

Authors: Chris Hockings, University of Wolverhampton; Marion Bowl and Sandra Cooke, University of Birmingham

Abstract: The growth in the student population within Higher Education (HE) against a background of government policy promoting the concept of 'widening participation' has led to much debate about the nature of teaching within Higher Education. However, data continue to show a lack of engagement amongst some groups in HE (HEFCE, 2005/03) and the academic engagement of all students within increasingly large and diverse classrooms has proved difficult for some to achieve (Mann, 2001).

The research that we report here is part of a two-year, ESRC/TLRP-funded project entitled 'Learning and teaching for social diversity and difference'. The project is designed to explore the differences and similarities between students and teachers across a range of disciplines in order to develop strategies for improving the academic engagement and participation of all students, for creating inclusive learning environments and to inform the development of good practice.

In this paper, we report on the first stage of this project by exploring some of the sociological, epistemological and pedagogical reasons why the learning environments within two universities (one pre- the other a post-1992 university) may impact differently on first-year students. We do this by asking: What conceptions do students have about higher education, university teachers, their subject and themselves as learners prior to enrolment at university? How do these conceptions influence how they engage in, and benefit from, learning?

To address these questions we focus on the experiences and conceptions of four groups of students whose educational, social, cultural and economic backgrounds vary considerably. We describe the range of qualitative and quantitative methods used to gather data including web-based questionnaires, focus group activities and semi-structured interviews and then draw upon three different theoretical perspectives to analyse the data. First, we take a sociological perspective, using theories of differentials in individual, family and institutional habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Reay, 1998a, b). Second, we take an 'approaches to learning' perspective (Marton and Saljo, 1976a, b) and third, an epistemological perspective drawing on theories of knowledge and knowing (Belenky *et al.*, 1997; Perry, 1970; Gilligan, 1982). We discuss the findings from this combined theoretical analysis and consider the implications for the wider academic and practitioner community of the factors that affect learners from diverse social and cultural backgrounds within the context of widening participation and mass higher education.

Thursday
7th September
2.30 – 4.00pm

What's 'key' and 'core' about literacy in FE? Authorising resonance between everyday literacy practices and formal learning

Presenters: Greg Mannion and June Smith, Institute of Education, University of Stirling

Abstract:

Context

Traditionally, being competent with the reading and writing of texts of various kinds has been seen as a form of neutral competence of decoding and encoding that a learner can easily carry with them from one context to another (Street, 1993). In contrast, the New Literacy Studies (NLS) takes a socio-cultural view and foregrounds the situated perspective via an analysis of the purposes and effects of reading and writing practices and the concurrent emergence of the related social and material contexts. The paper explores how everyday life and teaching and learning in FE is textually mediated and how formal processes of reading and writing might better relate to out-of-college literacies.

Domain of enquiry

The place of literacy in teaching and learning in post-compulsory education and training.

Research questions

The paper concentrates on one of the original aims of this TLRP project: to identify those 'border literacies' that enable people to negotiate successfully between informal vernacular literacies and formal literacies within the FE context.

Data collection methods

For the purposes of this paper, data from students are considered in the main. These were collected by (1) getting students to review the place of literacy in their lives at home, in college and at work using a multi-modal mapping method; (2) using a pictorial clock of a day in their lives to represent the ways in which reading and writing interpenetrate their everyday life.

Theoretical/analytical framework

As an alternative to representing literacy as a core and transferable skill, the paper theorises reading and writing in FE courses as a process of situated sense-making drawing on NLS. The analysis draws upon the concepts of literacy events and practices (Heath, 1983), the domains of literacy practices (Scriber and Cole, 1981), vernacular literacies (Barton and Hamilton, 1998) and the multimodality of literacy (Kress, 1997). We propose the terms resonance and dissonance as ways of describing how literacy practices might sustain or inhibit learning of and through literacy across domains in a fluid and relational manner.

Research findings

The project is revealing the pervasiveness of the textual mediation of learning even in practical curriculum areas. We are finding that students and lecturers alike don't always notice how reading and writing plays a part in their lives or how this might be brought into play in teaching and learning. We suggest reading and writing in different contexts can be described as resonant and dissonant when one considers their related purposes,

identifications, values and text-types, genres, etc. Some subject areas exhibit the potential for greater resonance across contexts than others.

Contribution to knowledge

Taking a situated approach and analysing the data in a relational manner leads us to move away from the traditional ideas of transfer and neatly bounded views of context. Within the field of literacy, using resonance and dissonance across diverse literacy practices as constructs we seek to offer an alternative empirically grounded way of addressing the 'transfer' and 'core skill' question.

We are suggesting that what is actually 'key' or at the 'core' of purposeful literacy is what makes it relevant for students across the different overlapping domains of their lives (home, college and work). Since the practice of teaching, learning and assessment in FE are often circumscribed by outside authorities with a decontextualised 'skills' development agenda rather than a socially situated approach, how educators might do this raises a concern.

Thursday
7th September
4.30 – 6.00pm

Conceptualising and measuring agency using the British Household Panel Survey

Presenters: Paul Lambe and Ian Alcock, University of Exeter

Abstract: In recent years educationalists, particularly in the adult education sector, have become increasingly interested in investigating the extent to which people are voluntarily involved in constructing their social identities and their biographies and the extent to which lives are shaped by structures and institutions of society linked to gender, race and social class. This work is taking place at a time when late modernity theorists such as Beck and Giddens have articulated the idea that individuals negotiate global and personal risk by making choices between different identities and biographies – a notion accentuated by neo-liberal policy tendencies. Emerging evidence from an ongoing longitudinal study into the learning biographies of adults in Scotland and England demonstrates the enduring influence of structures in lives of women and men that are also shaped by tendencies towards individualisation. It seems the question of how far agency is possible and the conditions under which it is possible is far from understood. Also little is known about the role of formal and informal learning in helping adults to become more pro-active or 'agentic' in shaping their everyday lives and their destinies.

Our ongoing longitudinal study seeks to shed light on processes such as these using 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives. Part of our study involves repeated interviews with a large group of adults over a period of three years, and part involves conducting analyses of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Within the study these two parts are in an iterative relationship with one another which, among other things, will allow us to map our case studies onto larger trends and processes within the UK.

The purpose of this paper is to show how we are using the BHPS to develop a measure of agency in its different dimensions and test its validity against a range of outcome variables. As most of the variables involved in its construction are categorical or ordinal, item response models are used in developing the measure, and multinomial and ordinal regression models in testing its effects. Once developed, it is intended that the measure will enable us to study the relationship between learning, identity and agency and track group-level changes over time.

Thursday
7th September
4.30 – 6.00pm

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

Effective Pre-School and Primary Education 3–11 (EPPE 3–11) Project

Chair: Brenda Taggart, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: The Effective Pre-school and Primary Education 3–11 (EPPE 3–11) Project is the largest European longitudinal study of a national sample of young children's development between the ages of 3 and 11 years. The EPPE 3–11 team has collected a wide range of information on 3,000 children, their parents, home environments and the pre-school

and primary settings they attended. The main research questions focus on the impact of pre-schools and a range of other background factors on children's cognitive and social/behavioural outcomes.

The EPPE 3–11 research demonstrates a mixed method approach to longitudinal research with quantitative data on standardised assessments informing the qualitative work on classroom practices and processes. The research uses a range of instruments including standardised assessment data, interviews/questionnaires and observational schedules to build a complex individual 'portrait' and 'learning trajectory' for each of our 3,000 children. Multilevel modelling, effect sizes and other statistical techniques have been used to assess progress and attainment net of other background factors. Thus the impact of pre-school can be separated out from the influences of school/home factors. The research can answer questions on the long-term impact of pre-school and how this articulates with other factors in determining children's outcomes.

This is a significant symposium given the current interest in early years experiences and what constitutes effective schooling. The research implications of this study are wide ranging. They concern not only the influences on children's cognitive and social/behavioural development but also demonstrate how research evidence can inform policy at national and local authority level, as well as contributing to the debate about effective practices in both early years and Key Stage 2. The three papers submitted to this symposium continue a long tradition of presenting emergent findings from the research study at BERA and continue the 'story' of the research. The three papers focus on (a) How does the effectiveness of the primary school a child attends link with other background factors? (b) How do Year 5 teachers vary in their classroom practices and how does this link to measures of effectiveness? and (c) What is the relationship between the home learning environment and child outcomes? The papers in this symposium will be of interest to BERA members who are concerned with early years experiences, the impact of a child's background on their development, effective schooling and mixed method research.

Paper 1

School effects and pupil progress in English primary schools

Authors: Edward Melhuish, Birkbeck, University of London; Pam Sammons, University of Nottingham; Kathy Sylva, University of Oxford; Iram Siraj-Blatchford and Brenda Taggart, Institute of Education, University of London; Helena Romaniuk and Mark Hibbett, Birkbeck, University of London

Abstract: This paper focuses on one aspect of the EPPE 3–11 study. The main research question asks how the effectiveness of the primary school a child attends links with other background factors. In order to establish this, an analysis was conducted on every primary school in England in order to isolate the 800 schools in which the EPPE 3–11 children attend and assign them an 'effectiveness score'. The sample comprises 15,771 schools providing information on over 616,000 pupils for each of three consecutive years, i.e. over 1.8 million pupils in all. The number of pupils per year in the 15,771 schools ranged from 1 to 240 (median=33, IQR=36). Around a fifth of pupils qualified for free school meals (socio-economic disadvantage). Less than 10 per cent of pupils had English as an additional language and 86 per cent of pupils were classified as white.

