British Early Childhood Education Research Association

CREATIVITY & CRITICAL THINKING IN THE EARLY YEARS

mac Birmingham, Cannon Hill Park
Tuesday 20th February 2018

The 8th BECERA Conference is hosted by:

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

Tel.: +44 121 464 0020

www.crec.co.uk

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

BRITISH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (BECERA)

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

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

WHAT ARE BECERA'S AIMS?

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

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

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

WHO RUNS BECERA?

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

HOW IS BECERA FUNDED?

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

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC)

CREC is a charitable organisation established in 2007 and located in the St Thomas Children's Centre, near the centre of Birmingham, in the UK. CREC is dedicated to raising the quality of early childhood and family provision in order to enhance outcomes for children.

CREC's central focus, as expressed in its Governing Constitution, is:

> *"To promote and carry out for public benefit, research into issues relevant to early childhood provision and to publish or otherwise disseminate the useful results of such research."*

CREC achieves this objective by specialising in early childhood research which has relevant and meaningful outcomes for practice and policy. Some of its research is transformed into development programmes by its sister organisation Amber Publications and Training (APT). These programmes include:

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

CREC also delivers postgraduate and research degrees through its close affiliations with Midlands universities, particularly Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University. It is also a strategic partner with the City of Birmingham's Children and Young People's Directorate.

In 2015, in partnership with the St. Thomas Centre Nursery and various Nursery and Primary schools across the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire & North Yorkshire, we launched the CREC Early Years Partnership SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training), delivering Early Years focused Teacher Training with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

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

CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Dear friends and colleagues,

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

This eighth conference has as its theme:

CREATIVITY & CRITICAL THINKING IN THE EARLY YEARS

The 2018 BECERA theme will focus on the importance and nature of creativity and critical thinking within early years curriculum and pedagogy from birth. As we look to re-examine the Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals, the key place of the Characteristics of Effective Learning and enabling environments that nurture this capacity deserve further consideration. Learners for the future will need the ability to be adaptable, flexible, self-regulating, able to innovate and engage with knowledge generation creatively and with a critical eye. The creative curriculum will be key to developing higher order thinking skills and realising the power in young children to innovate and critically evaluate fast moving developments.

BECERA 2018 will seek to explore and address three key questions:
· How might creativity and critical thinking, key elements in the Characteristics of Effective Learning, be better embedded in pedagogical practice?
· What are the professional challenges for securing high quality creativity and critical thinking in early years curriculum and pedagogy and how might these challenges be addressed in initial and continuing professional development?
· How might research explore and promote the development of more creative and critical thinking in children throughout the foundation years and early primary schooling?

These and other issues will form the dialogic basis of this exciting, participatory and democratic conference in which all are encouraged to be playful, adventurous, give voice and share power in a creative and challenging forum.

In format and content we are again foregrounding the importance of Practice Based Research with the particular aim of encouraging and supporting the development of Practitioner Researchers who study in the 'real world' of early childhood services. BECERA aims to make research meaningful and relevant to practice and to capture the

perspectives and knowledge of professionals and other service participants in co-constructing our understanding of the quality of experience for families and young children. Reflective practitioners have wide-ranging knowledge and BECERA provides a forum where this can be presented and held for systematic peer-review and examined for its transferability and relevance to others.

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Professor Tony Bertram and Professor Chris Pascal
CREC Directors

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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

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

LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE
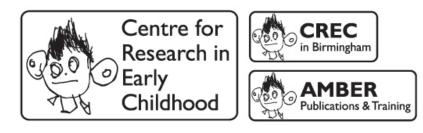
Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, CREC, Birmingham, UK

Professor Christine Pascal, CREC, Birmingham, UK

MAJOR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

REGISTRATION DETAILS
The conference fee for participants includes: admission to the conference, documentation, coffee breaks and lunch.

COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCH
Arrival refreshments are served at the Arena Bar. Lunch and refreshments during all scheduled breaks will be served at the Performance Studio. During the last 5 minutes of each break, please make your way to the room in which the plenary or your chosen symposium is located.

EXHIBITION
We invite all delegates to visit our exhibition located in the Performance Studio during lunch and tea/coffee breaks. Our exhibition this year includes:

- **Books Education** who offer 10% discount on all titles on the day of the conference. For more information please visit: www.bookseducation.co.uk.

- **Arts Connect -** Arts Connect is the Bridge programme for the West Midlands, funded by Arts Council England and run by the University of Wolverhampton in partnership with Culture Central. Our aim is that all children and young people in the region can access and enjoy a rich and meaningful arts and cultural life. We believe that meaningful engagement with the arts and culture contributes to a thriving childhood and impacts on learning, achievement, attainment, wellbeing, health, creativity, career options, progression into higher education and wider benefits to participating in society. For more information, please visit: http://www.artsconnect.co.uk/

- **Early Education –** A national charity supporting early years practitioners with training, resources & professional networks, & campaigning for quality education for the youngest children. For more information, please visit: https://www.early-education.org.uk/

INFORMATION DESK
The registration and information desk will be located in the foyer of the **mac.** After 10am queries should be directed to the CREC stand which will be located in the Performance Studio.

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

NOTE FOR PRESENTERS
Each symposium room is equipped with a PC and a data projector. We recommend you save your presentations as a Microsoft PowerPoint document to avoid any compatibility issues. We also recommend that you locate your symposium room in advance and arrive at your symposium room at least 10 minutes prior to your symposium start time in order to load your presentation and ensure a prompt start. All PCs are fitted with USB drives and we recommend you load your presentation on a USB memory stick.

NOTE FOR CHAIRS
Please be present in your symposium room at least 10 minutes prior to your session. It is important that the sessions stay on schedule so that individuals who want to listen to a specific talk may do so, and each presenter gets an equal opportunity to present their work. If a presentation is cancelled you may either convene a general discussion, or instead call a recess.

SYMPOSIUM ROOMS
Symposia will take place across 3 rooms. Depending on which room your intended symposium is in, it may take up to 5 minutes to walk between rooms. We recommend you make your way to the symposium rooms in advance to make sure you get there in good time and that you can find a seat.

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

TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE CONFERENCE VENUE
The mac is located in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, opposite the County Cricket Ground on Edgbaston Road, off Pershore Road (A441) and Bristol Road (A38). The **mac** is easily accessible using all the major city road routes and is served by a number of buses from Birmingham City Centre including 1, 35, 45, 47, X61 and 63. For more information on bus routes you can use www.traveline.co.uk or other route-planning facilities.

Car parking is available at Queens Ride, next to the mac & on a first come, first serve basis. Please note that this is chargeable via Birmingham City Council who manage the car park by pay & display or phone via park mobile.
- Up to 4 hours = £2
- Up to 16.5 hours = £3

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

TOA taxis: 0121 427 8888 Castle Cars: 0121 472 2222 Falcon Cars: 0121 477 7777

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

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

SOCIAL MEDIA
You can follow the BECERA conference on both Facebook ("BECERA") and Twitter ("@BECERAssoc"). Please post or tweet your comments during the conference and your photos using hashtag #BECERA2018

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Tuesday 20th February 2018

Time	Item	Location
08:00 – 09:10	Registration & Refreshments	*Foyer (registration)* *Arena Bar (tea/coffee)*
09:10 – 09:25	Opening session	*Cinema*
09:25 – 10:10	Keynote I – Di Chilvers	*Cinema*
	"You're making my memory come back" ***Reflections on young children's creativity and critical thinking***	
10:10 – 10:40	Coffee break & Exhibition	*Performance Studio*
10:40 – 12:00	Symposium Set I	*A: Deloitte Room* *B: Cinema* *C: Pinsent Room 1*
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch & Exhibition	*Performance Studio*
12:45 – 14:05	Symposium Set II	*A: Deloitte Room* *B: Cinema* *C: Pinsent Room 1*
14:05 – 14:25	Coffee break & Exhibition	*Performance Studio*
14:25 – 15:45	Symposium Set III	*A: Deloitte Room* *B: Cinema* *C: Pinsent Room 1*
15:45 – 16:05	Coffee break & Exhibition	*Performance Studio*
16:05 – 16:50	Keynote II – Bernadette Duffy OBE	*Cinema*
	The creative curriculum - the importance of creativity and critical thinking	
16:50 – 17:00	Closing session	*Cinema*

8th BECERA Conference

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

TUESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2018

09:10 – 10:10   Opening Session & Keynote I   Cinema

"You're making my memory come back"
Reflections on young children's creativity and critical thinking

DI CHILVERS - Independent, Advisor, Trainer and Writer in early childhood education

Di Chilvers is an advisory consultant in early childhood education, a writer and author of several books and articles on pedagogy and practice in the early years. She has also created the Development Map as a respectful and thoughtful way of recording children's progress.

