



Annual Report

2023/24





Director's Welcome

The role of education in society has never been more important, and harnessing the power of education to transform lives has never been more urgent. Nelson Mandela famously once said: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.



Few would likely argue with Mandela's characterisation of education's potential, however, for education to fulfil these lofty goals we need an evidence base to better understand the ways in which education can be utilised to shape the world we want to see. As the country's leading Department of Education, it will likely come as no surprise that through various ways and means we have been doing just this.

As always, our Department has had a busy and fulfilling year across several domains. Our research activity exemplifies our belief and commitment to educational research as a means to improve justice and fairness in education. There are too many examples of such research to highlight each one here, but several are represented in the pages of this report and I encourage you to read more about them, and indeed get in touch with us if you are interested in learning more.

The Repair-Ed project led by Professor Arathi Sriprakash (funded by UKRI) is one example. This project focuses on racial and class injustices and aims to help us better understand how the constructs of repair and redress can support our conceptualisation of how injustices are created, experienced, and resisted in educational contexts. Through this participatory research, Professor Sriprakash and colleagues will make an important contribution to how to leverage this understanding to lead to educational justice. Another example is the 'Comparing UK policies, inequalities and outcomes in post-16 education and training' project, led by Dr James Robson, Director of the SKOPE research centre. This project, funded by the Nuffield Foundation,



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Professor Victoria Murphy

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We have several academic programmes that have been specifically designed to enable individuals who might otherwise not be able to access an Oxford education to do so.

Professor Victoria Murphy

carefully examines education and training across the four nations using mixed methods approaches and will enable the team to co-develop and implement recommendations on how to improve education and training in post-16 contexts that meet society's needs today. Somewhat further afield, Professor Rob Klassen's project on 'Empowering school leaders in Kenya through remote coaching technologies' is an example of how research in our Department is shaping not just education's transformational potential in the UK, but around the world as well. Professor Klassen's project is developing and testing technologies to help school leaders in marginalised communities in Kenya and has already gathered positive results in improving teaching and learning outcomes in these hard-to-reach communities. These are just three examples of exciting research across the Department that demonstrate how education, and importantly research into education, is indeed shaping the world for the better.

Apart from supporting the development and implementation of world leading research in education, we also improve justice and fairness in education through our academic offer. We have several academic programmes that have been specifically designed to enable individuals who might otherwise not be able to access an Oxford education to do so. Furthermore, all our academic programmes either enable our students to consider issues of justice and fairness in education through

specific content, or through the development of appropriate transferrable skills in research methodology, design and analysis which in turn enable students to both access leading research and develop that research themselves.

Providing a superb experience to students and carrying out world leading research is not possible without exceptionally talented people. In this year we have welcomed several new colleagues who support the Department's overall mission to provide an intellectually stimulating and uniquely inclusive environment that nurtures the finest minds in the field. We are delighted to welcome them to their new professional home.

Finally, we were all delighted when earlier this year our PGCE programme was deemed 'outstanding' by Ofsted, yet again! Our core Initial Teacher Education programme being recognised as outstanding is a vehicle through which we shape the minds and develop the skills of the next generation of teachers. Teachers, being at the coal face of shaping our future citizens, need to be inspirational and guide and inspire our future leaders to change the world for the better. As W.B. Yeats said, "Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire". Throughout the pages of this report, you will see some of the ways in which we are igniting that fire.

Professor Victoria Murphy
Director of the Department

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All our academic programmes enable our students to consider issues of justice and fairness in education.

Professor Victoria Murphy



Year in Review

1st

in the UK for degrees in education
Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024



3rd

in the world for degrees in education
Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024



Outstanding

Ofsted PGCE result



£3m+

Newly secured research funding



751

Students pursuing postgraduate courses in education



49

Nationalities (students)



26

Scholarships awarded to new students



9

Postgraduate programmes at master's and doctoral level



21

DPhil completions



7.9k

X (Twitter) followers



5k

LinkedIn followers



39

ITE school placement partnerships



In the News

A Selection From the Year

A Level Results Day

Expert comment from
Professor Jo-Anne Baird

14 August 2023
BBC Radio 4 Today

Academics need a holistic approach to deal with AI in Science

Professor Sibel Erduran

16 May 2024
University World News

How to meet the needs of EAL learners

Professor Victoria Murphy

22 September 2023
Tes

PISA 2022: Rise in maths, but warning over inflated results

Professor Jenni Ingram, Dr Stuart Cadwallader, Jamie Stiff, Gabriel Lee and Heather Kayton