This analysis constitutes the first major multilevel value added study of the effectiveness of primary schools in England. The effectiveness measures are derived from the 2002, 2003 and 2004 Key Stage 2 (11-year-old) results for English, mathematics and science. Factors known to influence the Key Stage 2 result, including pupils' prior achievement at Key Stage 1 (age 7) and certain individual pupil characteristics are included in the analysis to ensure that the measures of effectiveness reflect the schools' effectiveness rather than the composition of the school. In addition the use of postcode information allows the matching of area level characteristics (e.g. deprivation, crime) to these data. This allows the investigation of area-level effects upon school effectiveness.

The paper reports on the analysis using the English National Pupil Database and the Pupil

Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) which provide individual records for all pupils. These records include details of ethnicity, first language, special education needs, free school meal (FSM) eligibility (a measure of socio-economic disadvantage), postcode, etc. Linking these databases provides a basis for the analysis of pupil progress as related to basic demographic attributes of pupils. Where this analysis is undertaken using multilevel modelling (Goldstein, 1987) for sufficient numbers of pupils within a school, then the school-level residuals can be used as an indicator of the impact of attending a specific school, having allowed for the characteristics of pupils attending that school (i.e. school effectiveness). Trends in effectiveness in terms of academic outcomes can thus be provided over three successive years.

The results are discussed in terms of the relative effect sizes and contributions of pupil characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity), school (effectiveness) and area characteristics (neighbourhood deprivation, employment, ethnicity, health and crime) have to pupil attainment and progress. This mixed method approach adopted by the EPPE 3–11 study has enabled this quantitative analysis to inform the selection of schools/classrooms for systematic classroom observations to illuminate practices and processes which appear to lead to more 'effective' outcomes. This paper will be of interest to those BERA members interested in effective schooling and influences on children's learning as well as innovative research methods.

Paper 2

Teacher and pupil behaviours in Year 5 classrooms and how this links to measures of effectiveness

Authors: Pam Sammons, University of Nottingham; Kathy Sylva, University of Oxford; Edward Melhuish, Birkbeck, University of London; Iram Siraj-Blatchford, Brenda Taggart and Sofka Barreau, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: Having established the 'effectiveness' of every primary school in England through statistical data matching (see the first paper in this symposium) the research team was able to focus on the 800 schools attended by the 3,000 EPPE children. Taking a sample across a range of 'effectiveness', the EPPE 3–11 team undertook structured classroom observations in 125 schools. The research question aimed to investigate the variation in Year 5 teachers' classroom practices in order to identify the range of practices and their association with different child outcomes and school levels of effectiveness. The project sought to identify a purposive school sample to include in the observation component of the research. The criteria for sampling included indicators of a schools' effectiveness (across a range of 'effectiveness') and the number of EPPE 3–11 children enrolled.

Two observation instruments were adapted and used in the EPPE 3–11 project to obtain information about variation in classroom processes, including teachers' and pupils' classroom behaviour and experiences. These instruments are the Classroom Observation



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19th Oct @ London Knowledge Lab: Knowledge cumulation with Diana Laurillard

16th Nov @ OU Milton Keynes: Interdisciplinarity with Josie Taylor

5th Dec @ Sussex University, Brighton: Methodology with Richard Cox

16th Jan @ Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh: Capacity with Lydia Plowman

20th February @ IOE London: User engagement with Andrew Pollard

For more information please see http://www.tlrp.org/tel/tel_events.html

System for Fifth Grade (COS-5, Pianta, 2001) and the Instructional Environment Observation Scale (IEO, Stipek, 1999). These instruments were selected because they were devised relatively recently, they are appropriate for the primary age group, they cover a wide range of pupil and teacher behaviours and they offer the opportunity to facilitate comparison with recent research in other contexts (e.g. Galton et al., 1999; NICHD, 1999). Both instruments were developed for use by the National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD) for a major longitudinal study in the USA.

The paper describes the instruments used to conduct the observations. The Pianta instrument covers a frequency of behaviour coding system (child-level settings, content of child's activity, teacher and child behaviours, etc.) coupled with measures of observed quality (positive affect, disruption, activity level, purposeful use of instructional time, etc.). The Stipek instrument covers General Classroom Management and Climate Scales and General Instruction Scales with both Mathematical and Reading/Writing Instruction Scales.

The paper also reports on results from the observations demonstrating the variation in teacher and pupil behaviours in classrooms within schools which demonstrate a range of 'effectiveness'. To conclude the presentation describes the links between observed measures of classroom practices and other measures of effectiveness. For this stage of the analysis data from the classroom observations have been linked to the Ofsted data-sets on school performance. The analysis describes statistically the relationship between Ofsted judgements of 'effectiveness' and 'improvement', as well as such factors as free school meals eligibility (FSM) and observed classroom behaviours. This paper will be of interest to those BERA members concerned with effective schooling and influences on children's learning, as well as innovative research methods.

Paper 3

The relationship between the home learning environment and child outcomes

Authors: Pam Sammons, University of Nottingham; Kathy Sylva, University of Oxford; Edward Melhuish, Birkbeck, University of London; Iram Siraj-Blatchford, Brenda Taggart and Sofka Barreau, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: The first two papers in this symposium report on school influences on pupil's outcomes yet the original EPPE study (Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project 1997–2003) explored and reported on the importance of other background factors which influence pupil development. The EPPE study showed the extent to which pupil (gender, English as an additional language (EAL), etc.) and family (socio-economic status (SES), etc.) characteristics have to be considered (and accounted for via multilevel modelling) in order to more accurately understand the impact of schooling upon child outcomes.

One additional factor which was considered in the EPPE research which proved to be extremely important to child outcomes was the quality of the home learning environment (HLE). The EPPE team developed a 'Home Learning Environment Index' which showed the relationship between young children's experiences in the home and their family SES, ethnicity, etc. Early reporting on this topic has shown that girls on the whole have better 'scores' on the HLE scale as do some specific ethnic groups. It would appear that the 'quality' of the home learning environment is variable but this is only moderately correlated with SES. Some mothers from lower socio-economic groups, with perhaps few formal qualifications, were greatly enhancing their children's life chances by providing stimulating learning experiences (e.g. playing with numbers and letters) which complemented later learning in pre-school. The research concluded what parents do with young children can be as important as who parents are. This aspect of the original research has had great influence in recent national initiatives, most notably the Sure Start programme, targeted at socially disadvantaged areas in order to close the social exclusion gap.

Now that the EPPE children are in primary school the project sent a second questionnaire to parents in order to monitor changes in the HLE as children get older. The questionnaire covers the use of computers in the home as well as the help parents give with homework.

This presentation describes the HLE in primary school and compares it with the pre-school HLE. It will then go on to explore the relationships between this new HLE to other background variables. For instance, do the patterns for gender, SES and ethnicity apparent at age 3 remain constant as children get older? This paper will appeal to those BERA members interested in not only influences on children's learning but also on the uses of longitudinal data.

Thursday
7th September
4.30 – 6.00pm

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

Learning in and for Interagency Working: undertaking analysis in activity theory

Convenor: Anne Edwards, University of Oxford

Abstract: The three papers in this symposium draw on evidence gathered in one research project to discuss the analytic frameworks and processes which have been used to answer the research questions that have been posed. The project is a study of the professional learning that occurs when practitioners from different agencies learn to work together to give support to the social inclusion of young people who are at risk of exclusion. The broad intention of the study is to develop a model of professional learning in and for responsive interagency work and investigate its feasibility for enhancing interagency practices and their outcomes. The research questions to be discussed in the symposium are as follows.

- What are the outcomes of professional learning for multi-agency working?
- What forms of interpersonal and organisational practice are associated with learning for co-configuration?

The study takes an activity theory approach which allows it to focus on object-oriented action in complex settings to reveal the conceptual tools used and the affordances for their use. In this symposium we examine the use of Developmental Work Research (DWR) (Engeström, 1999) as methodology to both drive and reveal changes in how participants are interpreting and responding to the objects of their professional practices in multi-agency work.

The papers each address a different methodological challenge associated with DWR and how it has been tackled in the context of the present study.

The symposium will consist of a short introduction to the project and DWR given by Edwards and three papers. In the first Popova and Apostolov discuss the processes of data collection in the workplace and the subsequent selection of evidence for use in DWR-



structured workshops with practitioners. In the second, Leadbetter and Warmington examine the use of contradictions in DWR sessions and how evidence of these can be analysed and used. In the final paper Martin takes a more fine-grained approach, to explain how professional learning outcomes are analysed in terms of changes in discursive practices. All three papers centre on evidence used or collected in DWR sessions to open a discussion of how learning can be evidenced in the workplace and in DWR sessions.