The three key questions posed by BECERA for the 2018 conference are a timely opportunity to stop, think and reflect on what it is like, for children and their 'teachers' to be creative and critical thinkers in early childhood education.

We can learn much from children themselves but only if we take the time to look and listen. The challenge is how we make sure that everyone from practitioners to policy makers understand and respect what it is they are seeing. The creative thinkers of the future!

Di will share her reflections on these questions through young children's perspectives and learning stories and how they inspire us to become creative and critical thinkers ourselves. She will include examples from her work with practitioners and teachers on extended professional development initiatives, which have focused on sustained shared thinking and Talk for Maths Mastery; and offer some thoughts on the challenges we face for good practice.

SYMPOSIUM SET I: 10:40 – 12:00

	Symposium Title	Room
I/A	CREATIVITY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	DELOITTE
I/B	SUPPORTING CREATIVITY IN CURRICULUM	CINEMA
I/C	MUSIC, SINGING & DRAWING AS PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS	PINSENT ROOM 1

SYMPOSIUM SET II: 12:45 – 14:05

	Symposium Title	Room
II/A	CHILDREN'S VOICE & ETHICS	DELOITTE
II/B	CREATIVE APPROACHES OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM	CINEMA
II/C	TRANSFORMING PRACTICE THROUGH CREATIVITY	PINSENT ROOM 1

SYMPOSIUM SET III: 14:25 – 15:45

	Symposium Title	Room
III/A	CREATIVE APPROACHES AND RECONCEPTUALISATIONS	DELOITTE
III/B	CREATIVE APPROACHES IN SENSTIVE CONTEXTS	CINEMA
III/C	CRITICAL DISCOURSE ON "SCHOOL READINESS"	PINSENT ROOM 1

16:05 - 16:50 Keynote II   Cinema

The creative curriculum - the importance of creativity and critical thinking

BERNADETTE DUFFY OBE

Originally teacher trained, Bernadette has worked in a range of settings over the last 30 years. She was Head of the Thomas Coram Centre in Camden, one of the first schools to be designated as a Children's Centre, for twenty years. The author of Supporting Creativity and Imagination in the Early Years and co-editor of Contemporary Issues in the Early Years, Bernadette is a speaker on a wide range of early years issues in this country and abroad. Bernadette was part of the devising of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, Birth to Three Matters and the EYFS Framework.

Why are creativity and critical important from birth and throughout life? How do we promote and encourage these vital characteristics in sometimes challenging circumstances?

In this presentation I will be looking at the nature of creativity and critical thinking, the research that informs us and embedding the effective practices that encourages their development. I will consider how we can use the Characteristics of Effective Learning, enabling environments and Early Learning Goals to promote creativity and critical thinking and crucially how we can develop our own creativity and critical thinking to better support young children. We do not know all the challenges and opportunities the children we care for today will encounter in their futures but we do know that creativity and critical thinking will enable them to respond in the best ways.

16:50 - 17:00 CLOSING SESSION   Cinema

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2018

SYMPOSIUM SET I: 10:40 – 12:00

SYMPOSIUM I/A
CREATIVITY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
ROOM: DELOITTE

CHAIR: Faye Stanley, University of Wolverhampton

The Undergraduate story: What does it mean to be an Early Years Teacher in practice?

Tracey Edwards, Wolverhampton University

Holding a Mirror up to Nature - Time to think in Early Years Professional Practice

Michael Gasper, Starfish Enterprise / Centre For Research in Early Childhood

SYMPOSIUM I/B
SUPPORTING CREATIVITY IN CURRICULUM
ROOM: CINEMA

CHAIR: Helen Lyndon, University of Wolverhampton

Monitoring progression in Creative and Critical thinking

Pete Moorhouse, St Werburgh's Park Nursery School and University of Bristol

How do some settings rate arts and culture more highly than others, and does this effect young children's innate creativity?

Ruth Churchill-Dower, Earlyarts

Exploring the potential of projects for embedding creativity and critical thinking opportunities into the curriculum for young children

Sarah Chicken, University of the West of England Bristol

SYMPOSIUM I/C
MUSIC, SINGING & DRAWING AS PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS
ROOM: PINSENT ROOM 1

CHAIR: Alison Moore, Birmingham City University

Children's Drawings as Reflection of their Learning Environment

Nada Alwadaani, The University of Sheffield

Promoting children's well-being, right to make choices and engage in playful activities in restricted environments through music and singing

Carolyn Blackburn, Birmingham City University

EXPLORING MUSICAL CONCEPTS THROUGH STORYTELLING: How does this approach to music in the classroom influence children's musical meaning-making?

Philippa Wright, Centre for Research in Early Childhood and Birmingham City University

SYMPOSIUM SET II: 12:45 – 14:05

SYMPOSIUM II/A
CHILDREN'S VOICE & ETHICS
ROOM: DELOITTE

CHAIR: Donna Gaywood, Birmingham City University

How can practice be changed to ensure the voice of the child is more effectively heard in the creation of an open listening climate across teams in Children's Centres?

Alison Moore, Birmingham City University

Working with children's rights in ECEC

Aline Cole-Albaeck, Centre for Research in Early Childhood and Birmingham City University

Owning the Social Hauntings of Early Years Pedagogy: Seeing, doing and speaking differently in the interests of social justice.

Linda Shaw, Oxford Brookes University

SYMPOSIUM II/B
CREATIVE APPROACHES OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM
ROOM: CINEMA

CHAIR: Mike Gasper, Starfish Enterprise / Centre for Research in Early Childhoood

My Nursery School is at the Museum and Garden: Educators Growing Together

Nicola Wallis, Fitzwilliam Museum

Exploring Loose Parts Outdoors

Jan White, Early Childhood Outdoors/Sheffield City Council

What can be done to improve the confidence of both adults and children dealing with mini beasts in early educational settings?

Beth Power, Lamphey School

SYMPOSIUM II/C
TRANSFORMING PRACTICE THROUGH CREATIVITY
ROOM: PINSENT ROOM 1

CHAIR: Carolyn Blackburn, Birmingham City University

It is what you do and it is the way you do it - teaching creativity through improvisation with music and stories.