5 December 2023
School's Week

Oxbridge acceptance rates triple in inner London

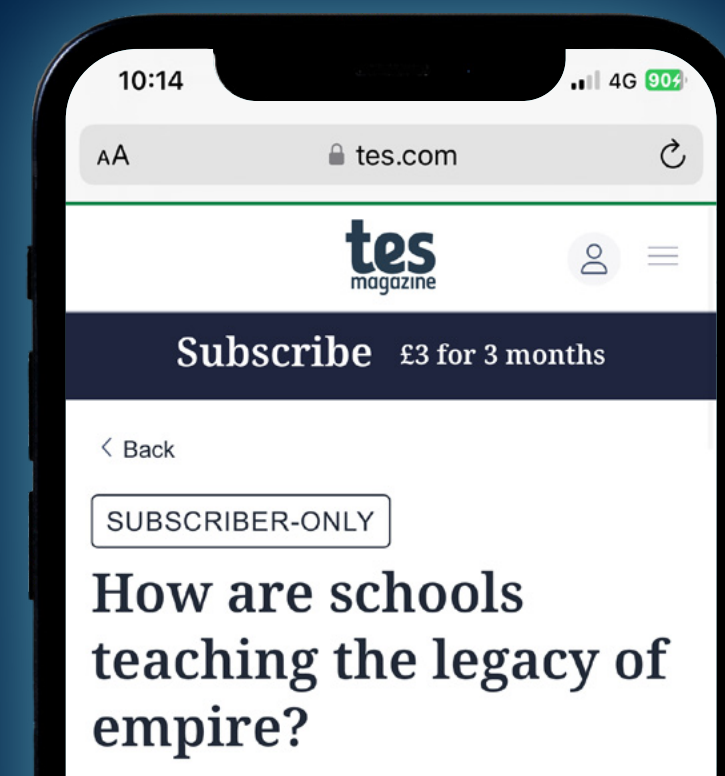
Dr James Robson

19 September 2023
Times Higher Education

How are schools teaching the legacy of empire?

Dr Jason Todd

16 January 2024
Tes



Highlights

Lifetime Contribution Award



Professor Kathy Sylva OBE, Honorary Research Fellow at the Department, has been awarded the Michael Rutter Medal for Lifetime Contribution to Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) bestowed the award on Kathy in November 2023 and, in acceptance, she delivered the keynote lecture 'The Role of Early Childhood Education in Supporting the Mental Health of Children'.

Kathy said: "I was thoroughly delighted and touched to be recognised with this award. The impact of high-quality pedagogy on wellbeing and self-regulation is a vitally important area to understand so that we can support children and young people in schools, that's why I'm thrilled to have received this medal."

Fellow of the British Academy



In July 2023, Professor Simon Marginson FBA, the then Director of the Centre for Global Higher Education, was elected a Fellow of the British Academy.

Simon said: "I am deeply conscious of the history of the Academy and of its roll call of Fellows, including some who continue to shape my own intellectual formation. One never feels equal to the company at such times, but it is a wonderful opportunity to work collaboratively and inter-culturally to further the many heterogeneous contributions of the arts, humanities and social sciences."

PGCE course receives 'outstanding' Ofsted result



The Department maintained its 'outstanding' rating following a visit from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED).

OFSTED said: "The University of Oxford successfully realises its ambition to ensure that trainees are as well prepared as they can be to become excellent teachers. The innovative course design has an exceptionally strong subject focus. Trainees acquire highly developed subject specific knowledge and pedagogical understanding to teach complex concepts in an accessible manner to pupils, including those who are disadvantaged."

50th anniversary of the Oxford Review of Education



The Oxford Review of Education, which is edited by members of the Department, celebrated its 50th anniversary in June 2024.

As part of the celebrations, the Editors selected 50 articles to represent the breadth and quality of the journal. The special issue is freely available to read online.

Educational Review's Article of the Year Award

Professor Steve Strand and Dr Annina Hessel were awarded Educational Review's Article of the Year Award for their paper, "Proficiency in English is a better predictor of educational achievement than English as an Additional Language (EAL)."

Established in 2013, the annual award recognises and honours excellence in the communication of research and scholarly endeavour in the field of education.

Steve said: "We are grateful to the Editors of Educational Review for the award, and to the colleagues in the Local Authorities that enabled the research to happen by sharing their anonymised data, and to all their schools and pupils. We hope this research will support the reintroduction of a national assessment of the Proficiency in English of pupils with EAL in England, and to more effective targeting of the EAL funding provided to schools through the National Funding Formula."



Department academic wins Teaching Excellence Award

Dr Danica Sims, Senior Departmental Lecturer in Medical Education, received an Individual Award for Academic Staff (Early Career Strand) in the Social Sciences Division's annual Teaching Excellence Awards.

The award recognises Danica's innovative approach to teaching and her commitment to student-centred learning.

Danica said: "As an early career academic, about to celebrate my first year at the University of Oxford, it is incredibly encouraging to be recognised for excellent teaching. Thanks must be given to the Department of Education, and my brilliant colleagues, who model excellence in all areas, and to the indispensable administrative team who work their magic behind the scenes. It has been a joy!"