Paper 1

Changing practice, developing theory: the use of data in Developmental Work Research

Authors: Anna Popova, Apostol Apostolov, Harry Daniels, Anne Edwards, Jane Leadbetter, Paul Warmington, Steve Brown, Deirdre Martin and David Middleton

Presenters: Anna Popova, University of Bath; Apostol Apostolov, University of Oxford

Abstract: This presentation focuses on the selection and use of data generated by the Learning in and for Interagency Working (LIW) project in developmental work laboratories (Engeström, 1987). More commonly known as developmental work research workshops (DWRs), these are the LIW project's main tools for ongoing data generation and shaping new forms of multi-professional learning in its research on local authority children's services. Based on the idea of 'dual stimulation' (Vygotsky, 1986), DWRs provide an innovative way of intervening into organisational structures by engaging practitioners and strategists in scrutinising and reflecting upon empirical data from their own working environment.

In this paper we use examples from interventions in three UK local authorities. We reflect on the process of data collection and selection, which aimed at gaining an insight into professional activities and organisational structures within which professionals were learning to work in an interagency way. We shall also examine how these data, known in activity theory as 'mirror data' (Engeström, 1993), triggered reflective processes in the professional groups involved in DWRs. In each successive DWR, the mirror data were used to provide participants with an analytical tool that allowed them to redefine activity systems they were constructing at the time. In particular, the paper considers the use of 'mirror data' in activity theory as a tool that can be shared by researchers and practitioners in engaged educational research, in order to analyse the systemic ways in which the 'objects' of work are shaped in different interagency settings.

In the context of Every Child Matters agenda – in which the LIW project operates – one of the challenges which both researchers and practitioners working in the field of children's services are facing is finding a way of bridging strategic thinking and operational outcomes. In this paper we examine the potential of using ground-level evidence in DWRs to prompt systemic reflections on the conceptual tools available to translate policy into new practice based on individual or 'collective' learning.

Some of the questions the paper addresses are as follows:

- What is the role of data in developmental research work for enhancing (a) activity theory methodology and (b) evidence-based practice?
- What is the role of DWRs for shaping professional learning for interagency working and how is it recreated in the process of ongoing research?

In addressing these questions, we shall draw upon instances from the research in the three local authorities where the data, analysed through the lens of activity theory, served as a tool that prompted participants' learning that otherwise would not have occurred. The examples will point to perceptions of cultural differences in the three local authorities that shape and shift occurrences of professional learning in interagency settings. The notions of 'culture' and 'professional identity' have been central to discussions in DWRs and will be used in providing accounts of change or shifts towards change which have occurred in the course of the learning cycle.

Paper 2

Developmental Work Research: activity theory as a dialogic tool for researchers and 'multi-agency' professionals

Authors: Anna Popova, Apostol Apostolov, Harry Daniels, Anne Edwards, Jane Leadbetter, Paul Warmington, Steve Brown, Deirdre Martin and David Middleton

Presenters: Jane Leadbetter and Paul Warmington, University of Birmingham

Abstract: TCurrent reconfigurations in UK children's services emphasise the need for new forms of professional practice, predicated upon integrated provision that crosses traditional service and team boundaries. The aim of the Learning in and for Interagency Working (LIW) project is to examine the forms of professional learning evolving in multi-agency settings and to promote 'expansive learning' (the creation of new knowledge and practices) for the emergent activity of 'joined up' working. The LIW study uses activity theory as the framework for its intervention research in local authority children's services. Its methodology draws upon the Developmental Work Research (DWR) cycle modelled by Engeström. DWR has been described as 'a methodology for applying activity theory, specifically the theory of expansive learning, in the world of work, technology and organisations'. DWR cycles are structured around workshop sequences, wherein evidence on professional concepts and practices is jointly scrutinised by researchers and practitioners using activity theory as a shared analytical tool.

Using data derived from DWR workshop sessions, this paper focuses upon how interventionist dialogues between researchers and practitioners in the LIW project surfaced contradictions in professional practice. Systemic analysis facilitated the recognition of areas in which there was a need for change in working practices and suggested possibilities for future practice through re-conceptualising the 'objects' and 'tools' around which multi-agency work was organised. In particular, the workshops surfaced contradictions in relationships between professional subjects, the objects of their practice and the rules that governed their activities. In the workshop settings it became apparent that responsive, 'joined-up' service provision often called for a degree of 'rule-bending' on the part of staff. 'Rule-bending' occurred in cases where staff had identified the need for non-routine, partially improvised decision-making in order to meet highly personalised client needs and/or rapidly changing situations. In such cases professionals sought to ensure that local authority processes and routines did not unduly constrain their responses to clients' needs. We would suggest that constructive forms of rule-bending rely upon the creation of organisational climates that support flexible, responsive action by professionals. Organisations can learn lessons for future practice from the ways in which staff have negotiated structural tensions between rules, objects and professional identity.

Another salient feature of emerging practice was practitioners' emphasis during the workshops on the importance of 'coming to know' potential 'networks' of colleagues and resources. These 'knowing' trails were an example of the kinds of shifts in representations that DWR-style workshops can support. The LIW research has built upon these findings by focusing on the ways in which professional knowledge, relationships and identities incorporate cognitive trails that involve learning 'who', 'how', 'what', 'why' and 'when'. Moreover, we have begun to examine the dynamic, relational ways in which professional learning unfolds. In learning activities 'who', 'how', 'what', 'why' and 'when' are not fixed, static categories; analysis of professional learning also provokes questions about movement, change and interaction. This means asking 'with whom', 'where to', 'where from', 'around what', 'through what processes' and other questions which recognise that learning is embedded in fluid social and cultural contexts.

Paper 3

Discursive construction of professional identities in interagency work

Authors: Deirdre Martin, Harry Daniels, Anne Edwards, Jane Leadbetter, Paul Warmington, Steve Brown, David Middleton, Anna Popova and Apostol Apostolov

Presenters: Deirdre Martin, University of Birmingham

Abstract: This paper is based in the wider ESRC-funded TLRP project of Learning in and for Interagency Work (LIW) which studies interagency work through a post-Vygotskian lens of socio-cultural activity theory. This paper is primarily concerned with the discursive construction of professional identity as professional boundaries are adapted, modified and re-learned for co-configured work in multi-professional teams.

The main study collected data from three local authorities in England. Two sources of data from one local authority are drawn on: interviews and workshops. These sources of talk provide a means of 'doing identity' for multi-agency professionals who were involved with working with 'looked after children' (LAC). Interviews guide strategic and operational-level professionals towards personal-professional narratives of aspects of interagency work. Interventionist workshops with members of the LAC team direct talk towards dialogic interaction around recognising and resolving issues in their interagency work. Data is available over a period of three months which affords tracking change in constructing professional identity.

The data are analysed across key issues: to identify recurring patterns and themes of constructs and change of professional identity in interagency work (Gee, 2005); to identify distinct professional discourses, not only within professional boundaries but also differentiating strategic and operational levels of work and to note contexts of and implications for discursive hybridity (Sarangi and Roberts, 1999); to analyse constructions of and changes in professional identity through narrative positioning of expertise in self and others (Schiffrin, 1996); and to analyse workplace narratives (Holmes, 2005) and dialogic learning (Mercer, 2000) as methodological tools for studying the (re)construction of professional identity.

This paper is innovative in several ways and offers important contributions to the field of learning. The study will contribute to the development of the emerging role of discourse analysis and, specifically, discursive constructions of identity within socio-cultural activity theory. Through analysing narratives and dialogic interaction over time this study will begin to understand the contribution of talk in constructing professional identity in interagency work and the nature of changing professional boundaries. Further, drawing on two types of talk, narrative and dialogic interaction, will enable study of the ways that narrative, which is largely reflective, and dialogic interaction, which is mainly directed learning, are used by professionals for (re)constructing their personal-professional experience, expertise, roles and boundaries.

Thursday
7th September
4.30 – 6.00pm

Professionalism on probation: induction and new teachers in Scotland

Presenters: Brian Corbin and Ian Stronach, Manchester Metropolitan University

Abstract: This paper draws on data produced by 'teacher-researchers' working with teachers during their induction year 2004–5 in Scotland and is part of a Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) project on 'Early Professional Learning' (EPL). It considers some of the discursive dynamics of various discourses of professionalism, in particular the 'organisational' (of audit accountability and 'economies of performance') and occupational (of ecologies of practice and collegiality). These discourses may be polarised, especially around the issues of control and trust, and often seen as fatal to occupational autonomy. The paper discusses these engagements in the light of the details of a particular case study, along with some comparisons with other new teachers. In such accounts, engagements with the two discourses are far from unitary. Not only does the new induction policy itself draw on both, they feature in varied ways in a 'roller-coaster' of early professional experience. Narratives of deaths, births and rebirths of possibilities for professional selves are evident. It concludes that while new teachers remain primarily mobilised by commitments to their own learning and that of their pupils, these involve both necessary and contingent conflicts. The death of all features of occupational professionalism may be overdrawn, but the ways in which the new induction policy is embedded within the impact of more powerful discourses has to be considered.