Stephen Grocott, Freelance - www.dronesmusic.net - Steve Grocott's Pages

Transforming Practice: The Power of Improvisation to Create Zones of Intimacy and Grace

Liz Clark, Caroline Farley & Gillian Sykes Independent Dance Artist Liz Clark & Loughborough Campus Nursery

Working together - Creative collaborations between artists and practitioners

Karen Wickett, University of Plymouth

SYMPOSIUM SET III: 14:25 – 15:45

SYMPOSIUM III/A
CREATIVE APPROACHES AND RECONCEPTUALISATIONS
ROOM: DELOITTE

CHAIR: Ioanna Palaiologou, University College London, Institute of Education

Beyond divisive discourse of digital childhoods: The case for social ecologies of digital lives in early childhood education

Ioanna Palaiologou, University College London, Institute of Education, Lorna Arnott, University of Strathclyde & Colette Gray, Stranmillis University College: Queen's University Belfast

Factors shape pedagogical leadership in early childhood education: the Saudi context.

Lubna Alameen, Canterbury Christ Church University

Co-authoring perceptual narratives through pedagogic documentation techniques: Implications for professional development

Suzanne Flannery Quinn, University of Roehampton and Andrea Yankah, Carshalton College

SYMPOSIUM III/B
CREATIVE APPROACHES IN SENSITIVE CONTEXTS
ROOM: CINEMA

CHAIR: Jackie Musgrave, The Open University

Recruiting research participants from a "vulnerable" people group - Lessons learnt.

Donna Gaywood, Birmingham City University

Supporting the health and wellbeing of refugee children

Jackie Musgrave, The Open University

Is sex education curriculum a creative approach in safeguarding and wellbeing of children in Saudi preschools?

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

CHAIR: Julie Ovington, Northumbria University

"I'm ready...are you?". Embracing the creative thinking of 2-year-old children within the discourse of school readiness to think otherwise.

Julie Ovington, Northumbria University

Where is the rainbow?' How do the narratives and ideas of Reception children help us to rethink 'school readiness'?

Laura Heads, Northumbria University

ABSTRACTS

SYMPOSIUM SET I
10:40 – 12:00

SYMPOSIUM I/A

CREATIVITY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

CHAIR: Faye Stanley, University of Wolverhampton

ROOM: DELOITTE

The Undergraduate story: What does it mean to be an Early Years Teacher in practice?

TRACEY EDWARDS, Wolverhampton University

Research aims or questions:
In 2018 the final cohort of Undergraduate Early Childhood and Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) will graduate. Research seeks to capture the EYTS placement experiences within the context of studying a degree and EYT award.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Dyer and Taylor (2012) suggest placement plays an important role in gaining confidence in ones professional practices. Egan (2004) identifies a sense of professional identity and pedagogy that can emerge for teachers. However Robert-Holmes (2012) maintains that professional EYT status is still an issue.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
A case study approach has been identified as best fit (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2009). There is an element of uniqueness surrounding this cohort that justifies analysis and which offers a rare opportunity to frame an intrinsic qualitative case (Stake, 1995).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
With only 8 students studying on this degree; defined therefore as a naturalistic design, data is being collected from two sets of semi-structured interviews (beginning and end) of their final year of degree, along with focus group and document analysis of practice portfolio and reflections.

Ethical considerations:
As an insider researcher mitigation of bias of the research process requires transparency and honesty, enabling the audience opportunity to develop their own perspective which is as valid (Cohen et al. 2000).

Main finding or discussion:
Initial analysis highlights conflicts regarding the value student's place on their practice experience in the EYTS programme and the value of EYTS award within the sector and beyond.

Implications, practice or policy:
Initial focus is on the embedding of assessed placements, observed practice, value added experiences and employment opportunities within Early Childhood Studies degree programmes.

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Multiple narratives*

Holding a Mirror up to Nature - Time to think in Early Years Professional Practice

MICHAEL GASPER, Starfish Enterprise / Centre for Research in Early Childhood

Research aims or questions:
To explore reflections of pre-school practitioners and members of a professional mentoring / coaching organisation in Ireland on the effects of professional mentoring and coaching on practice.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
To inform research the effects of professional development and training in mentoring, coaching and pedagogic mediation (Pascal and Bertram 2015).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Exploring the effect of theory on a professional team and their effect on improvement of practitioner professionalism and practice, improving opportunities for pre-school children's education. (McNiff 2010, Friere 1972, Fillery-Travis & Cox 2014)

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Qualitative research - action research and ethnography (Mukherji P and Albon D 2015).
Research method: a survey with reflective questions for mentor/coaches and practitioners. Including an option for practitioners themselves and with those they support to use focus groups to identify themes from the survey questions.

Ethical considerations:
Permission has been gained from the organisation (Better Start Ireland) and from practitioners. Each were made aware of the context of the research, its aims and how the data will be used. Rights of each group and individual to anonymity made clear, to see ad challenge drafts and receive a final version and to withdraw up to that point.

Main finding or discussion:
This research is current but key areas will include:
critical importance of time and space to enable reflective thinking for mentors and Early Years practitioners alike;
outsider / insider perspectives; how quality was seen to improve (or not).

Implications, practice or policy:
the value of mentoring and coaching (theory into practice)
issues around how to achieve successful pedagogic mediation
perspectives on improving professionalism in Early Years Education

Keywords: *Action Research, Early Childhood Professionalism, Methods, Practice based inquiry, Leadership*

SYMPOSIUM I/B

SUPPORTING CREATIVITY IN CURRICULUM

CHAIR: Helen Lyndon, University of Wolverhampton

ROOM: CINEMA

Monitoring progression in Creative and Critical thinking

PETE MOORHOUSE, St Werburgh's Park Nursery School and University of Bristol

Research aims or questions:
Researching ways in which early years teaching staff can best be supported to encourage the key thinking components of creativity - Creative thinking and Critical thinking and contributing learning dispositions and crucially monitoring children's creative development.

Monitoring children's progression in creative and critical thinking is extremely important it is clear creativity skills have an impact on learning power and future achievement/ self-actualisation. We need to be able to monitor creative and critical thinking progression to ensure we are developing each child to their full potential and also be particularly aware of children that need additional input. Research includes: literature review/analysis, researching the best ways to encourage thinking progression to enhance creativity, Developing a monitoring system to evaluate children's development in their creative and critical thinking skills, Collecting empirical evidence of situations that have led to creative flow and extended thinking from teachers Trialling monitoring system at St Werburghs Park Nursery School Analysis of data/ evaluation/ reflection - informing revised monitoring document.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Building on work By Claxton 2012 , Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein 1999 and Craft 2008

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Theoretical framework based on analysis of previous research and conceptual framework informed by ensuring the research is relevant and accessible for practitioners

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Action research in school through observation, teacher monitoring, documentation and reflective practice

Ethical considerations:
Consent and permissions obtained from parents

Main finding or discussion:
Monitoring creativity helps develop understanding of creative and critical thinking processes underling creativity and focuses attention on how best to support children

Implications, practice or policy:
Impact on staff development, observation and understanding and richer opportunities provided for children

Keywords: *Action Research, Pedagogy, Practice based inquiry, Outcomes, Creativity*

How do some settings rate arts and culture more highly than others, and does this effect young children's innate creativity?

RUTH CHURCHILL DOWER, Earlyarts

Research aims or questions:
To explore opportunities for, and obstacles to, arts provision for early years children and how this impacts upon their creativity.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
This research builds on 'An Arts Mark for Early Years?', ACE (2017), 'International perspectives on EYs creativity', ACE-NI (2013), various papers by Bamford (2006), Duffy (2006), NACCCE (1999), Rinaldi (2001), Schore & Marks-Tarlow (2017).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
We refer to the framework established by neuroscientists Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) and Schore (2018) that creative activities can lead to a blooming of synaptic connections, increase in cognitive ability, heightening of self-control, emotional intelligence and positive behaviours. Yet creativity remains difficult to facilitate, observe and measure successfully.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
We combined qualitative methods, including semi-structured telephone interviews, webinars, co-design sessions and an online survey, with quantitative data from ONS and Ofsted.

