Welcome

Welcome to STORIES 2011! The Oxford University Department of Education student conference is organised by students, for students, and we hope this year's event will be fun and useful for presenters and attendees.

This booklet gives the abstracts of all the research papers in this year's conference, organised by session. Both abstracts and the schedule of presentations are available on the Hotspot site on weblearn, for current Oxford students. Sessions with the suffix A take place in Lecture Room A, and those with the suffix B in Seminar Room B. If you can stay for all of the papers within one session this will be better for presenters and other attendees. On the chairs in the seminar rooms you will find printed forms for you to give feedback on presentation and content. These forms will be collected by the chairs and distributed to the presenters at the end of the conference.

In addition there are three plenary sessions. This year we have taken as our theme research funding and impact. We are very pleased to welcome Dr Susan James as our keynote speaker, from the SKOPE centre at the Department. She will talk about her own personal experience of applying for research funding, and the trials and tribulations of doing so; a learning experience for any doctoral student hoping to become a post-doc! Her presentation will be the first session of the conference, on the morning of Wednesday 16th March. Our ‘debate’ topic this year is ‘Research funding and evidence-based policy in education: the current climate’, and their effect, which will no doubt stimulate some fierce discussion! The discussion will be the final event on Wednesday, from 4.35 to 5.45, and will take place immediately before the conference dinner – always an event to look forward to, and this year accompanied by live music!

For this year's final plenary session we are pleased to welcome Dr Glenn Swafford, the Director of Research Services at Oxford University, and his colleague Miss Leila Sattary, who will be talking about that ever controversial, interesting and intangible topic, Research Impact. The final session will be from 2 to 3pm on Thursday 17th of March, and will close the conference.

Don't forget to support your friends, attend lots of sessions, and enjoy STORIES 2011!

Velda Elliott and Ariel Liu

Co-Chairs, STORIES 2011
Educational Communications Technologies Across the Public and Private Regions of Social Life in Saudi Academia

Abdulrahman Al Lily, University of Oxford

The study investigates the role of educational communications technologies in the reconfiguration of existing social distribution. Although major components of Saudi society continue to be split into public-male and private-female regions, universities are using technology to establish connections between these regions. This means that, while men and women remain separate, they are becoming electronically connected. The nature of these changes is explored through a qualitative case study of a Saudi state university. Analysis of interview, observational and documentary data points to two emerging themes. One is that, as educational communications technologies have been applied to build communication structures between the two regions, this has brought about an increase in the technological structuration of organisational activity. This has also seen the modification of the internal social communicative infrastructure, allowing contact between different-region members.

Developing design principles for technology-based research environments in education: considering the role of ethnography

Steven Albury, University of Oxford

This presentation is based on my research into the use of technology to support the ways in which employees can provide feedback on management directed staff development activity within organisations. Using interview data gathered from senior managers and policy makers within the further education sector, I will look at the role technology might play in developing collaborative research practice which is integrated into the formal quality system of a further education college. These interviews are part of phase one of this study which is focused on how the managers interpret and act out their documented systems. I will make the case that technology should both support and augment professional development activity and that this is recognised by educators and managers but is not given a high priority by other actors in the education system. The presentation will describe the current teaching quality process in a college and address the question of how it might be augmented through considered use of collaborative technologies.

Young people’s learning experience with technology in museums

Ariel Liu, University of Oxford

Interactive, hands-on features in museums are believed to be a fun, effective way of empowering students and stimulating a ‘minds-on’ mentality and learning experience. This project is in the second year DPhil stage, in collaboration with the Natural History Museum and Churchill Museum, London. A total of 117 secondary school students, 18 schoolteachers, and 12 museum educators and curators participated. Using a multimodal analysis, the study explores students’ behaviours in response to museum technologies. It analyses students’ modes of communication and interaction through video observation, the results of which are validated through stimulated recall interviews and document analysis. These data reveal that the chosen hands-on device provides an accessible platform for students to relate their individual experiences with the textual information and the authentic exhibits. By delivering information through a multi-sensory presentation, the museum appears to connect with students, and suggests that it also encourages social engagement, promotes further exploration, and sustains students’ learning interest.
Investigating the suitability of the Reading Recovery Tests for use with EAL children
Charlotte Clancy, University of Oxford

This research investigated the relationships between the Reading Recovery assessments from the Observation Survey (Clay, 2002) and UK standardised tests (i.e. the BAS; the PhAB and the WIAT-II). The aim was to examine whether the relationships were the same for children who learn English as an additional language (EAL), in comparison to their native-speaking peers (NS). The study contributes to the body of empirical research which has investigated underlying literacy skills associated with reading comprehension in EAL children who demonstrate difficulties with reading. This study considers these component skills in relation to EAL children who have participated in Reading Recovery in the UK. The relationships between the Reading Recovery assessments and the UK standardised tests for these two groups of children were different. The UK standardised tests were found to be stronger concurrent predictors of reading comprehension for EAL children, than were the Reading Recovery tests from the Observation Survey.