Friday
8th September
9.00 – 10.30am

SAKAI: a collaborative Virtual Research Environment for education

Presenters: Patrick Carmichael, CARET, University of Cambridge; Richard Procter, Institute of Education; Sanna Rimpilainen, University of Strathclyde

Abstract: Since January 2005 constituent projects of the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) and the Applied Education Research Scheme of Scotland (AERS) have been using a novel online framework to support collaborative research activities. This is SAKAI, a framework which allows individuals and groups to configure a range of electronic tools within a single access-controlled environment. This is hosted at CARET, the Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technology at the University of Cambridge, which is a participant in the SAKAI development community. While SAKAI can be configured so as to act as a personal information manager, e-Portfolio, or Virtual Learning Environment, we have been primarily interested in its role as a Virtual Research Environment (VRE). We have been conducting an evaluation of SAKAI under the Joint Information Systems Committee's (JISC) Virtual Research Environment Programme and the data presented here draws on this work together with other experience of supporting and developing the VRE.

Ten research projects, the majority of which are multi-institutional, have been involved in the evaluation. This has included initial semi-structured interviews with project directors, focused interviews with project participants and the collection of routine data from the online environment. Key research questions addressed concern the relationship between existing or potential patterns of collaboration and specific project outcomes, and the role that the VRE might play in supporting or enhancing this collaboration. Projects have identified a number of roles for the VRE in their working practices. These reflect differences in project design and methodology; the stage in the project 'life cycle'; the presence of 'IT champions' and those with prior experience of online working; and the geographical distribution of participating individuals and institutions. There are a number of foci for collaboration within projects: organisation of events; data collection and processing; data analysis (some projects using the VRE as a repository); and collaborative writing of reports, articles and other project documents. 'Collaboration' has been interpreted more broadly by a number of projects, most notably those concerned with teachers' professional



development, and student consultation. In these cases, projects were keen to explore the potential of the VRE as a 'shared space' in which they could engage research participants and 'users' both in and with research.

Other issues also emerged as the project proceeded. For example, the need to establish a secure and central data repository was, in some cases, more of a priority than provision of a platform for person-to-person collaboration. Projects also found they needed to revisit ethical guidelines and confidentiality agreements in the light of their use of the VRE; this was one area where the modularity and 'fine-grained' control offered by SAKAI was useful as it allowed complex patterns of access to be defined.

We also canvassed project members as to what new online tools would support their collaborative activity. This helped us identify a key 'gap' in the existing SAKAI toolkit, namely a 'wiki' tool for collaborative writing. The development team at CARET were able to develop such a tool and this has now been integrated into the VRE environment where it is currently being used by projects for management, 'brainstorming' and preparation of project documents and publications.

The findings of this project have significant implications for education research projects and for the education sector as a whole, particularly as multi-institutional projects and online collaboration become more common. It also shows how, as models of 'e-Social Science' begin to emerge, it is important that domain-specific approaches and priorities – such as the involvement of teachers and students in research communities – are reflected and supported in any online infrastructure.

Friday
8th September
9.00 – 10.30am

Reflections on changing teachers' roles, identities and professionalism

Presenters: Pat Mahony and Ian Hextall, Roehampton University; S. Gewirtz and A. Cribb, King's College London

Abstract: This paper reports on the themes emerging from a Thematic Seminar Series entitled Changing Teacher Roles, Identities and Professionalism (C-TRIP) conducted under the auspices of ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). The series is concerned with teachers (across all sectors) both as learners and as the agents of students' learning. It has been designed to build on latest research in order to provide a basis for enhanced professional practice and learning. The seminars presented new empirical and/or theoretical work and brought together two important traditions of enquiry about teachers' lives and practices, namely research which investigates the social and policy contexts of teachers' lives and that which focuses on the enhancement of professional practice. The series had at its core the development of knowledge that can illuminate the role of teachers in a learning society, in order to maximise their effectiveness. An annotated bibliography of recent literature is being produced as well as an edited volume consolidating the theoretical contribution made by the seminar programme.

Between January 2005 and July 2006 nine seminars were organised covering the following areas:

- Identity, agency and policy in teachers' professional lives explored the changing policy context of teachers' work and how teachers actively construct their identities in relation to this changing context.
- Professional identities and teacher careers examined recent changes in teachers' attitudes to teaching as a career, key career moments that shape professional identity, the shifting nature of teachers' professional identities and the gendered and racialised nature of identity construction over the career course.
- Conceptions of professionalism and professional knowledge considered contested concepts of professionalism and professional knowledge, the diverse ways in which these are conceptualised by teachers and the implications of new roles in schools for conceptions of professionalism and professional knowledge.
- Enactments of professionalism: classrooms and pedagogies focused on how conceptions of professionalism are played out in schools and classrooms and how

teachers' and leaders' conceptions of professionalism influence and are influenced by classroom practices, relationships and student experiences.

- What can be learnt from other professions? considered recent research on professional identities, knowledge and constructions of professionalism in professions other than teaching and explored the implications for understanding teachers' work.
- What can be learnt from comparative analysis? reflected on the insights that cross-national comparison can offer about changing teacher roles and identities in UK contexts.
- Models of effective professional learning explored how professional learning can best be promoted within the various political, organisational, social and emotional contexts within which teachers work.
- The impact of research on professional practice and identity considered the range of ways in which research can be used to influence teachers' practice and their students' learning.

Summary reports have been written on each of the seminars and from these emergent themes have been identified. These will form the framework for the paper and are as follows:

- contexts of professionalism, including history, phase and sector, region and nation;
- professional identities, including unities and disunities, resistance and transitions;
- conceptions of professionalism, including values/ethics and professional knowledge;
- professionalism and policy, including research and practice and the communicative discourse between research, practice and policy.

Issues such as these have been central to the concerns of the whole seminar programme in particular as they relate to:

- intersections of policy development, translation and implementation;
- modes of communication and dialogue between the various participants in these policy processes;
- articulations between the experiences of professionals in education and other occupational sectors;
- comparisons of such experiences across different regional, national and transnational boundaries.

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

Problematising 'situated' theories of workplace learning

Convenors: Alison Fuller, School of Education, University of Southampton; Lorna Unwin, Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester

Abstract: This international symposium explores the theoretical underpinnings of workplace and work-based learning, and has a particular focus on the meanings and implications of 'situatedness' for research, policy and practice. In problematising the current privileging of situated learning, the symposium will identify ways in which the development of academic- and practitioner-oriented interests in the field of 'work and learning' can be taken forward. The aims of the symposium are:

- 1 To develop theoretically informed and empirically based critiques of current theories of situated learning in work environments, drawing on the authors' recent and current research.
- 2 To identify the implications for the future development of academic- and practitioner-oriented interests in workplace learning.

Significance: Workplace learning is of increasing interest to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners as: (a) it provides an alternative lens (to formal educational settings) through which teaching and learning can be conceptualised, analysed and improved; and (b) it is now much more widely recognised that there is a relationship between workplace learning, organisational performance and employee personal development. The papers engage

critically with contemporary debates on aspects of situated learning. In so doing, the symposium contributes to debates on workplace learning with a particular emphasis on the contribution and issues surrounding situated learning theories and their usefulness for understanding and developing workplace learning. The individual presentations also highlight the rich and varied territory for empirical research on teaching and learning opened up by studies of workplace learning. The policy and practice implications of the empirical research presented in the symposium will be drawn out to provide an additional practical dimension to the discussion.

The presenters have all recently directed research studies that aim to advance our understanding of the processes, environments and organisational frameworks of workplace learning. The research by Evans and Kersh, Fuller and Unwin, Cairns and Malloch and Hoyles and Noss, undertaken in a wide range of workplace learning environments, advances the field nationally and internationally. In addition to the individual papers, the wider international comparisons enabled by the symposium make an important contribution to the evidence base on workplace learning. The symposium will also add to the theoretical debate through constructive critique of situated learning and to the methodological challenge of capturing how people learn through their participation in 'everyday' work activities. The projects presented in the symposium have utilised a variety of data collection methods and are far enough advanced to have produced substantive findings. Three of the four papers draw on findings from Phases One and Three of the UK's ESRC-funded Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). By coming together in a symposium, these papers provide an opportunity for the research community to discuss the problematic nature of investigating and theorising situated learning and its implications for further research, policy and practice.

Paper 1

Adults learning in, for and through the workplace: the significance of biography and experience

Authors: Karen Evans and Natasha Kersh, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: This paper addresses the significance of the individual dimensions of learning, and the importance of situatedness in the context of the adult learner's biographical experience as well as in the context of workplace activity and culture. It is based on analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, including more than 100 case studies, from a series of projects led by the authors, including two UK Research Council projects on adult learning in work environments and European projects involving partners in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Portugal and Greece (see *inter alia* Evans *et al.*, 2004; Kersh and Evans, 2005).