Ethical considerations:
377 contributors participated voluntarily and were held in confidence, and impartiality was maintained through independent analysis of the data.

Main finding or discussion:
Most educators considered creativity to be a fundamental asset in early education but were aware of resistance to their own creativity, and the impacts this had on their children. Obstacles to creativity included knowing how to spot, progress and measure its qualities; focus on fashioning a product rather than enjoying a process; lack of skill in art forms or training in scaffolding creative learning; and unsupportive leadership. This sometimes led to children's creative opportunities being missed or curtailed prematurely, despite a commitment to creative values.

Implications, practice or policy:
Where educators overcame obstacles, their strategies and stories are powerful in inspiring other educators (and children) to discover and release their innate creativity.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Impacts, Leadership, Creativity, Learning environment*

Exploring the potential of projects for embedding creativity and critical thinking opportunities into the curriculum for young children

SARAH CHICKEN, University of the West of England, Bristol

Research aims or questions:
This paper investigates utilising projects as pedagogical tools for embedding creativity and critical thinking into curricula for young children.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Drawing on the work of Chicken (2015), 'projects' are viewed as progressive pedagogical practices which facilitate child voice and agency whilst highlighting creativity and critical thinking skills (Rinaldi, 2006).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The projects of Reggio Emilia position creativity as pivotal (Malaguzzi, 2011). A Reggio theoretical position asserts that creativity flourishes when there is no emphasis on external prescription and falls outside the boundaries of predictability within a climate of enquiry and risk-taking (Grainger and Barnes 2006). 'Progettazione' are consequently constructed as a journey without a pre-specified destination (Chicken, 2015) navigated by the thinking and developing ideas of children (Malaguzzi, 2011).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Situated within six Welsh settings, this study was underpinned by a constructionist position and the research process viewed as a collaborative cycle of 'meaning making. ' Drawing on pedagogical documentation, participants were observed; exemplar documentation analysed

Ethical considerations:
and follow-up interviews utilised with issues of power, agency and positionality discussed (BERA, 2011)

Main finding or discussion:
Findings indicate that whilst practitioners utilised project terminology, practices were often constraining and resonated with topic approaches, constructed as tools of planning and control. Stemming from a discourse of regulatory modernity (Moss, 2007), participants succumbed to the 'regulatory gaze' (Osbourne, 2006) since there was a desire to manage the creative process steering project activities towards external markers.

Implications, practice or policy:
Subsequently, it is argued that the potentiality of projects as pedagogical vehicles for nurturing creativity and critical thinking was reduced and is worthy of further exploration.

Keywords: *Creativity*

SYMPOSIUM I/C

MUSIC, SINGING & DRAWING AS PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

CHAIR: Alison Moore, Birmingham City University

ROOM: PINSENT ROOM 1

Children's Drawings as Reflection of their Learning Environment

NADA ALAWDAANI, The University of Sheffield

Research aims or questions:
The aim was to encourage children to share their opinion and critically think about their preferences in their learning environment through drawings.
Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Studies (Malchiodi, 1998) indicated that children's drawings are powerful tools that help to understand children's views, worries, and feelings, along with insights and images of the world around them.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
A sociocultural perspective was taken into account and indicated the influence of social and cultural experiences on children's experience (Vygotsky,1978)

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Small qualitative. Data were collected through drawings and distance interviews with children. Used a purposive sample (Matthews, 2010) to gather 8 children's perceptions about their learning environment. Children aged between 5-9

Ethical considerations:
Parents' consents for their children's participation were obtained. Children were given the choice to participate and were informed that they can withdraw at anytime.

Main finding or discussion:
The findings revealed children were hesitated and asked for instructions about exactly what adults want them to draw, which is a strong indication of the cultural influences on children. Despite the cultural influence, children clearly demonstrated in their drawings what they like/dislike about their learning environment and what they would like to change. The findings emphasized the importance of the used methods to elicit children's opinions and encourage them to think critically about their learning environment

Implications, practice or policy:
Children's drawings provided us with several crucial clues about their learning environments and about the culture influences. Thus, drawing must be included in classrooms' practices as a method to encourage children to share their thoughts and attitudes towards different people and objects in their lives

Keywords: *Methods, Children's perspectives, Learning environment*

Promoting children's well-being, right to make choices and engage in playful activities in restricted environments through music and singing

CAROLYN BLACKBURN, Birmingham City University

Research aims or questions:
The Singing Medicine team works at Birmingham Children's Hospital with in-stay patients (children). In an environment where children can experience loss of control over decisions and restricted play experiences, musical games and activities offer children affordances to improve these experiences. This research aimed to describe and analyse the views and perceptions of parents and professionals who care for and support children who participate in the Singing Medicine service.
Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Links to Froebel's work on singing, e.g. Powell and Gouch, 2015 and Spratt, 2012. The project is funded by The Froebel Trust

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Shared music activities between adults and children serve the function of 'signs' or 'cultural tools'. Bronfenbrenner (1993) stressed the influence of the multiple integrative contexts on children's development and the relationships between them.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
A qualitative interpretive approach was taken. Methods included interviews with 10 parents and 10 health professionals who have / are supporting a diverse range of children attending BCH.
Ethical considerations:
Ethical considerations relate to informed consent, right to anonymity, right to withdraw at all stages of the research and to power relationships between researchers and participants

Main finding or discussion:
Children's heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels improve when participating in the programme. Parents appreciate being able to develop positive memories of their child's time in hospital. Health professionals value the programme as augmentative to medical interventions providing holistic care for children.

Implications, practice or policy:
Music at BCH is valued by children, parents and professionals. It lifts moods and helps to connect people and build memories between home and BCH.

Keywords: *Play, Children's perspectives, Creativity, Parents perspectives, Parents participation*

EXPLORING MUSICAL CONCEPTS THROUGH STORYTELLING: How does this approach to music in the classroom influence children's musical meaning-making?

PHILIPPA WRIGHT, Centre for Research in Early Childhood & Birmingham City University

Research aims or questions:
The focus of this action research project was to explore ways in which children use storytelling as a vehicle to explore music and encounter meaningful musical experiences through characters and imaginative worlds.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Creativity and collaboration are seen to be essential social processes in children's musical experiences (Haynes & Murris, 2013; St John, 2006). Whilst research into the ways that music supports literacy is wide (Hallam, 2010; Paquette & Reig, 2008; Barrett, 2006; Fisher et al, 2001), research about the musical outcomes of narrative-based practice (Flohr, 2006) appears to be rarer.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Jerome Bruner's concept of a narrative construction of reality (Bruner, 1986; Richards, 2011) was vital in the framing of this study. Models of musical development (Swannick & Tillman, 2003; Glover & Young, 2002; Duffy, 2006) were key in laying out parameters for observations.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Through qualitative action research, datasets were drawn from questionnaires, a focus group and observations of both adult-led music sessions and child-initiated musical play.

Ethical considerations:
Ongoing, informed consent was granted and all presentation of data keeps all participants and settings anonymous.

Main finding or discussion:
The findings of the study illuminated teachers' interest in children's creativity and some insightful observations of adaptive and collaborative creative play.

Implications, practice or policy:
The difficulty we faced in running multiple cycles of action research was mirrored by the challenges faced by teachers when planning imaginative musical exploration sessions for the classroom.
The creativity of practitioners is vitally important when constructing enabling environments. The space, time and inspirational opportunities for this to develop should be given utmost priority in teachers' timetables.