Delaying the Academy: A Gap Year Education
Joe O'Shea, University of Oxford

In recent years, a debate has emerged around the impact gap year experiences can have on the young people who undertake them, but they have been the subject of little academic research. Through a qualitative case study of a prominent international volunteering gap year programme, this study sought to holistically explore the motivations of young people in undertaking these gap years and the ways they believe it has affected them. In contrast to previous research which suggested that little positive benefit is derived, this study found a wide breadth of learning and intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive development that can occur—principally by challenging the way participants understand, or make meanings, of themselves and the world around them. Together, this study offers both practical guidance and empirical evidence which extends the literatures of the gap year, volunteer motivation, transformational learning, and constructive developmental perspectives.

Exploring Differential Collocational Knowledge among Native and Non-Native English Speaking Children: Developing a test for use with young learners
Sara Smith, University of Oxford

Assessment of vocabulary in reading comprehension has tended to emphasize counting the number of words the individual knows, or vocabulary breadth. However, in order to use these lexical items effectively the learner must also have knowledge of grammatical functions, register, contextual usage, idioms and collocations, or vocabulary depth. One area of vocabulary depth of increasing interest is the role multi-word phrases, collocations (for example: catch fire, pay attention), play in language acquisition and processing. At present the nature of collocational knowledge in young learners remains relatively under-explored as there are no available measures appropriate for use with children. The current paper details the creation of two receptive measures of verb + noun collocations for children between 7 and 10. Findings from the pilot test will be presented along with initial results from the validation process.
Beyond the classroom: Developing a strategy-based research tool to probe the out-of-class vocabulary acquisition behaviour of study-abroad learners.

Jess Briggs, University of Oxford

Previous research suggests that strategic behaviour cannot be considered in isolation from the context in which it is applied. Short of habituation, it is difficult accurately to record the out-of-class L2 contact which study-abroad learners encounter, and as such the behaviour of learners in out-of-class contexts has not been investigated fully. This study aims to develop a tool that can capture in fine detail the strategies used by learners of English when confronted with unfamiliar vocabulary outside of the classroom. Questionnaires, observation and interviews will be used to define the most common out-of-class vocabulary acquisition encounters. Computer-based simulations of these encounters will be created and piloted using a number of different audio and visual stimuli. The resulting simulations will then be used in interviews to capture the task and/or context-specific strategic behaviour which learners apply in non-laboratory/classroom settings.

First and second language lexical development in primary school bilingual and monolingual children: morphological awareness in focus

Yuko Hayashi, University of Oxford

I report on part of a larger-scale study with two groups (ESL & JSL) of 46 Japanese-English bilinguals and 25 English monolinguals (EL1) in England. One goal is to investigate the development of morphological awareness (MA), an essential component of vocabulary and literacy development, within and between a pair of languages, which have received little attention to date. I also examined potential cross-linguistic influence, using regression analysis. English MA was uniquely explained by variance in vocabulary size only for the ESL group, contrasting with past research. Moreover, among the ESL group, Japanese MA in the ESL group uniquely explained variance of English MA above and beyond the control (age and IQ) and within- and between-language predictors. In another model predicting Japanese MA, English MA made an independent contribution. The language- and group-specific nature of the developing MA, together with the bidirectional cross-linguistic linguistic found, are discussed in terms of morphological complexities (e.g., scripts and orthographic/semantic transparency) in each language.

Fractures, Fragments, post-colonialism: the Ghanaian senior woman administrator’s narrative.

J Sika Akoto, Bristol University

In higher education like other institutions, unequal power relations are conveyed and constructed through lived experiences of people. In Ghana, the paucity of research conducted on higher education reflects a situation where issues concerning administrators have been neglected. Working within the interpretive paradigm and grounded in post-colonial feminist theory, my research employs narrative inquiry as an approach to researching work-related experiences of nine senior women administrators in selected universities in Ghana. The research seeks their perceptions of how work relations are negotiated with academics and how such interactions invisibly or explicitly impact on their self-esteem.