Much recent research about learning in the workplace prioritises the social dimensions of learning – communal and organisational. Conceptualising the place of the individual within participatory studies of workplace learning which emphasise social processes is deceptively difficult. In our analysis, we see the individual and social structures as integrated, not separate. But workers are both part of and separate from their workplace community: they have prior experience, together with lives and identities that far extend beyond it. Analysis of data from the multiple projects suggests several overlapping and interlinked ways in which biography is relevant to learning at work. This paper focuses on three of them: how workers/learners bring prior knowledge, understanding and skills (many of which are tacit in nature) with them, which can contribute to their future work and learning; how dispositions towards work, career and learning influence the ways in which they construct and take advantage of opportunities for learning at work; and how values and dispositions of individual workers contribute to the co-production and reproduction of the communities of practice and/or organisational cultures and/or activity systems where they work. The paper concludes that engagement in purposeful learning depends upon that learning being well situated in biographical terms, as well as in the context and culture of the workplace.

Friday
8th September
12.15 – 1.45pm

Paper 2

Situated learning in context: an exploration of the factors influencing workplace learning in contrasting organisations

Authors: Alison Fuller, University of Southampton; Lorna Unwin, University of Leicester

Abstract: In recent years, researchers have become increasingly interested in how people learn at work and in using the metaphor of learning as participation embedded in different settings. Located within this metaphor, situated learning theory has helped explain how people learn (usually from more experienced others) through their membership of a workplace community of practice and their participation in the social relations of production, whilst cultural historical activity theory has focused on (the object of) workplace activity and the tools which are used and developed to mediate this activity. There is also growing interest in understanding the relationship between how work is organised and workplace learning. This paper discusses the need to understand this relationship in order to make sense of the reasons why organisations adopt different practices and why they create such different learning environments (see also Fuller and Unwin, 2005; Unwin *et al.*, 2005). The paper presents findings from a four-year ESRC-funded multi-sector study in the UK (2003–07). The project is employing a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine these issues in case study sites which span both public and private sectors. The emerging findings indicate the need for a sharper focus on the context of workplace learning, including wider regulatory, sectoral and organisational characteristics. The research is revealing that a range of factors are relevant to shaping what different groups of workers learn in different organisations and that workplace settings vary in terms of the mix of learning opportunities they make available. In addition, it is suggesting that where people are positioned in the political economy of the workplace affects not only the types of learning in which they engage and the types of knowledge they can acquire, but also the extent to which their learning and knowledge is recognised. The paper concludes that the use of the perspective of situated learning theory to conceptualise and illuminate workplace learning processes needs to be augmented by critical questions in to what is learned, why and by whom.

Paper 3

Can 'self-managed learners' jump puddles?

Authors: Len Cairns, Monash University, Australia and Marg Malloch, Victoria University, Australia

Abstract: This paper examines the concepts of place, agency and mindfulness (PAM) in the context of workplace learning and how these ideas relate to situated theories and broader issues of transferability and generalisability of capable learners. Research projects by the

presenters undertaken in England and Australia in relation to learner managed learning in professional doctorates and to learning in a range of workplaces contribute to this consideration of workplace learning (see also Cairns *et al.*, 2005; Malloch, 2004).

Utilising a metaphor of frogs in 'puddles' (or ponds), we explore the question as to whether a sophisticated 'learner managed learner' operates with greater agency across situations. It is the contention of the authors that in workplace learning, particularly from our research in Australian workplaces, that the 'mindful agent' has been somewhat de-emphasised in the name of situated learning derived understandings. We suggest that while situated theory has enhanced our understanding of workplace learning over past years, we now need to move beyond this to reconsider the place, mindfulness and agency of learners and how more sophisticated adult learners who begin to manage their own learning do so across situations and social groups as capable learners.

Paper 4

Computational artefacts as abstractions of the work process

Authors: Celia Hoyles, University of London and Special Adviser to UK Government; Richard Noss, Director of the Knowledge Lab, University of London

Abstract: Our current research follows on from a previous project (Hoyles *et al.*, 2002) which promoted the idea of 'mathematical literacy' as a growing necessity for successful performance in the workplace. Our latest research has led us to a new organising construct that we term 'Techno-mathematical Literacies', a way of thinking that characterises what people need to know in IT-based workplace practices. The idea of literacy is crucial: individuals need to be able to understand and use mathematics as a system that increasingly pervades the workplace through IT-based control and administration systems, just as conventional literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy pervaded working life in the last century.

Building on core notions of activity theory and particularly the notion of Boundary Crossing (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström, 2003), we will demonstrate how middle management needs to read and interpret the output of IT systems as abstractions of the work process, and how negotiation around these abstractions between different workplace communities illuminate contradictions in the workplace.

We will present some examples derived from different workplaces, that illustrate how the meanings attributed to these abstract computational artefacts are mediated by workers' rich experiential knowledge of the work process and the tools with which they are familiar.

Meetings of Minds: a new TLRP Fellowship Scheme

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- Are you credibly established in your specialist field with high-quality publications?
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Modest funding will be provided for a targeted mentoring programme with a more experienced colleague working to enhance the applicant's ability to secure research funding and publish their work.

The Scheme's purpose is to enhance UK-wide research capacity by helping the next generation of research leaders' progress. Funding has been allocated for up to 30 Fellowships in the period up to December 2008.

For full details and an application form see <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/fund.html>
Closing date 31st October 2006 for this round.



Friday
8th September
3.00 – 4.30pm

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

TLRP's research on widening participation in HE: some methodological work in progress

Chair: Miriam David, TLRP, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: This symposium is based upon the TLRP's new England-based research projects on widening participation to higher education and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The successful projects are all interdisciplinary and draw on a range of perspectives and approaches from across the social sciences. They are well rooted in an understanding of current policy contexts and practices in widening participation and learning and teaching within and across higher education, involving practitioners.

Widening participation is taken to mean extending and enhancing access to HE experiences of people from so-called under-represented and diverse social backgrounds, families, groups and communities, including deprived remote, rural and coastal areas or from families that have no prior HE experience. Widening participation is also concerned with diversity in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability and social background in particular HE disciplines, modes and institutions.

Three of the seven successful research projects will present aspects of their work in

progress and raise issues about access to and development of quantitative data-sets about pupils and students in school, further and higher education. These projects are all concerned with exploring social diversity and enhancing educational opportunities across and within forms of education.

Dr Geoff Hayward's project is about the organisation and development of vocational and educational training (VET) and its links into HE across the UK through a sophisticated study of progression routes into and through HE.

Dr Anna Vignoles is undertaking a quantitative cohort analysis of widening participation in HE, using an innovative linkage of newly available data-sets and sophisticated modelling techniques to examine determinants of entry into and progress within HE, which promises to create a definitive baseline study of full- and part-time undergraduate students.

Professor Gareth Parry is leading a team studying the impact of the dual structures of further and higher education on strategies to widen participation in undergraduate education. The main focus here is on the policies and practices of colleges of further education and their role in the expansion and diversification of higher education.

The presenters will raise issues about the quality of available data and how they are beginning to develop their analyses of widening participation to and within aspects of different forms and structures of higher education. The discussant will raise issues about this quantitative approach by contrast with more qualitative approaches to understanding and analysing issues about widening participation to HE, and drawing on the other four funded projects in this TLRP phase.

Paper 1

Degrees of success: the transition between VET and HE

Presenters: Geoff Hayward and Hubert Ertl, University of Oxford

Abstract: The increase in participation in post-compulsory education in recent decades suggests that the expansionist aims have been achieved in secondary education to a certain degree, partly by a substantial increase in participation in vocationally oriented programmes. However, international studies have shown that not all upper secondary education, particularly vocational education and training (VET), leads to improved educational opportunities. Investigations into the educational value of many vocational qualifications in terms of their currency for further progression have concluded that they de facto only offer what one observer has called a 'mirage of wider opportunities'. Instead, each wave of new vocationally oriented qualifications has contributed to the overall tendency toward educational credentialism.

Against this background, the ESRC-funded project Degrees of Success: The Transition between VET and HE investigates the transition processes between vocational and training (VET) and higher education (HE). The project is part of the TLRP programme on Widening Participation in HE. This paper reports on the theoretical background of the project, including a comparative perspective, as well as its initial stages. In particular, we provide a progress report on the development of the methodology for the project (details below) in order to stimulate both a theoretical and methodological discussion.

The overarching framework guiding the proposed research is that of the learning career which allows for the incorporation of experience that is objectively and subjectively defined. Learning careers have the capacity to describe continuity and transformation in individual learning biographies in both objective and subjective senses. We are interested in exploring not only the objective form of the transitional terrain between VET and HE as revealed by the analysis of quantitative data, but also the ways in which, and the extent to which, learners' dispositions to knowledge and learning change as they make the transition from VET into HE. This is important because widening participation cannot be just about ensuring more people from non-traditional HE backgrounds gain access to HE but is equally concerned with ensuring that they are successful in HE. Thus, it is necessary to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in order to capture both the objective and

subjective dimensions of the transition into, and subsequent progress within, HE of learners with diverse VET backgrounds.

The underlying assumption is that people with vocational qualifications can widen participation in HE. The project tests this assumption by analysing a number of existing data-sets, most importantly HE access data provided by the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) for the last ten years and HE participation data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

The resulting map of the landscape of transition is further investigated using a focused research design looking at the learning experiences of young people who have made the transition from VET to HE. Factors affecting their transition processes are identified and their perceptions of the learning environments at universities and colleges are investigated. The project regards learning and teaching processes as intertwined, and, therefore, the perceptions of HE lecturers and admissions staff regarding students are analysed.