Keywords: *Action Research, Focus groups, Play, Multiprofessional collaboration, Creativity*

SYMPOSIUM SET II
12:45 – 14:05

SYMPOSIUM II/A

CHILDREN'S VOICE & ETHICS

CHAIR: Donna Gaywood, Birmingham City University

ROOM: DELOITTE

How can practice be changed to ensure the voice of the child is more effectively heard in the creation of an open listening climate across teams in Children's Centres?

ALISON MOORE, Birmingham City University

Research aims or questions:
My PhD, explores practitioners' understanding of child voice, in a context of Children's Centres in the UK. Examining how child voice can be effectively heard to facilitate change and improve practice and provision.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
The study builds upon the work of Clark, Kjorholt & Moss (2001, 2005) , eliciting child voice to facilitate change. It reflects on and draws inspiration from the praxeological and participatory work of Pascal & Bertram (2012, 2015)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The theoretical framework draws on ideas of pedagogy in participation Formosinho and Formosinho (2011, 2012) . A rights model of participation (Lundy 2007) forms a basis of reflection alongside the shared process of reflectivity through Communities of Practice. (Wenger 2004)

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
An interpretative paradigm taking the form of a qualitative case study. Using multi methods to collect data, working alongside children, practitioners and parents. Constructing narratives of 'thick'

descriptions (Geertz 1973), for reporting findings, drawing on participatory methods of Clark & Moss (2001, 2005)

Ethical considerations:
The research has ethical approval from the Institution, drawing on EECERA Ethical Code (2014) and the UNCRC (1989), considering the power relationships between participants and the researcher and the ethical praxis when researching with children.

Main finding or discussion:
Stimulating a discussion based on main findings and early analysis. How practitioners and children construct the research process, developing praxeological research to ensure young children have a voice.

Implications, practice or policy:
The dialogue will facilitate a sharing of narratives of effective strategies for eliciting the voice of young children, to inform change, providing opportunity to advance understanding and influence both policy and practice.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Multiple narratives, Multiprofessional collaboration, Children's perspectives*

Working with children's rights in ECEC

ALINE COLE-ALBAECK, Centre for Research in Early Childhood & Birmingham City University

Research aims or questions:
In this PhD study I am looking at defining the concept of Child Rights Pedagogy.
Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Although there is a growing corpus of children's rights research, research on rights in ECEC is still limited and has tended to focus on one aspect; participation (Reynaert et al., 2009; Quennerstedt 2011; 2015). I want to build on this body of work to develop a broader understanding of what rights respecting practice could entail.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
My philosophical approach is deontological and sociological as it recognises children as a social group with their own set of interests, priorities, and concerns (Mayall, 2000; Freeman, 2012).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
To explore how two-year-old children experience rights an approach in line with Critical Incident Theory (Flanagan 1954; Webster and Mertova, 2007; Spencer-Oatey, 2013) was used to identify significant events in their everyday experiences as indicative of what is important to them. I am looking at how these events are related to children's rights and use the sociologist Mark Frezzo's (2015) notion of Human Rights 'bundling', to bundle identified rights around pedagogical issues.

Ethical considerations:
I followed University, EECERA and BERA guidelines informing issues such as ongoing assent/consent, confidentiality and concepts such as children's silences (Spyrou, 2016).

Main finding or discussion:
My data is suggesting that, just like the UNCRC has 4 Guiding Principles for children 0 - 18, there may be rights that could be bundled or seen as Guiding Principles for working from a child rights perspective in ECEC.

Implications, practice or policy:
This approach may help make the discourse on rights more accessible and relevant to pedagogical practices in early childhood settings.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Birth to Three, Children's Perspectives*

Owning the Social Hauntings of Early Years Pedagogy: Seeing, doing and speaking differently in the interests of social justice.

LINDA SHAW, Oxford Brookes University

Research aims or questions:
The aims of the study centred around the interrogation of educational discourses in early years' settings in order to implement and evaluate alternative teaching strategies which could be used in our interactions with young children.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
The paper draws on a PhD thesis entitled 'Heterotopia and hauntings: troubling the spaces and artefacts of early years' education and care in England (Shaw, 2017), particularly the methodology chapter. The methodological positioning draws on post-structural philosophy (Foucault, 1993, Derrida, 2010) and feminist sociology (Gordon, 2008) in order to challenge reifications of pedagogical theory (Dahlberg et al, 1999)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The ethnography is interpreted through a lens which takes account of Foucault's (1994) notion of spaces as heterotopic, but also pays attention to Gordon's (2008) 'the meddlesome fictive' as a mechanism for challenging institutional injustices.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Participant observations were carried out in six pre-school and reception/KS1 classes. Purposive sampling was used to select contrasting socio-economic and cultural settings.

Ethical considerations:
The ethics of participant research in relation to children, practitioners and the researcher formed an important aspect of the methodology. Informed consent was gained, in line with BERA and other sector guidance.

Main finding or discussion:
The new knowledge(s) generated in relation to EYFS in England are connected primarily with methodological approaches and to pedagogical questions which might form the basis for future research.

Implications, practice or policy:
The implications for practice lie in our capacity to see differently in order to broaden pedagogical possibilities and challenge mundane social injustices which narrow children's experiences and opportunities to think creatively and express their ideas as competent social actors.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Ethics, Methodological approaches, Children's perspectives, Learning environment*

SYMPOSIUM II/B

CREATIVE APPROACHES OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

CHAIR: Mike Gasper, Starfish Enterprise / Centre for Research in Early Childhood

ROOM: CINEMA

My Nursery School is at the Museum and Garden: Educators Growing Together

NICOLA WALLIS, Fitzwilliam Museum
Research aims or questions:
To investigate how a multi-disciplinary residency project can extend and develop creative professional practice across nursery, museum and botanic garden settings.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
The 'My Primary School is at the Museum' project by Kings College London tested the radical idea of relocating schools in museums, by carrying out a series of residencies. Our research aimed to build on this by exploring the potential for staff development by situating the residency across a museum and a garden.
Our approach develops the view of the child as a competent museum visitor explored in Piscitelli & Anderson (2001) & Hackett (2017).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The work sits within a socio-constructivist framework, focusing on knowledge creation through interaction and follows Kai-Kee & Burnham's (2011) and Hein's (2012) vision of museum education as a force for positive social change.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
A participatory paradigm shaped the work. This resulted in an emergent, mixed-methods approach to data gathering, responsive to the needs and preferences of participants. Photographs, video, artwork,

questionnaires and interviews will be analysed collaboratively to enable learning to continue after the end of the residency itself.

Ethical considerations:
It was not possible for all the nursery children to visit the museum and garden. Steps were taken to ensure that the sampling was ethical and non-discriminatory, and activities were created to help all members of the nursery community feel involved.

Main finding or discussion:
Educators were enabled to think creatively about their own practice through cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Implications, practice or policy:
This project advocates for young children as capable visitors to these unique places, and for the key contribution of practitioner-led research.

Keywords: *Action Research, Pedagogy, Practice based inquiry, Multiprofessional collaboration, Learning environment*

Exploring Loose Parts Outdoors

JAN WHITE, Early Childhood Outdoors/Sheffield City Council

Research aims or questions:
With child-led enquiry, play and agency at its heart, the range of valuable thinking that the concept of 'loose parts' provokes has the potential to cause a significant shift in pedagogy. This practitioner-led enquiry seeks to: investigate what young children do with loose parts outdoors; explore what the concept 'loose parts' could mean and its pedagogical value; and develop the use of loose parts for play, wellbeing and learning in the outdoors.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Nicholson's 'theory of loose parts' (1971) is much cited but has been poorly interrogated. White (2017) outlined the value of this concept for enabling the development of flexible thinking and creativity.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The enquiry will draw upon affordance (Gibson 1986) and ecological (Morton 2010) theories.
Paradigm, methodology and methods:
This practice-based, community of learning inquiry will involve semi-structured meetings and emergent planning from ongoing findings. Information gathering methods best suited to individual investigations will include observations, photographs, video, children's comments and reflections, and journaling.