In this presentation I share stories emerging from my data in which one of my participants encounters the complexities of post colonialism and patriarchy as she negotiates her work and personal life experiences.
Educational Reform in Vocational Education and Training in Germany, England, and Austria: Implications for developing innovative teaching and learning practices
Florian Friedrich, University of Oxford

This DPhil is funded by the ESRC as part of SKOPE and builds on prior research by Hubert Ertl and others. Since the English vocational education and training (VET) system has undergone significant reform in recent years, and similar pressures exist in other European countries, this research investigates questions of pedagogic innovation in its relation to influences that are external to the classroom setting, tracing connections to structural, organisational, and curricular changes. Based on prior comparative work involving Germany and England, the current effort widens the scope by adding Austria, gathering a substantially larger data base, and incorporating some of the most recent policy developments in all three countries. This leverages the opportunities afforded by a comparative approach.

A pilot phase consisting of expert interviews in all three countries, as well as the bulk of the data gathering efforts in England and Austria, have been concluded. Preliminary analysis shows that there are marked differences between concepts of innovation and the role of teachers. This comparison is expected to generate results that can be abstracted from the particularities of single settings, aiding the formulation of future VET policy changes.

Between ‘prophet’ and ‘professional’: the implications of memory, representations, and conflict on the development of the professional identity of teachers in training in Lebanon
Mahmoud Natout, University of Oxford

This study investigates the challenges facing the development of the professional identities of beginning teachers in three major teacher-training programs in Lebanon, specifically vis-à-vis the various images and representations of teaching and teachers that emerge from socio-political and academic discourses and contexts that are present today in ‘post-conflict’ Lebanese society. In effect, this study seeks to contrast such images while exploring how teacher-trainees deal with them. I draw on in-depth semi-structured interviews with Ministry officials and representatives, teacher union and syndicate members, teacher trainers and trainees, among others, as well as historical and official documents on teaching and teacher education in order to identify some of the competing images that may influence the development of beginning teachers’ professional identities.

Comparing notes: a principle of decision making in examiners of ‘A’ level English and History
Velda Elliott, University of Oxford

The marking of ‘A’ level examinations in the UK is conceived of as a highly rational process in which examiners apply a complex mark scheme to a lengthy examination script. However, it seems likely that the constraints of working memory, especially given the time pressure involved, mean that examiners rely on other ways of decision making. This study used recording of examiner training meetings and a small sample of ‘think aloud’ data to examine the cognitive processes by which examiners make judgements about scripts. Several interesting principles were discovered; one is that one of the main techniques by which examiners make judgements is the use of comparison. This paper will outline the features of the comparisons which examiners make and how it affects their decision-making.
**Student Teachers’ Perspectives of Dyslexia**

*Neil Gilbride, University of Cambridge*

Despite over 100 years of research, Dyslexia provides practitioners with a conundrum. Debates over cause, presentation and even its existence and validity, are rife within the academic and professional communities. Where has this unclear picture left teachers? There has been little research into what perspectives teachers hold on this topic, and how these perspectives are being formed in the light of such varied opinion and evidence. This study will explore the perspectives of student teachers, using interview and task methods. The grounded theory design will allow for further investigation of any potential influences on the perspectives which arise. This project will provide an insight into how different experiences and inputs can influence teachers on complex concepts, whilst discovering more about the social understanding of Dyslexia. In this presentation, the project and methodology will be outlined in addition to preliminary findings and how this will guide the rest of the project.

**Tutors’ Development: A Case of Teaching about HIV/AIDS**

*Moses Orwe-Onyango, University of Cambridge*

The aim of the study was to explore tutor’s development and the preparation of trainee teachers to teach about HIV/AIDS. In Kenya HIV/AIDS education is integrated in teacher education. However, recent studies have reported superficial teaching of HIV/AIDS. Several authors have attributed this to link between sex education and HIV-prevention. Participants were tutors and teacher trainees. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and document review. The data was transcribed and analysed inductively using qualitative data analysis software HyperResearch. The findings indicate that participants feel inadequately prepared to teach about HIV/AIDS due to cultural practice in Africa that restricts discussions on sexuality issue among peers. Hence, there is need for a comprehensive approach towards educators’ preparation to teach about HIV/AIDS.

Key Words: Teacher development, HIV/AIDS education.