These two parts of the project are supplemented by User Forums bringing together practitioners in HE and VET. These Forums have a twofold role: first, they are used to discuss and disseminate the findings of the project to make them relevant to the widening participation agenda. Second, the User Forums refine the project's research questions and develop new tasks for the quantitative and the qualitative part of the project. The overall aim of the User Forums is to develop ways in which the transition of people between the contexts of VET and HE be facilitated and in which the learning experience of these people in HE can be improved.

Paper 2

Widening participation in higher education: a quantitative analysis

Presenter: Anna Vignoles, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: The drive to widen participation in higher education in the UK is longstanding yet there is still remarkably little in the way of large-scale quantitative analysis of many aspects of this issue. This research aims to develop a theoretically based quantitative empirical analysis of the higher education experience of different students, particularly disadvantaged students, ethnic minorities, women, those entering HE without A levels and mature students.

The analysis will be multidisciplinary, building on economic, education and geographical theories of educational attainment, and will provide a life course perspective to the issue of widening access to higher education. Our objective is to determine at what age interventions aimed at widening access to higher education need to be focused? In particular, when do socio-economic, ethnic and gender gaps in educational attainment emerge? Do students from different family backgrounds and with differing prior attainment have different perceptions of their ability to benefit from higher education? For those who do enter HE, do they experience a very different form of higher education from their more advantaged peers, particularly in terms of subject studied and quality of institution? How does gender affect degree choice and how does this compare to other countries? Can we better understand these choices using economic models of educational investment? For students who do enter higher education, how do progression rates vary across different types of student and across different subjects and quality of institution?

The research will require us to use a variety of different data sources. In particular, we are combining a number of key UK administrative data-sets on schools, FE and HE to provide us with a uniquely comprehensive account of the educational attainment of an entire cohort of young people in the UK. This is a challenging task and in this paper we review the data issues and challenges arising from the process of bringing together these diverse data sources.

Paper 3

Universal access and dual regimes of further and higher education

Presenter: Gareth Parry, Sheffield University

Abstract: This is a two-year study (2006–08) led by Professor Gareth Parry at the University of Sheffield, conducted with four partner institutions and in collaboration with HEFCE.

The overarching aim is: to investigate the impact of the division between further and higher education on strategies to widen participation in undergraduate education.

The main objectives are:

- To determine the nature and significance of this division in the English system and its rationale
- To examine the impact of this separation on policy formation, organisational development and student participation, progression and transfer
- To assess the contribution of dual-sector colleges and universities to widening participation in higher education.

Drawing on theories of differentiation and stratification, the influence of dual sectors will be investigated at three levels:

- 1 *At the macro level*, the findings of policy interviews and statistical studies will be compared with international evidence on analogous systems.
- 2 *At the meso level*, a typology of dual-sector organisations, partnerships and networks will be developed from an analysis of national data-sets and a survey of further and higher education institutions.
- 3 *At the micro level*, fieldwork conducted in four partner dual-sector institutions will assess the significance and meaning of moving between further and higher education and between short-cycle and first-degree education.

A key element in the study is research collaboration and capacity building with partner institutions. Small-scale longitudinal studies of students and interviews with managers and tutors will involve regular visits to each institution over two years. The research team will work with four institution-based research associates, each seconded for one day a week. The team will also collaborate with HEFCE in developing a new data-set on the movement of students between further and higher education and testing the quality of the statistical information with users.



Friday
8th September
3.00 – 4.30pm

Project: Early professional learning of teachers

Paper: Job satisfaction among newly qualified teachers in Scotland

Presenters: Nick Boreham, Peter Gray and Allan Blake, University of Stirling, with the following members of the EPL project team: Jim McNally (project director) and Peter Cope (co-director), University of Stirling, and David Dodds, Lesley Easton, Colin Smith, Phil Swierczek, Lesley Walker (teacher-researchers) and Gary Wilson (extended management team)

Abstract: Since 2005, all newly qualified teachers in Scotland have been guaranteed employment for their first year. They are allocated a 70 per cent timetable, attend courses of professional development organised by their local authority and receive in-school mentoring and support. The aim of this part of the TLRP project on Early Professional Learning was to measure the job satisfaction/dissatisfaction of probationary teachers under these new arrangements (hereafter abbreviated to 'job satisfaction').

Domain of enquiry

The early professional development of teachers.

Research questions

- 1 What are the sources of job satisfaction among probationary teachers in Scotland?
- 2 How high or low are their levels of job satisfaction?
- 3 Does job satisfaction vary between subgroups (mature vs. direct entrants to the teaching profession, male vs. female and primary vs secondary)?

Data collection methods

Six teacher researchers carried out in-depth interviews with 18 probationary teachers in their own schools and identified 40 dimensions of the probationer role which related to job satisfaction. These were collated with previous research. Based on this work, an instrument measuring 40 dimensions of job satisfaction was constructed and administered to 150 probationary teachers throughout Scotland, together with a separate measure of overall job satisfaction. Data on age, employment record, gender and sector were collected by questionnaire.

Theoretical framework

Probably the best theoretical account of job satisfaction is the degree of need fulfilment experienced by an individual through work (Dinham and Scott, 1998). Previous research into the job satisfaction of teachers suggests that greatest fulfilment comes from helping children achieve and overcome their problems and from the personal growth that the profession may afford. The major sources of dissatisfaction are school leadership, pupil behaviour and infrastructure. However, these findings are not based specifically on probationers and pre-date recent developments in Scotland, which have been directed at improving school leadership (including the leadership of probationers), the management of pupil behaviour and school infrastructure.

Analysis

Means and distribution statistics were calculated for the 40 dimensions of job satisfaction and for the separate measure of overall job satisfaction. Differences were calculated for the sub-groups. Rank order correlations were calculated between the 40 dimensions of the probationer role and the separate measure of overall job satisfaction.

Selected research findings

Job satisfaction in the sample was on average fairly high, although there was a tail of specific dissatisfactions. The five dimensions of the job with which the probationers were most satisfied were, in descending order of satisfaction, recognition by the pupils of their status as teachers, their working relationship with their departmental colleagues, support from their subject mentor, support from other colleagues in the department and their relationship with pupils in the classroom. The dimensions with which they were most dissatisfied were (in descending order of dissatisfaction) the availability of permanent posts in their subject, pupil behaviour in the school, the balance between work and private life, their salary as a probationary teacher, the availability of material resources for teaching.

Contribution to knowledge

This research identifies the specific aspects of the probationer's role which are sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, many of which have not previously been investigated. The research breaks new ground by identifying the main source of job satisfaction as the recognition of the probationer's status as a teacher and the establishment of good working relationships with pupils and colleagues. Arguably, this indicates that the probationers were succeeding in a development task that is specific to the probationary year, establishing themselves as a member of the school community, and that the structure of job satisfaction among probationers might therefore be qualitatively different from job satisfaction later in the career. The results are not fully consistent with traditional models of job satisfaction which represent it as the sum total of individual affective responses to positive and negative experiences in the workplace. Finally, detailed examination of the degree of satisfaction for particular job dimensions and differences between sub-groups supports practical suggestions for making the induction year a satisfying experience for probationers.

Friday
8th September
3.00 – 4.30pm

Project: Moving to the music: learning processes, training and productive systems – the case of exercise to music instruction

Presenters: Alan Felstead and Dan Bishop, Cardiff University; Alison Fuller, University of Southampton; Nick Jewson and Tracey Lee, Cardiff University; Lorna Unwin, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: Considerable effort has been devoted to measuring and tracking the incidence, intensity and volume of training (Machin and Wilkinson, 1995; Keep *et al.*, 2003; Spilsbury, 2003; Dearden *et al.*, 2005; DfES *et al.*, 2005: 6–14). All these studies have attracted the attention of policy-makers. However, they are all based on large-scale survey data, with the key variable being whether or not respondents have undertaken or funded training during a specified period of time. Getting a handle on training content and, in particular, what skills are taught is inevitably more difficult using survey questions that are designed to have generic appeal. The survey method is therefore not best placed to examine the trajectory of productive systems which have many layers linking labour, equipment and materials at each stage of the productive process (Wilkinson, 2002). A fuller understanding of what role and



function training plays in a productive system and how this has changed over time requires a case study approach. By adopting such an approach this paper argues that, in some circumstances, training can stifle and prevent learning by drilling trainees to carry out their jobs in a standardised and prescribed manner. A more nuanced approach to the study of training and learning is therefore required with an acknowledgement that training sometimes means nothing more than working according to script and that in these circumstances the specialised knowledge of the script writers may reside upstream in the productive system and away from the point of delivery.

The empirical evidence for the paper is taken from the health and fitness club sector in the UK which has experienced rapid growth since the early 1990s. In particular, the paper focuses on the delivery of exercise to music (ETM) classes. The paper examines the proposition that – by standardising and branding the product, hence leaving little room for instructor creativity and innovation – ‘pre-choreographed’ exercise programmes have done ‘for exercise what McDonald’s did for hamburgers’ (reported position of the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association). These classes are compared with ‘freestyle’ forms of delivery in which instructors have ownership of the product in terms of music selection, the moves made, combinations used and choreography.