Ethical considerations:
EECERA 2014 guidelines will be followed regarding informed consent, respectful practice and data management.

Main finding or discussion:
The presentation will describe the rationale and structure of the project. Running for 1 year from January 2018-9, Reception teachers in six schools across Sheffield will meet half-termly to share, analyse and debate their investigations of children's interactions with 'loose parts' in dynamic outdoor environments.

Implications, practice or policy:
The enquiry will offer a protracted, practitioner-led and action-research based opportunity for professional growth, and develop effective practice for learning outdoors within participating schools. It will also generate valuable insights and contributions for deepening the pedagogy of 'outdoor learning' nationally.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Practice based inquiry, Outdoor Play, Creativity, Learning environment*

What can be done to improve the confidence of both adults and children dealing with mini beasts in early educational settings?

BETH POWER, Lamphey School

Research aims or questions:
This study investigated confidence amongst adults, working in various roles within primary school settings, to non-mammalian animals, in particular mini beasts-and the relationship between science and gender, and the impact that this has on education.
Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
The Donaldson report (2015) is leading to increased emphasis on science as a subject in early education. the primary curriculum and EYFS state that a sense of wonder for the natural world can be the starting point for inspiring action to protect and conserve the natural environment, initiating behaviours and attitudes that young children will carry with them for life

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Social learning theories Bandura, 1977
Gender Stem discrepancies Beede et al,2011;WISE,2016

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
The research methodology was based on naturalistic phenomenology. This study concerned the experiences of adults working with children whilst in early educational settings regarding non-mammalian animals. Interpretive qualitative data and quantitative data were collected, case studies, questionnaires and interviews.

Ethical considerations:
Ongoing consent and assent checked

Main finding or discussion:
Most children encountered adults with negative perceptions of non-mammalian animals as well. These perceptions, we need to assume, will have been transferred, if not at school, then at home either directly from an adult or through media. This is also happening with science education with strong links to gender. This is relevant to every adult in a role working with children e.g. lunchtime supervisors, whose perceptions then influence those of children

Implications, practice or policy:
The need for all staff to be aware of non verbal communication. A need to improve adult confidence with science and natural world with support/ correct resources.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Personal social and emotional development, Children's perspectives, Outdoor Play*

SYMPOSIUM II/C

TRANSFORMING PRACTICE THROUGH CREATIVITY

CHAIR: Carolyn Blackburn, Birmingham City University

ROOM: PINSENT ROOM 1

It is what you do and it is the way you do it - teaching creativity through improvisation with music and stories.

STEPHEN GROCOTT, Freelance - www.dronesmusic.net - Steve Grocott's Pages
Research aims or questions:
This is a presentation/discussion demonstrating ways that an improvisatory approach can, and has, been taught to non-music specialists to enable creativity in their everyday music and story making with reference to: context, repertoire, techniques, skills and attitudes.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
It includes a brief survey of the different meanings of "improvisationâ€ and their relevance to everyday music making in EY settings.
The presentation will refer to relevant research particularly on the embodied nature of children's responses - Young S(2006)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The practice described in the presentation is underpinned by the work of, among others:
Trevarthen (2002, 2010) on Communicative Musicality, Gopnik (2001, 2011) on Child Development and Motherese, Csikszentmihalyi (1991) on Flow, Lakoff (1992) on Metaphor, Asma (2017) on The Evolution of the Imagination, Haven (2007) on the Science of Story.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
The methods are derived from 30 years experience of making music at a professional level and adapting appropriate elements for working with children and parents and in training practitioners.
There is an emphasis on connecting with the ideas and practices that practitioners and parents already have as a way of ensuring these complementary ideas are included in their practice when the "specialistâ€ is absent.

Ethical considerations:
The practice promotes inclusivity by; providing multicultural materials, ensuring access to people with different abilities and accepting a wide range of different cultural expressions and responses as valid.

Main finding or discussion:
Training in this way is possible and useful.
The improvising attitude is transferable to all areas of learning.

Implications, practice or policy:
This presentation offers a model to enhance initial and in-service training for both EY practitioners and specialists working with them.

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Play, Communication Language and Literacy, Creativity, Parents perspectives*

Transforming Practice: The Power of Improvisation to Create Zones of Intimacy and Grace

LIZ CLARK, Independent Dance Artist **& CAROLINE FARLEY & GILLIAN SYKES**, Loughborough Campus Nursery

Research aims or questions:
The aim of the research was to use the medium of dance, and in particular improvisation, to enhance adult child interactions through creativity.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
This research was driven by the work of Goldschmied She advocated for focused interaction specifically organised to respond to very young children's need for close relationships with the keyworkers which is characterised by a flow of meaningful interaction. Crafts (2008) principles for CPD to foster creativity were used to structure training and reflections.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Owens (2011) six zones of creative development were used to analyse the findings. The Zone of Intimacy was further broken down into phases to describe the creative relationships.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
As qualitative research tools were used an interpretive paradigm was adopted. A small sample of early years practitioners was used with a mix of age, gender and experience to help validate findings. Focus groups and videos (observations) were used to generate data.

Ethical considerations:
Ethical guidelines of BERA (2013) were used. Informed consent was gained from practitioners, with the right to withdraw. The holistic wellbeing of the participants was key.

Main finding or discussion:
Initially practitioners were unable to align with the creative process. Through the interplay and engagement with improvisation the learning space, reciprocal interactions and changing of rules, the Zones of Intimacy and Grace were created.

Implications, practice or policy:
By entering the Zones of Intimacy and Grace with children the practitioners felt empowered, excited and motivated. The journey to Grace was achieved by the dance artist empathising, connecting and valuing with all participants and becoming a 'super author of authors' (Owen, 2011).

Keywords: *Early Childhood Professionalism, Focus groups, Play, Creativity*

Working together - Creative collaborations between artists and practitioners

KAREN WICKETT, University of Plymouth

Research aims or questions:
The aim of the research was to explore what Early Care and Education (ECE) leaders, arts organisation leaders and Local Authority (LA) ECE advisors believe are the challenges and possibilities when establishing sustainable creative collaborations. The research was part of the Elements project, which placed an artist in an ECE setting.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Elements builds on Little Big Bang (Young, 2012), which explored the role of the artist in Children's Centres.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
There is acknowledgement that there are benefits for children and practitioners when artists are involved in ECE settings (Young, 2012). These collaborations are susceptible to changes. 0Sustainable collaborations are more likely when leaders of the organisations are able to discuss their beliefs (Remer, 2010).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
ECE setting leaders, LA Advisors and Take Art leaders were invited to take part in a focus group before and after the artists had worked in the ECE setting. They engaged in a reflective conversation (Schon, 1991) to consider the possibilities and challenges of longer-term collaborations.

Plots and themes emerged when analysing the data.

Ethical considerations:
Ethical approval was granted by the University of Plymouth's ethics committee.
Participants were informed of my dual role as researcher and a trustee of the arts organisation before they took part in the research.

Main finding or discussion:
The reflective discussions highlight that whilst 'funding', 'understandings of creativity' and 'education policy' challenged the collaborations, the reflective discussion also afforded opportunities for sustainable collaborations, as participants were able to construct understandings and foster relationships.

Implications, practice or policy:
Provide leaders of organisations opportunities to reflect, construct understandings and foster their relationships.