**‘Why Should Girls Stay in School?’ Aspirations of Students, Parents, and Educators Invested in Girls’ Secondary Schools in Rural Pakistan.**

*Willy Oppenheim, University of Oxford*

Most research on girls’ schooling in rural Pakistan has focused on factors constraining enrolment or on outcomes correlated with those who enrol. The current study contributes to this literature by exploring what aspirations motivate stakeholders to invest in girls’ secondary schooling. In particular, the study focuses on how stakeholders evaluate girls’ schooling in relation to topics like marriage, parenting, and employment. At roughly six rural schools, the researcher will collect survey data and conduct qualitative interviews and observations with consenting students, parents, and educators. The study works to shed light on the relationship between girls’ schooling and the dynamics of cultural change and reproduction in historically patriarchal contexts. At the STORIES conference, the researcher will discuss questions of ethics, epistemology, and methodology.
Catch Up Numeracy: an Intervention for Learners who Struggle with Numeracy
Wayne Holmes, University of Oxford

Around 15% of UK primary school children have difficulties with mathematics which impacts severely on their ability to access the curriculum and their successes in later life. This presentation will describe an intervention developed to support the needs of these children, Catch Up Numeracy, which centres on 15-minute individual sessions delivered twice a week. This will be followed by analyses of individual data for 440 children, comparing progress made by children who received Catch Up Numeracy intervention (progress more than twice that expected of typically achieving learners) with controls who received non-targeted intervention or none. The evidence indicates that Catch Up Numeracy is effective and practical, in a variety of school settings across the UK. More generally it strongly supports the view that children’s arithmetical difficulties are highly susceptible to intervention, and that the amount of time given to individualized interventions does not need to be large to be effective.

Integrating technology into the classroom: Teacher response
Maria Mama, University of Cambridge

This study explored the role of educational technology as echoed in teachers’ beliefs and classroom practices. A multi-case study was conducted in Cyprus involving 11 primary teachers. Following the analysis of interview and observational data, four groups emerged, according to the teachers’ perception of the role of technology, their practice with the computers and Interactive Whiteboard, the (in)consistency between reported and observed practices, and the impact of the external factors on their practice. Group-A considered technology use to be pedagogically valuable and tried to incorporate it. Group-B, although not highly competent with technology, was eager to “learn more about it”. Group-C focused on its administrative uses and was not willing to spend extra effort and time to use it pedagogically. Group-D thought that technology undermined teacher’s authority. The results may provide insights into the factors influencing the uptake of technology and leave implications for policy makers, ICT coordinators and professional development program designers.

Learning Support on the Move: Mobile Learning Activities to Support Undergraduate Students in Malaysia
Sakina Baharom, Bristol University

The introduction of mobile learning in higher educational institutions (HEI) in Malaysia would appear to be an instinctive course of action in response to the precipitate increase in mobile phone ownership amongst undergraduate students. Using a social constructivist learning framework, this undergoing study aims to explore how mobile learning can support undergraduate students in a course. The study seeks to discover if mobile phones could be used as another supportive learning platform for undergraduate students in Malaysia. The students’ voices are emphasised, as students’ influence is essential to move the technology in the directions that they prefer. The study’s methodology uses design-based research (DBR), which emphasises the need for cyclic intervention in order to ensure reliability as part of the research process. Hence, there are two research cycles for this study. Mixed methods are used to explore the students’ perspective on the mobile learning activities.
Oxford Interdisciplinary Knowledge-Sharing Service (OIKSS): A Pilot Study
Hareesh Kanchanepally and Bowen Yang, University of Oxford

As we transit from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy, the need for individuals to connect, share knowledge, and learn from each other is increasing. Moreover, social constructivists espouse knowledge co-construction and peer support from the ‘more knowledgeable other’. Web 2.0, especially social-networking, technologies provide affordances for connecting and knowledge-sharing. However, in higher education, where interdisciplinary knowledge-sharing is more important to foster innovation, students’ use of Web 2.0 technologies to connect specifically for academic purposes is low. There is a need for more focused intra-university knowledge-sharing mechanism. As a pilot study for Blue-Skies project, we surveyed 67 current Oxford students and 66 responded positively towards using a web application, if provided, for knowledge-sharing purposes. To meet these requirements, we are creating a Web application that intuitively connects students with each other and thus helps foster interdisciplinary knowledge-sharing. At STORIES, we will elaborate on these needs and will elucidate the mechanism behind the Web application.

The Experience of Jews and Christians in secondary school religious education lessons
Dan Moulin, University of Oxford

This paper explores the experiences of secondary school students from religious backgrounds in Religious Education (RE). 16 loosely structured, group, pair and individual interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of school-age attendees of places of worship from four religious communities: one Jewish and three Christian. 34 respondents took part, who attended a total of 14 secondary schools, including non-denominational comprehensive, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and independent schools.

The findings make a useful contribution to on-going debates concerning pedagogy and practice in secondary RE. Members of the religious communities consulted often found their tradition stereotyped and simplified in RE lessons. Respondents also found that at times they were expected to be, or felt the need to be, spokespeople or representatives of their religion. However, experiences of religious intolerance and prejudice, or the fear of it, were common. This led to some students being reluctant to reveal or discuss their religious identity in lessons.