The paper draws on a range of different types of data sourced in a variety of ways. However, the primary method of data collection was interviews with a number of stakeholders in the sector. A total of 20 management-level interviews have been carried out with health and fitness club operators as well as 14 instructor interviews which, in most cases, have been preceded by participant observation. In addition, the lead author of the paper has also attended and participated in a two-day fitness convention and a two-day training event for ETM instructors in order to watch and see how these workers learn.

Friday
8th September
5.00 – 6.30pm

Using research to enhance professionalism in FE

Presenter: Mark Goodrham, Calderdale College

Abstract: This project was devised to explore and better understand the relationship between practitioners' own understandings of professionalism and their capacity to engage in ‘research’ in the further education (FE) sector. It originally aimed at identifying ways of better using research for the advancement of professional practice within FE. Other key objectives of the research were to suggest possibilities and approaches for the future utilisation of research in relation to new understandings of professional practice. The study determined to explore research engagement where it could be located in five general FE colleges located in the north and north-east of England, in an attempt to understand how research and understandings of practitioner professionalism might be connected and how research engagement might help facilitate rejuvenated practitioner professionalism. Research ‘enthusiasts’ were identified in colleges through Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) Learning and Skills Research Networks (LSRN) and through a wider sample in each college, comprising their colleagues and managers; their participation in ‘research activity’ in a broad sense was located within the context of their organisation and the wider FE sector. Participation in ‘research activity’ by FE practitioners was conceived of as indicating an engagement in professional understanding and development of practice and participants were encouraged to define ‘research’ in their own terms.

The primary fieldwork for this study was completed in April 2005. Some early messages have already been reported at previous BERA conferences, with respect to (a) many

participating practitioners' certainty that FE practice is not a professional occupation and (b) an observable decrease in the level of research engagement described by participants in relation to their own activities over the course of the study.

Empirically the paper suggests that three broad conclusions might be drawn in relation to the research sample.

1 FE practitioners' stories confirm that a rising imbalance between the tensions inherent in

professional practice became increasingly problematic during the course of the data collection period.

- 2 The conditions for labour described by most FE practitioners in the study worsened during the course of the study.
- 3 Linked to 1 and 2, opportunities for practitioners to engage in research activity during the research period decreased for most FE practitioners in the study.

The theoretical development of the work has endeavoured to combine Hoyle (1974) and Hoyle and John's (1995) notions of 'restrictive' and 'extended' professionalism with Stronach *et al.*'s (2002) description of public service professionalism 'in flux', in relation to FE practitioners. While both theoretical approaches were originally developed in relation to professionals not working in FE, the fusing of the two sets of concepts represents a useful and arguably new conceptualising of practice in FE as inherently characterised by tension and simultaneously constrained by specific dispositional and contextual features of that practice. In addition practitioners' aspirations and dispositions to their professionalism are significant but perhaps inseparable from the context in which the possibilities for agency exist cf. Hodkinson *et al.* (1996) 'horizons for action'.

One conclusion emerging from the final analysis and writing up phase of the project is that realistically not all FE practitioners are likely to be disposed towards an 'extended' professionalism that includes research engagement.

Friday
8th September
5.00 – 6.30pm

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

The impact of policy on learning and inclusion in the post-16 learning sector

Chair: Frank Coffield, Institute of Education, University of London

Discussant: Mary Hamilton, University of London

Abstract: A team of seven researchers from an ESRC project within the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) offer a symposium, which consists of one central idea (the impact of policy) as it affects three different contexts (Further Education, Adult and Community Learning, and Work-based Learning). In all, there are four papers, each of which contributes in different ways to the central notion of how five government levers and drivers (funding, planning, inspection, targets and initiatives) influence learning and inclusion in the learning and skills sector (LSS):

Paper 1, an overarching conceptual analysis of the change mechanisms chosen by government, first locates our research within the wider bid to 'modernise' all public services, then discusses the strategy for reform in education, and finally explores the use of five particular instruments within the LSS. It draws on the theoretical work of Janet Newman, Jan Kooiman and Stephen Ball.

Paper 2 produces a typology of responses from managers and tutors in four FE colleges (two in the North East and two in London) to the endless waves of governmental reform. The diversity within the groups of interviewees (e.g. size and culture of college and department) ensures that the paper will demonstrate the impact of the levers and drivers on professional attitudes and practice.

Paper 3 draws on repeated interviews with learners, teachers and managers of eight adult and community learning centres in London and the North East, over a period of 30 months of considerable policy turbulence. It will describe the different strategies that tutors and managers use to 'ride the waves of policy' in order to shield learners and provision that they believe make an important contribution to lifelong learning.

Paper 4 discusses in details the impact of five policy instruments on the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy in eight workplaces in London and in the North East. The discussion moves beyond a consideration of individual instruments to analyse the dynamics, diversity and complexities involved in 'orchestrating' a variety of instruments.

Paper 1

'Modernisation', learning and skills: policy levers and provision in the learning and skills sector

Presenter: Richard Steer, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: This paper explores the major policy levers that are used by government to shape provision and improve outcomes in the English learning and skills sector (LSS). We begin by situating policies in the LSS within the wider context of the Labour government's reform of public services. As set out by Newman (2001, 2005), governance in the UK has undergone an important shift from the 'New Public Management' of the 1980s and early 1990s to a new approach to public services under the banner of 'modernisation', which is central to the political project of New Labour. We also give consideration to the other important drivers of education policy, as these help to explain why some policy levers are preferred over others within a 'supply-side' strategy of reform.

Drawing on interviews with 82 policy actors in the LSS and on our analysis of key policy documents, the central part of the paper focuses on five main policy levers that are deployed by government and the Learning and Skills Council within the LSS: planning; funding; targets; inspection; and major initiatives (focusing on Skills for Life and the Employer Training Pilot / National Employer Training Programme). We describe briefly some ways in which each of these policy levers has been used in the LSS since 2001 and how they are assumed by policy-makers to operate. Our research participants at different levels and in different parts of the LSS raise questions about the effects that these policy levers have on the organisation and 'delivery' of learning.

The final section of the paper argues that the effects of policy steering mechanisms within institutions in the LSS remain largely unknown and under-theorised (Ball, 1997). Borrowing Black and William's (1998) concept as they applied it to assessment, we liken the institution to a 'bigger, blacker box'. To aid a better understanding of the ways in which policy levers interact with the organisation and delivery of learning, we explore the perceptions and practices of staff at different levels within institutions in relation to particular policy mechanisms. This approach will be used in three separate, but associated, papers looking at the interactions of policy mechanisms with three types of provision within the LSS: full-time Level 1 and 2 FE college courses; basic skills provision in adult and community learning sites; and work-based learning settings where basic skills are being delivered.

Paper 2

Policy levers and drivers and the role of professionalism in a marketised further education sector

Presenter: Ken Spours, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: Over the past fifteen years further education colleges in the UK have endured turbulence and change. They experienced the radical experiment of marketised incorporation and, at the same time, were subjected to high degrees of regulation through the Further Education Funding Council and, more recently, through the Learning and Skills Council. This mixture of competition and external regulation provides a backcloth for research on the effects of policy and inclusion on teaching, learning and assessment in the Learning and Skills Sector.

This paper focuses on the relationship between key policy levers and drivers – funding, targets, inspection, planning and policy initiatives – on professional practice and learning provision, as FE managers and lecturers attempt to cope with constant externally inspired change and challenging groups of learners. Further education colleges provide a particularly interesting setting for this kind of study because of their size, the multiple points of accountability, the challenges they face as 'second chance' institutions, the diversity of their teaching force and their pivotal role in the government's skills strategy.

The paper draws upon research undertaken between 2004–06 in four further education colleges, two in London and two in the North East. Over this period, we have made five visits to meet staff and students involved in one Level 1 and one Level 2 course in each

college. Individual and group interviews with staff and learners have been supplemented by classroom observations and triangulated with data from secondary sources, documentary analysis of key policy texts and national policy interviews.

We use Black and William's concept of the 'Black Box' (which analyses the role of assessment in the classroom), and apply it to the wider institutional environment of FE. The concept of the 'bigger blacker box' is then used to describe and analyse the way in which the five key policy levers enter the institution and interact with different layers and groups of education professionals. The paper goes on to describe and analyse the dynamics of change within the institutions and will produce a typology of responses from managers and tutors to the endless waves of governmental reform. The diversity within the group of interviewees – for example, in terms of college size and culture, departmental size and culture, their learners, the nature of the different disciplines taught, their previous experience of teaching in the sector, and their personal understandings of what professionalism means in the FE sector – ensures that this paper will demonstrate the complexity, dynamics and variety of the levers and drivers on professional attitudes and practice.