Keywords: *Multiprofessional collaboration, Leadership, Creativity*

SYMPOSIUM SET III
14:25 – 15:45

SYMPOSIUM III/A

CREATIVE APPROACHES AND RECONCEPTUALISATIONS

CHAIR: Ioanna Palaiologou, University College London, Institute of Education

ROOM: DELOITTE

Beyond divisive discourse of digital childhoods: The case for social ecologies of digital lives in early childhood education

IOANNA PALAIOLOGOU, University College London, Institute of Education, **LORNA ARNOTT** University of Strathclyde & **COLETTE GRAY,** Stranmillis University College: Queen's University Belfast

Research aims or questions:
Ecological factors that shape young children's experiences with Internet of Toys.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
In research (i.e. Marsh et al 2016, Edwards and Bird 2017, Yelland 2015, 2016) on children's use of technology two key divisive ideologies feature between: traditional (non-digital) - new (digital) play; home - early childhood education. However, such research is grounded mainly in screen-based digital technology and use of the Internet of Toys has been not examined yet in full.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Synergy of developmental, socio-ecological and pedagogical perspectives based on the empowerment of children (Craft 2013, Arnott 2016, Palaiologou and Male 2017).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
12 case studies of families and children. Data collected through interviews with parents and practitioners, participant observations at home and early childhood settings and multimedia messages. Naturalistic observations of non-digital play (so far 220 children) in the home and early childhood education to compare them with children's interactions IoToys.

Ethical considerations:
The EECERA ethical code of practice has been followed. As the project focuses on IoToys to safeguard the children researchers engaged in participant observations to ensure safe internet play experiences. The Safe Internet Use Policy was applied.

Main finding or discussion:
Our findings showed that young children do not differentiate between digital and non-digital play, and IoToys is creating an entanglement in children's play between digital and non-digital. An alternative conceptualisation that goes beyond the divisive ideologies, based on social ecologies of children's digital lives that moves continuously in three ecologies: self, exosphere, eco-community.

Implications, practice or policy:
Early childhood education should consider creating digital spaces to create synergies between the digital and non-digital, home and education.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Play, Case study, Learning environment, Technology and ICT*

Factors shape pedagogical leadership in early childhood education: the Saudi context.

LUBNA ALAMEEN, Canterbury Christ Church University

Research aims or questions:
Identify the factors that influence pedagogical leadership in Saudi preschool context.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
The current study builds on previous research on early childhood such as Gordon and Browne (2014), and early childhood leadership as well as pedagogical leadership such as Rodd (2013), O'Sullivan (2015), and Male and Palaiologou (2016).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The theoretical framework is based on the insight of viewing leadership as a praxis, shaped by the context where leadership operates. it also considers the notion of the ecology of the community in the educational setting, in which the interaction of a set of social pedagogical axes takes place to shape pedagogical leadership (Male and Palaiologou's, 2016).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
This study adopts a qualitative methodology, interpretive inductive approach, providing in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives and actions, and their practical experiences of pedagogical leadership. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 preschool leaders. They were randomly selected from private and public preschool settings.

Ethical considerations:
Obtained an ethical approval from the University Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and the Ministry of Education in Saudi, to facilitate the process of the data collection. The researcher assured participants of the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected and avoided risks to the participants.

Main finding or discussion:
A number of factors identified appear to influence and shape leadership, thus the learning environment. Among these factors, for instance, were values, beliefs, culture, religion, media, leader's characteristics, economy, etc.

Implications, practice or policy:
Emphasising the role of leadership in the success of the educational institutions.
Understanding and appreciating the individual differences of the educational contexts, the settings and the leaders.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Leadership, Learning environment, Parents participation*

Co-authoring perceptual narratives through pedagogic documentation techniques: Implications for professional development

SUZANNE FLANNERY QUINN, University of Roehampton **AND ANDREA YANKAH**, Carshalton College

Research aims or questions:
We intend to facilitate discussion about forms of pedagogic documentation that can disrupt narratives of standardisation and create spaces for creativity and critical thinking for young children and the people who live and learn with them. We will present a case study of a pedagogic document, titled 'Pedagogy of Imperturbation' (co-authored by a child and an adult) and discuss the process of [?/] as a way to co-create perceptual narratives in heterotopic space(s).

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
Documentation/storytelling as a form of attentive listening and democratic resistance to standardization is supported by (Rinaldi, 2006; Lemon, 2007; Moss, 2007; Tarr, 2010; Carr, 2011; Bath, 2012).

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
We build on Froebel's ideas of 'Living with Children' (trans 1885), and take a critical socio-historical-ecological perspective (ie Freire, 1973 and McLaren, 2000) on the use of documentation techniques as a

means to recognise the affordances of ordinary (socially produced) spaces as heterotopias (ie Lefebvre, 1974; Foucalt, 1967).

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
We use an interpretive paradigm in a case study of a child's perspective of a home environment. Child photography, interview, and narrative construction are methods.

Ethical considerations:
Ethics of participatory methods guide the project. All participants/guardians have given consent.

Main finding or discussion:
Ordinary spaces within the home can be recognised as pedagogic.
Alternative forms of pedagogic documentation can be used to enhance critical and creative thinking and to redress power relations.

Implications, practice or policy:
Pedagogic documentation can be incorporated into continuing professional development and Master's level study in early childhood studies.
The process of questioning [?] and spaces for multiple interpretations [/] can support resistance to discourses of standardisation and conformity.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Practice based inquiry, Children's perspectives, Learning environment*

SYMPOSIUM III/B

CREATIVE APPROACHES IN SENSITIVE CONTEXTS

CHAIR: Jackie Musgrave, The Open University

ROOM: CINEMA

Recruiting research participants from a "vulnerable" people group - Lessons learnt.

DONNA GAYWOOD, Birmingham City University

Research aims or questions:
To consider how very young refugee children experience Early Education settings, in terms of their sense of being and belonging

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
The work of Tobin et al (2016) influenced the research design. whilst Friere's (1970) work provides the philosophical values. Laevers work on children's wellbeing and involvement is also used (2003)

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The research is poly vocal, praxeological and phenomenological. It also draws on Natural Inclusion theory (Rayner:2017)

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
It is located within a qualitative, real world research paradigm. A drawing methodology, has been employed, offering a universal communication tool (Theron et al: 2011) The Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss:2011) has informed the methods used, to elicit the child's voice and Bertram, Pascal and Saunders (2008) formed the basis of the child observations.

Ethical considerations:
The primary ethical concern has been to define and re-define the concept of "vulnerability" when considering refugees to afford dignity and recognise the innate power of those who leave to survive

Main finding or discussion:
Recruiting participants for this study has been a complex process. Encountering gatekeepers, subtle forms of Orientalism and the impact of global politics has all been experienced. The power of snowballing has been clear. To ensure the integrity of the research a strong positionality needed to be adopted, enabling the resolution of the right to research as either an insider or an outsider (Dwyer and Buckle: 2009) The pilot study has illuminated the dynamic, restorative nature of the research process, which has demonstrated clear benefits for the participants

Implications, practice or policy:
Lessons learnt about recruiting research participants from a 'vulnerable' people group

Keywords: *Ethics, Real world, Children's perspectives, Parents participation*

Supporting the health and wellbeing of refugee children

Jackie Musgrave, The Open University

Research aims or questions:
To explore how practitioners support the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of refugee children – implications for practice

Relationship to previous studies by others or self:
This research follows on from my doctoral research. The focus of refugee children's health is a theme in my book 'Supporting Children's Health and Wellbeing'.(Sage)
This paper was part of a symposium presented at EECERA 2017 with colleagues from the University of Worcester.
Prowle, A. (2017) Migration and challenge: supporting families seeking sanctuary in Wales. Presentation at EECERA Conference   29-31 August 2017, Bologna.
Harvell, J. (2017) The view from the camp: personal reflections. Presentation at EECERA Conference   29-31 August 2017, Bologna.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, it identifies how the aims and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017) can support refugee children's health and wellbeing. Inclusion (Nutbrown and Clough 2013) is used as a lens to explore how practitioners can promote children's refugee children's health and wellbeing,

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
The research used a praxeological approach to explore practitioners' experiences. Methods included questionnaires and extracts from students' work. The paper also uses documentary analysis of policy and guidance.