From villagers’ failure to city-dwellers’ success: Mixed-methods study of spatial inequalities in Georgian HE access
Maia Chankseliani, University of Cambridge

In this study I put forward the hypothesis that applicants’ residential location is closely associated with their chances of gaining access to Georgian higher education (HE). Location, I argue, affects the opportunities of developing capabilities to pursue HE, with rural applicants, on average, having lower chances and urban applicants being more privileged.

Two-phase sequential mixed-model design has been used to explore different aspects of HE access. This involved examination of the relationship between applicants’ residential location and their odds of HE access by applying logistic and multiple regression analyses to the quantitative data about the entire population of HE applicants in Georgia in 2005-2009. Non-availability of population data on different levels – individual, school, and area – did not allow for multi-level modeling. The quantitative findings were further explicated in qualitative interviews with rural families and policy-makers in Georgia.

The study demonstrates that after holding general aptitude test results, district-level poverty, and an array of other variables constant, rural applicants tend to have significantly lower odds of gaining HE admission, in particular, to more prestigious institutions.
Researching international student mobility: old ideas in the new dimensions.
Anya Wells, University of Oxford

This presentation summarizes my doctoral research on international, academic student mobility in contemporary Europe, using a case of Latvian students enrolled in Bachelor programmes in universities across England. The presentation will introduce international student mobility from the point of view of different academic disciplines, highlight some interesting findings of the existing research and explain the challenges involved in reading these findings. The proposed argument is that concepts borrowed from Sociology of Higher Education can be successfully applied to international contexts and provide a strong platform for researching student mobility. Several researchers in the field have used this principle successfully and it will be explained how their methods and findings contributed to the design of this research study. The description of the research design leads to the review of the early findings of this study and concludes the presentation.

Learning in and from the virtual world, Second Life: Ethnographic accounts of three in-world groups
Wan Ying Tay, University of Oxford

A review of the literature suggests that most studies on Second Life have focused on conducting studies in virtual campuses of formal institutions. There are but a handful of studies that examine what goes on in Second Life (SL), particularly how learning occurs in the everyday practices of the virtual world. This study seeks to examine how members in their respective groups interact and potentially learn in SL, by taking an ethnographic approach in studying three in-world groups. In this presentation, the rationale for choosing an ethnographic approach will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the data collection methods consisting mainly of participant observations and online semi-structured interviews. Using Gunawardena, Lowe and Anderson’s (1997) interaction analysis model as the analytical tool and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) as the framework for discussion, a thematic analysis of the data will be presented, followed by a discussion of the findings.

One for you, two for me: Young Children’s Responses to Unequal Sharing Tasks
Sarah Walter, University of Oxford

The current study aims to further our understanding of the relationship between early mathematical and social concepts. Sharing provides a context for young children to understand mathematical concepts in a concrete way, and many use maths-based strategies to decide how to share fairly. This practical knowledge may help children when they are taught more abstract maths later on. The present study will examine whether 4 and 5 year old children can learn to solve sharing tasks where sharing fairly does not mean giving equal shares (for example if one person has done more work and deserves a larger share). Twenty-five 4 year olds and twenty-five 5 year olds will be recruited from schools in the Oxfordshire area and asked to solve five different sharing tasks. Results from this study will inform the design and research questions posed in 3-4 additional studies in Toronto, Canada that will further explore children’s responses to sharing situations involving the distribution of unequal shares.
The flourishing vs. the disaffected: the spectrum of engagement with undergraduate mathematics  
Ellie Darlington, University of Oxford

As a STEM subject, mathematics suffers as the number of applicants to study it at undergraduate level is below government targets (HEFCE, 2010). The problem is compounded by the number of students who fail to complete the course, with drop-out rates in the mathematical sciences being amongst the highest (Johnes & McNabb, 2004). Since well-qualified, successful mathematics students have been found to exhibit signs of disaffection with the subject at undergraduate level (Daskalogianni & Simpson, 2002), it is important that their experiences are investigated in order that a comprehensive picture of engagement in the context of undergraduate mathematics may be drawn. To be conducted at Oxford University, this project aims to examine the relationship between students' experiences, the undergraduate learning environment & their previous experiences of mathematics. This will be achieved through the use of questionnaires to establish levels of student satisfaction with undergraduate mathematics, as well as interviews with them in order to further probe the reasons behind their responses. This will be conducted across all year-groups in order to ascertain whether there may be any changes or differences in students' experiences of and feelings about advanced mathematics. Furthermore, secondary- and tertiary-level course content and assessment will be investigated in order to establish whether any differences here contribute towards students' experiences of this complex field of study.