Paper 3

'Riding the waves of policy' in adult and community learning in England

Presenter: Ann Hodgson, Institute of Education, University of London

Abstract: When New Labour came to power in 1997, while its main focus in education policy was undoubtedly the school and pre-school sectors, lifelong learning also rose to prominence with the publication of *The Learning Age* Green Paper in 1998. Adult and community learning (ACL), having gone into decline during the early 1990s as a result of the *Further and Higher Education Act*, took on a new lease of life at this point. Its position was further bolstered by the *Learning and Skills Act* in 2000 and the *Skills for Life* adult literacy, numeracy and language strategy, both of which accorded adult and community learning an important role in widening participation in lifelong learning. The picture in 2006, as the data from this ESRC-funded project indicate, is not quite so rosy. Having ridden the crest of the wave for about five years, ACL and the learners it serves are once again in danger of being left behind by the tide of policy. As funding for the learning and skills sector as a whole becomes more tightly focused on the government's twin priorities of education and training for 14–19 year olds and the Level 2 skills needed for national economic competitiveness, less money is now available for the broader and often unaccredited forms of learning offered by ACL providers.

This paper draws on data from secondary sources, policy texts, national policy interviews and tutor, manager and learner interviews to explore the question: What is the impact of policy on teaching, learning, assessment and inclusion in adult and community learning? The paper, like the project as a whole, uses Newman's (2001, 2005) and Kooiman's (2003) work on 'governance' and 'modernisation' as well as Ball's (1997) concept of 'policy trajectory' as tools for analysing national, regional and local policy developments under New Labour. In particular, it explores the impact on ACL of the government's use of arm's-length steering mechanisms – funding, inspection, planning, targets and policy initiatives. The metaphor of 'the bigger blacker box' (building on Black and William's (1998) concept of the 'black box' of assessment) is employed to describe the context inside adult and community learning sites in which tutors and managers mediate the impact of these policy steering mechanisms. The design of the project allows the authors of this paper to draw on repeated interviews with teachers, learners and managers of ACL in eight sites of learning (four in London and four in the North East) over a period of 30 months of considerable policy turbulence. The paper describes the different strategies that tutors and managers use to 'ride the waves of policy' in order to shield learners and provision that they believe make an important contribution to lifelong learning. In its conclusions the paper attempts to provide a better understanding of what happens inside the 'bigger blacker box' as a result of policy and, from this, to draw out a number of lessons for policy-makers and practitioners.

Paper 4

Orchestrating change. the effects of governing policy instruments on teaching, learning and assessment in work-based learning

Presenter: Ian Finlay, University of Strathclyde

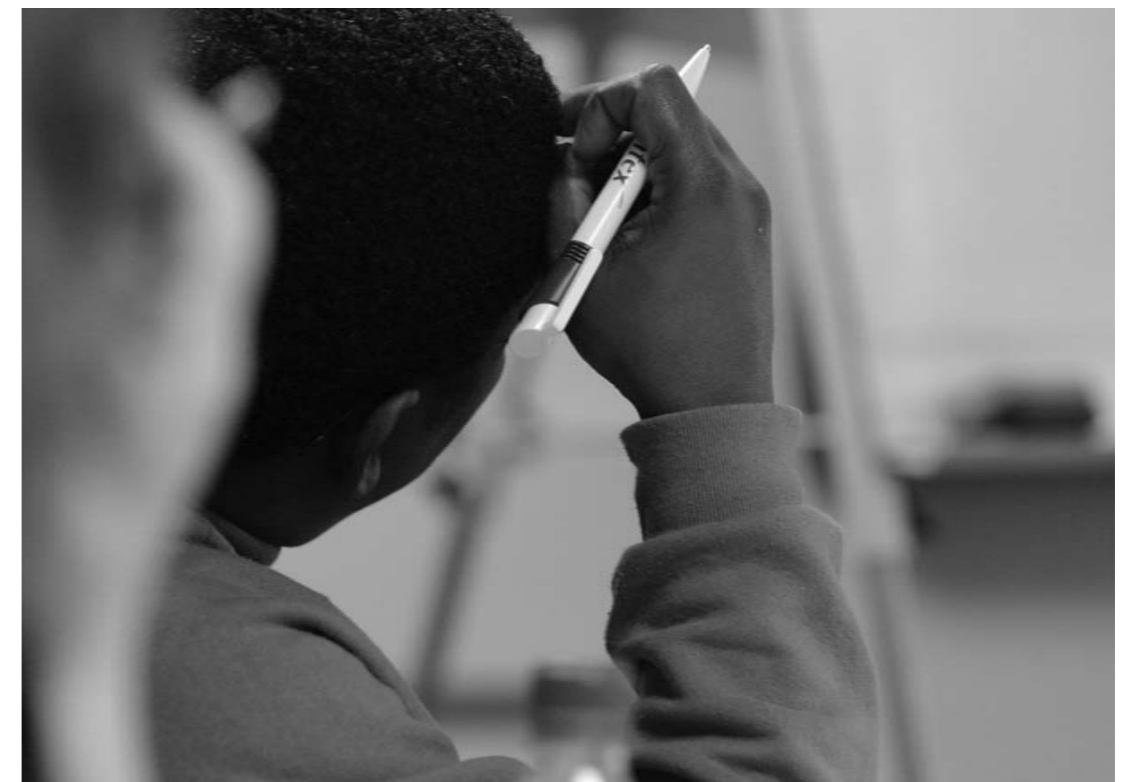
Abstract: This paper examines the effects of two linked government policies that relate to the English learning and skills sector, the first of which aims to increase the amount of formal learning being undertaken in workplaces and the second aims to improve adult literacy and numeracy skills in the population. The particular contribution of this paper to the symposium is to examine the effects of governing policy instruments where these two policies coincide, that is literacy and numeracy learning delivered in the workplace. In particular, the impact of five instruments is discussed in detail:

- 1 Funding: the Union Learning Fund, and the Employer Training Pilots;
- 2 Targets: the Skills for Life targets for numeracy and literacy;
- 3 Inspection: the Adult Learning Inspectorate;
- 4 Initiatives: Union Learning Representatives; and
- 5 Planning.

Following Kooiman (2003) the discussion moves beyond a consideration of individual instruments, to analyse the dynamics, diversity and complexities involved in 'orchestrating' a variety of instruments and the extent to which the resulting effects on teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) are harmonic or discordant.

Data was collected from eight sites of work-based learning in London and the North East by interviewing managers, tutors and learners on four different occasions over a 30-month period. Data were also drawn from policy documents produced by all the main players. The data from the interviews and the documents were analysed and summarised in eight site reports. Both common and contrasting key elements from the site reports were then identified and these form the findings on which this paper is based.

One emergent finding is that, while the effects of the instruments listed above have been generally positive for TLA, activity in this sector is highly precarious and the main plea from actors is for sustainability. The main task of analysing the data is currently being undertaken and new findings will be reported at the BERA Conference.



Friday
8th September
5.00 – 6.30pm

Learning from children about the impact of interactive whiteboards

Presenters: Steve Kennewell, Howard Tanner, Gary Beauchamp and Sonia Jones, University of Wales

Abstract: Children are increasingly being given the right to express views on their experience of teaching and learning, and researchers have realised the value of seeking out learners' perspectives in gaining an understanding of the processes at work in school settings and formulating recommendations for improvements in practice. Furthermore, children can understand the concept of educational research and assume the role of researchers into their own learning.

The Interactive Teaching and ICT project, within the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), recognises the changes in teaching and learning which children experience with the introduction of interactive whiteboards and other new technologies, and has given a key role to pupils in analysing their learning, characterising their learning environment in terms of interactivity, and comparing activity and learning in classrooms with and without ICT.

The project involves 36 teachers from 20 primary and secondary schools, working in pairs to plan a six-month period of teaching in one subject (mathematics, science or language) with a particular class. In phase 1, one teacher works with ICT and one works without in this limited context, so that the research team can explore with them the differences between the ICT and non-ICT environments. In phase 2, all teachers will have ICT available as a resource, together with professional development opportunities to help them make best use of ICT in conjunction with other resources.

Data are collected from initial teacher and pupil interviews, initial assessment tasks, classroom observation, video-stimulated reflective dialogue with teachers and with groups of pupils, and final interviews with teachers and pupils. Two groups of four pupils from each class are asked initially about their classroom and activities, focusing particularly on what they do in lessons, how they participate in joint/communal activity and how they learn from this. They are also asked about their perceptions concerning differences when ICT is used.

After a classroom observation which is recorded by two cameras, one focused on the front of the classroom and one roving to focus on pupil activity, the teacher selects a particular section of the lesson to discuss with a member of the research team. The groups of pupils are also asked about their perceptions of this episode, using the video as a prompt for recalling the activity, clarification of their goals and comment on learning. A final interview with the same groups of pupils will seek to elicit a more general reflection on the activity and learning which has taken place in the subject during the phase of research, and will probe more specifically pupils' perceptions of the effect of ICT.

The interview data will be analysed in terms of similarities and differences across subjects, phases and the use of ICT/non-ICT resources. In the paper, we will report on the role of pupil interview data in triangulation, on pupil perceptions of learning in general, on pupil perspectives concerning interactivity and participation in lessons, and on their perceptions of the impact of ICT on these factors during phase 1.