Ethical considerations:
Ethical approval was given for the research.
Cases studies and names use pseudonyms.

Main finding or discussion
Practitioners in early year's settings are increasingly educating and caring for refugee children. Such children have often experienced physical and emotional hardship, such as malnourishment, dehydration, infectious diseases, witnessed brutality and in some cases, have survived torture. Practitioners are well placed to support children's health and wellbeing in order to maximise their inclusion in early education and improve long term developmental outcomes.

Implications, practice or policy
This paper argues that the features of high quality settings are a valuable asset to support refugee children's physical and emotional wellbeing. However, practitioner training and relevant knowledge about health conditions is important to promote confidence so that suitable interventions can be identified to mitigate the impact of adverse experiences on their development. An understanding of the context of the child's life and the need to work with their family and other professionals is important.

Keywords: *Personal social and emotional development, Practice based inquiry, Real world, Health and wellbeing*

Is sex education curriculum a creative approach in safeguarding and wellbeing of children in Saudi preschools?

AMAL BANUNNAH, Umm Al-Qura University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and The University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

Research aims or questions:
This paper evaluates participants' responses towards the suggested topics for young children about sex education in the early years curriculum in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
In schools throughout the world, the focus has traditionally been on standardised academic topics, including English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (Goldman, 2016). In this regard, most schools give sex education comparatively little emphasis in regards to other subjects (Goldman, 2011). Although young children are also able to learn and adopt personal safety concepts and knowledge (Boyle and Lutzker, 2005) there is no guarantee that the topics will be systematically implemented or widely discussed in schools (Silva et al, 2013).Therefore, this study will provide important details about sex education topics and how this creative curriculum can safeguard children in Saudi Arabia.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
This study is interpreted from sociocultural theory perspective.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
Data were collected by two methods: questionnaires (2886 preschool teachers) and interviews (20 preschool supervisors, 8 specialists). Mixed methods were used to collect and analyse data.

Ethical considerations:
Ethical consideration approval was obtained from the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee. The full written permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education in the KSA prior to the start of the study to approach educational organisations. The consent letters form were obtained from all participants.

Main finding or discussion:
Sex education in the curriculum can be the creative approach to educate children about gender and sex keep them safe in the society.

Implications, practice or policy:
Provision sex education topics in early years curriculum can be a creative approach in child protection.

Keywords: *Life of inquiry, Early Childhood Professionalism, Creativity, Curriculum*

SYMPOSIUM III/C

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ON "SCHOOL READINESS"

CHAIR: Julie Ovington, Northumbria University

ROOM: PINSENT ROOM 1

"I'm ready...are you?". Embracing the creative thinking of 2-year-old children within the discourse of school readiness to think otherwise.

JULIE OVINGTON, Northumbria University

Research aims or questions:

A relentless focus on school readiness dominates United Kingdom educational policy (Neaum, 2016) shaping pedagogic knowledge and professional practice, via social constructions. Prior school readiness research focuses on policy perspectives; this research highlights the child's perspective; challenging preconceived notions: thinking differently.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:

Children are unique, learning efficiently through creative play (Vygotsky, 1978). Numerous factors influence 'School readiness' (Clark, 2016) creating fluidity in definitions and interpretations resulting in a nebulous concept. Deleuze and Guattari (2006, 2004, 1994) discuss the impact of concepts; challenging researchers to think otherwise and act on lines of flight within practice.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and cognitive play theory (Vygotsky, 1978) were used to explore school readiness in early education.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:

A Deleuze and Guattarian inspired framework influenced a mixed methods project; including reiterative focus groups, observations and interviews to understand how children retain their colourful characters within the school readiness discourse.

Ethical considerations:

Aims, objectives and preconceived ideas were discussed, followed by written information to overcome concerns of judgement prior to obtaining informed consent. Child-friendly assent booklets were used for chidren's informed consent. A reiterative approach ensured transparency by sharing findings. British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines were followed. Northumbria University granted ethical approval.

Main finding or discussion:

Children have voices and a right to be unique within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Accessing this requires policy makers and practitioners to re-evaluate concepts influencing their practice and identify how children's creativity and critical thinking supports educational outcomes.

Implications, practice or policy:

Demands to quantify tangible productivity is schoolfying two-year-old children to meet prescribe standards. Where is children's creativity?

Keywords: *Life of inquiry, Personal social and emotional development, Methodological approaches, Play, Children's perspectives*

Where is the rainbow?' How do the narratives and ideas of Reception children help us to rethink 'school readiness'?

LAURA HEADS, Northumbria University

Research aims or questions:
Much attention has been drawn to the way we work with young children, particularly given pressures to 'ready' children for Year One. The aim of this research was to use children's voices to destabilise academic notions of 'readiness', and to capture moments of their creativity.

Relationship to previous studies by others and self:
This study links to the work of authors such as Linklater (2006) who emphasised the value of listening to Reception children, and Gauntlett (2007) who advocated using a playful approach to research.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:
The design of this second study used concepts from Deleuze and Guattari (1987), such as 'rhizome', as a framework for creating a playful research space to facilitate the spontaneous emergence of children's ideas.

Paradigm, methodology and methods:
In this 6-week post-structuralist study, open-ended play materials were used with different groups of Reception children, as part of an after-school 'Ideas Club'. Data took various forms, including children's physical outputs, such as their clay models, as well as happenstance conversation.

Ethical considerations:
Northumbria University granted ethical approval for this research. Children were encouraged to handle recording equipment to facilitate their informed assent. The open-ended nature of the club also meant that children had input into the activities.

Main finding or discussion:
Children's engagement was markedly greater when experimenting with materials on their own terms. As a researcher, this meant relinquishing specific outcomes and learning to be present in children's explorations. Children's complex meaning making was also drawn out as a theme.

Implications, practice or policy:
This research has implications for the way we perceive and promote children's competencies. How far does 'school readiness' acknowledge children's creativity and intelligence?

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Play, Children's perspectives, Creativity, Curriculum*

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EECERA 2018 – Call for Papers

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This year, the prestigous EECERA Annual Conference will be held 28th August – 31st August, in Budapest, Hungary hosted by University of Debrecen. The theme of this year's conference is **"Early Childhood Education, Families and Communities"**.

We warmly invite you to respond to this 28th conference call of papers and hope you will be able to participate in this year's conference scientific activity.

This year we are delighted to introduce a 4th proposal type to allow speakers even greater choice and flexibility in the way they wish to present and discuss their research. On top of the existing types presenters are invited to submit a 10 minute short talk, delivered without notes or slides. The talk is based on the concept of the TED-style presentation approach, concise & simple & is an ideal presentation for those who want to pitch a new, personal, thought provoking idea, issue or approach.

Full guidance and details of how to register online and submit a proposal for a conference paper, poster or talk can be found on the conference website: http://www.eecera2018.org/

Proposals should be submitted online by 28th February 2018 and successful applications will be notified by 26th April 2018, following the meeting of the Scientific Committee. There is a full programme of social activities for those who want to network.

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

With warm regards,
Sándor Pálfi and Anikó Vargáné Nagy
Chair and Co-chair of the EECERA 2018 Conference