What is the extent of deaf children's delay in mathematics?  
Laura Gottardis, University of Oxford

Researchers have observed that deaf children lag behind their hearing peers in mathematics but the nature and the extent of this delay are still unclear. Level of hearing loss, age, type of amplifications and type of educational provision were highlighted as possible moderators. The last extensive UK survey was conducted in 1983 by Wood et al. but since then changes in the educational provision and in the type of amplifications could have influenced this situation. The aim of this research is to conduct a survey in order to evaluate deaf children's delay in mathematics in the UK. 193 deaf children aged 6 to 11 years with a hearing loss ranging from moderate to profound were recruited. Preliminary results show that they have a delay of two standard deviations in mathematics. Only the type of educational provision and the language used at home are significant moderators of their mathematical achievement.

Educational Leadership Effects on Academic Achievement: Evidence from Romanian Schools  
Sonia Ilie, University of Cambridge

School effectiveness research has been focusing on how educational leadership may affect students' achievement levels in a variety of contexts. This presentation will draw on a quantitative case study of a high-achieving upper-secondary school from Romania, which looked at the effects leadership practices had on teachers' attitudes and students' achievement. Conceptually, the study was based on transformational and instructional leadership, arguing for their integration in a head teacher leadership construct. Methodologically, it implemented a structural equation model and a hierarchical linear model of the effects framework. The results indicate that the hypothesised structural model is not ideal for describing the school’s situation, and although a connection was observed between leadership and some teacher attitudes, it does not appear to spill over at the student level. The presentation will also provide insights into an ongoing, larger and similarly-focused study.
Insider dealings: researcher experiences of ethnographic research on race and migration in two English secondary schools.

**Emel Thomas, University of Cambridge**

This paper considers the access strategies employed to examine youth perceptions of race and migration. Drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT), this paper seeks to highlight some of the experiences and challenges that a Black British born researcher encounters when researching the perceptions of British ‘minority ethnic’ youth and more recently migrated Eastern European ‘immigrant’ youth. The paper explores various networks negotiated, before and during ethnographic field work, that are sources of racial conflicts in the English educational system. In navigating various networks, the paper draws attention to the need for researchers to constantly transform their critical and reflexive positions. This paper argues that Black British born researchers often manoeuvre unspoken and subtle racial challenges from staff and students.

What is difficult about learning pinyin?

**Kathy Xu, University of Oxford**

Although pinyin is taught throughout mainland China, there seems a lack of available information about what pinyin is for at school, how it is taught, and what children have learned from it. My study hopes to gain insight into what is difficult and what is easy by examining how children spell in pinyin. Ninety-five children aged around 6 from three schools were recruited for a spelling test which took place five days before the school started. Some of the findings will be talked about. Suggestions on learning and teaching pinyin are subsequently provided based on the findings. It would be interesting to see how children learn this alphabetic writing system to represent a non-alphabetic writing system. We hope that this study may contribute to the understanding of children learning an alphabetic system in general, and of children learning an alphabetic system in a Chinese context in particular.

School inspection judgement: Getting access and managing audio recordings

**Moritz Sowada, University of Cambridge**

This work-in-progress report focuses on two crucial elements of my ongoing PhD research project into school inspection judgements. First, the issue of getting access. I will describe how I obtained permission to undertake my fieldwork in Germany and how I have been struggling to get access for my research in England. I will explore what may contribute to the varying degrees of difficulty in getting field access for sensitive research. Secondly, I will address the challenge of processing the data collected. During my fieldwork in Germany I recorded approximately 100 hours consisting of episodic interviews and talk during inspections. The audio data has been gathered at six external school evaluations (Three inspections in Lower Saxony and three in Thuringia; two German federal states with distinct school evaluation systems.). It appears inefficient to transcribe all audio data in minute detail. Therefore I will discuss how the data corpus could be treated in a more selective yet systematic manner.
Learned knowledge as a barrier to the acquisition of nuanced structures: a corpus based study of how classroom context impedes advanced Brazilian learners of English.

Jason Cole, University of Oxford

The study begins by comparing spoken English learner corpora data from classroom learners in Brazil and Brazilian immigrants living in England with native English speaker corpora. The study specifically focuses on differences in acquisition patterns of the nuanced meanings of “will” and “going to”. Analyzing corpus data as well as qualitative data regarding context of learning, the study considers factors that might interfere with the successful acquisition of “going to” by Brazilian classroom learners. The study suggests that the previously learned structure, “will”, acts as a psychological constraint on noticing context laden input featuring “going to”, a structure which Brazilian immigrants acquire without difficulty. The study uses additional data to suggest other common nuanced forms are also blocked by previously learned structures. Finally, the study examines the effectiveness of using explicit, form-focused instruction, given partially in Brazilian Portuguese, specifically advocating the use of “going to” over “will” in certain grammatical contexts.

Cultural Sustainability through Community-Based Early Childhood Education in Solomon Islands?

Lindsay Burton, University of Oxford

The Solomon Islands, a small developing nation in the South Pacific, demonstrates an emerging community-based kindergarten model with the potential to promote context and culture relevant early learning and development; however, it is severely challenged by faltering community support. This is particularly concerning in light of a 2008 nationally enacted three-year mandatory kindergarten enrollment prerequisite for primary school. Therefore, based on data collected through an ethnographically-inspired collaborative research approach, this presentation will highlight key research findings pertaining to the cultural and contextual sustainability features of these programs. With an ever-increasing influence of the globalization of early education through international agendas and universalized claims of “best-practices”, yet lack of government resources to support such endeavors nationwide, it is now critical to better understand how community-based initiatives can facilitate early childhood education while continuing to instill context-specific cultures and identities each generation through sustainable initiatives.

What do actors learn in Theatre in Education?

Helen Campbell, University of Oxford

Performance is increasingly used by Non-Governmental Organisations working with vulnerable communities to teach them about issues ranging from health to human rights. However, little research has been done on what is learnt about the issues or how to convey them by the actors. Performers in Theatre in Education (T.I.E.) typically have very limited time and resources to decide on the educational message being conveyed, or how they will communicate it to an audience. They may devise a performance based on an existing script, or improvise one from scratch. This proposed study will use field observation, stimulated photo/video recall and interviews to look at what performance skills and content knowledge actors bring to rehearsals, what actors learn co-operatively during the creative process, how their learning develops from existing knowledge to incorporate new, and how they use this knowledge to construct messages for the audience. It is hoped that understanding more about the creative processes of rehearsal will help to train T.I.E. actors.
Cultural values towards school guidance and counselling services: An ethnographic case study in one secondary school in Malaysia.

Nurul Ain Mohd Daud, Bristol University

This qualitative study explores students’ cultural values and attitudes towards school guidance and counselling services in one secondary school in Malaysia. My study adopted narrative ethnographic case study as an approach. Semi-structured individual interviews, group interviews and observation were conducted with students of different cultural backgrounds. In addition, views of school counsellors, teachers and school administrators were also sought for the purpose of triangulation and in-depth understandings of the issue. Data were analysed using comparative analysis through grounded theory. Findings indicate that there are differentiated values and attitudes of students and school community towards counsellors and school guidance and counselling services. The discussion highlights the role of a school system in elucidating values towards guidance and counselling services. The study poses implications for understanding counselling services in the school system.

A Walking Contradiction: Teacher as A School Refuser

Ya-Wen Chiu, Bristol University

This inquiry looks at the life stories of teachers (I am one of the respondents in this study) in Taiwan who were school refusers during their schooling and how this experience impacts on the formation of their identities within the context of Taiwanese sociocultural elements.

Discussions include how teachers re-construct remembered selves through autobiographical remembering under the framework of narrative inquiry. Our narrative accounts show that autobiographical selves are pieced together through not only our own remembrances, but coupled with family members and the public memories. As such, multiple-voiced memories reflect our discourses, positioning, and power relations in certain context. Bakhtin s theory of dialogism is employed to examine why our voices are always half others, and why they are far from neutral. Moreover, the conflicting voices between our and others discourses provided a stance to view the relation of our agentic work and agency, which sheds a light on improvisations of our actions in the space of the classroom as teachers.

Developing independent learning skills through assistive technology for 6th form students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD)

Paul Grove, University of Oxford

Since the introduction of the Special Education Needs Act 2001 (SENDA, 2001) schools have been exploring ways of supporting students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) to achieve their full potential. The extension of disability legislation has brought important changes in schools by requiring the provision for students with disabilities. Thus, disabled learners’ needs must be considered when making learning accessible. The increasing use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in the twenty-first century has led to greater attention in research studies to supporting disabled students and a recognition of the need for assistive technologies. However, students’ problems learning, due to technology policy, accessibility, usability and experience of technologies are not represented or are infrequent. The aim of this paper is to address the issues that 6th form students with SpLDs, at an independent school in Hampshire, England, experience when supporting their own learning and how the relationship of the teacher, learning content, and environment direct the use of assistive technologies.
Academic Achievement and the International Baccalaureate in American Urban Public Schools
Eva Lam, University of Oxford

This project investigates the implementation of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in two American urban public high schools. The IB, a demanding two-year curriculum leading to an internationally recognized school-leaving qualification, is spreading rapidly in North America, particularly among schools seeking to improve academic performance. However, little research has addressed the question of how urban public schools implement the IB, which was originally developed in a small group of international schools serving relatively privileged students.

This project explores how the IB works in a significantly different context, against the backdrop of growing concern about ‘failing schools’ in urban districts. The empirical work consists of case studies of two IB schools in a large district in the Midwestern United States. Data collection methods include interviews with students, administrators, and teachers; observation of classes and other activities; and document analysis. A pilot study is planned for April 2011 to refine methods and research questions.

Knowledge transfer through the realisation of research projects in virtual contexts
Tamara Danchuk, University of Paderborn

In times of innovation pressure and rapid development of „new media“, fresh possibilities and challenges have appeared concerning the development of ideas and new approaches, cooperation and collaboration in the world of science. The focus has shifted towards the development of new knowledge and problem-solving forms, which is no longer possible within one field of study (discipline). Moreover, the necessity of research and communication in online-modus is expiring. First insights into the interdisciplinary online knowledge transfer and the influence parameters will be presented. The focus nearby will lay on the influence of social and personal factors within the virtual context. Moreover, it will be proposed the concept of the virtual- and social-context design for the active and effective knowledge transfer within the interdisciplinary researcher groups under the circumstances of online-cooperation. At the end the methodical approach and its emerging challenges will be discussed.

Vocational orientation - Teacher’s experiences with pupils in Germany’s upper secondary vocational transition system
Petra Frehe, University of Paderborn

Within the last few years the German upper secondary vocational transitions systems expanded intensely. It is already known as a third pathway from school to work apart from common ways, such as studying at university and doing an apprenticeship. By now nearly half a million pupils enter this system, each of them with different aims and perceptions. Within the research project “InLab” the current cooperation with teachers who work in this system show that vocational orientation is a main challenge pupils have to cope with, although most of them have already attended such courses or contents in their former school career. This presentation will focus on a new didactical instrument to advance young people in their vocational orientation in an extraordinary personalised way. In addition to explanations referring to this instrument, there are also some passages extracted from lately done interviews with teachers, which reveal their experiences with the pupils’ level of vocational orientation.
Development of eMedia – web-based self and peer evaluation

Marcel Gebbe, University of Paderborn

Development of eMedia for formal educational settings is a complex field, influenced by several actors. This presentation focuses on future challenges with regard to designing eMedia from a didactical perspective. It gives an insight into a newly designed tool: The web-based self- and peer-evaluation (www.myflux.eu). This didactical tool supports individual learning processes in collaborative, problem-based learning environments and in addition, it offers functions to enhance teaching processes. Furthermore, it has been designed to be adoptable for different kinds of educational institutions (e.g. schools and universities). The development process itself has been the fundamental source to generate findings on how to design didactical tools from scratch. Regarding this, there will be a short introduction into the activities that have been done throughout the engineering process within the research work.

Practical Experience in Higher Education – Impact of (Goals in) Students' Internships – First Empirical Results

Markus Schoencke, University of Oxford

The underlying research design deals with practical experience in higher education from student perspective. Due to the results of the Bologna process, the employability resp. the students’ preparation for professional life must be taken into account in more detail by higher education institutions. The research field is embedded in the module “Managerial Education” which belongs to the study programme “Bachelor of Business Sciences” at the University of Paderborn. The module covers different elements of practice within the context of vocational and further education. The research design comprises three steps: A qualitative preliminary study (interviews in breadth) is followed by a quantitative minor study (questionnaires) and a qualitative major study (interviews in depth). As a report on work in progress, the very first empirical results of the minor study will be presented and discussed. These results rely on two questionnaires, which were given to the students before and after their internships.

An exploration of pupils’ conceptions about the brain and how it works

Vicky Page, University of Oxford

The study aims to explore pupils’ conceptions of the brain and how it works. It will also look at the factors that influence these conceptions. The study will investigate pupils’ conceptions of the brain and how it works in year 5 and year 10 in Oxfordshire. It will look at the similarities and differences between perceptions in these two age groups when pupils are grouped by gender, self-reported attainment at KS1 or KS3, the brain-based programme implemented by the school, the availability of science information at home and the EAL and FSM status of pupils. A combination of pupil questionnaires and interviews will be used.