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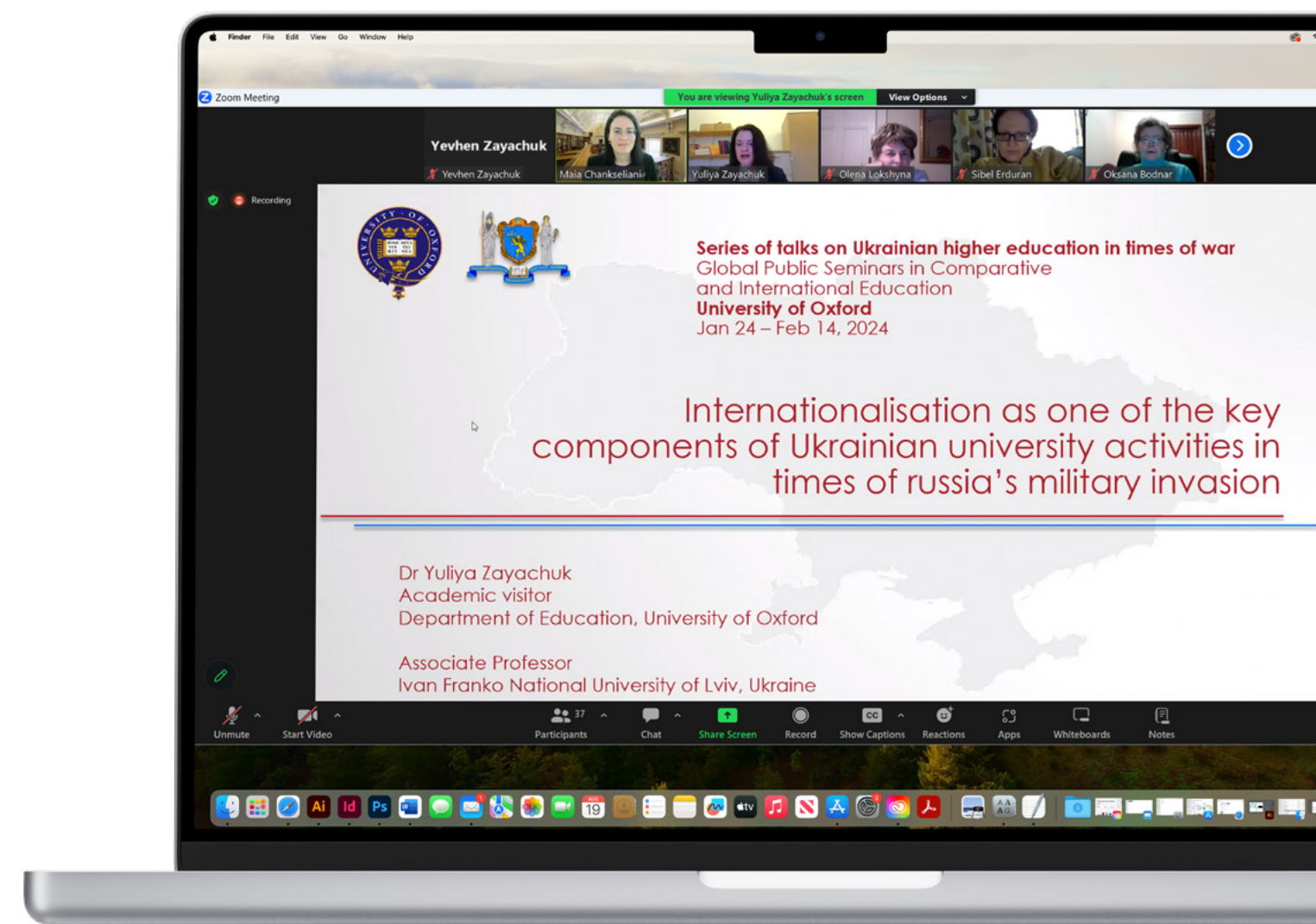
We hope this research will support the reintroduction of a national assessment of the Proficiency in English of pupils with EAL in England.

Professor Steve Strand

Ukrainian Higher Education in Times of War

Dr Yuliya Zayachuk, academic visitor at the Department of Education, initiated a series of talks on Ukrainian Higher Education in Times of War, organised with Dr Maia Chankseliani.

The series was launched as part of the Global Public Seminars on Comparative and International Education on UNESCO's International Day of Education, tying in with the theme of "learning for lasting peace". The talks explored how Ukrainian universities respond to complex challenges caused by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, while maintaining a constant commitment to their long-term academic role. The talks are available to watch on the Department's YouTube channel.





New centre for the learning and teaching of Chinese

The creation of a centre for the learning and teaching of Chinese at the Department is being funded thanks to a generous donation from John Swire & Sons Ltd. Headed up by a newly endowed Chair, the aim of this initiative is to transform the study of Chinese across the UK.

The endowment of the Chair, along with the seed-funding to establish the centre, will help the University to raise the profile of the world's second most spoken language through carrying out cutting-edge research, building stronger networks between the University and teaching practitioners, and improving access and opportunities for school pupils. The new centre is expected to become fully operational by 2026.

Alumna wins Women in Innovation Award

Sara Berkai, former MSc Child Development student, received the prestigious Women in Innovation Award from Innovate UK and a purple plaque, which has been placed in her honour at the Department.

After graduating in 2021, Sara set up 'Ambessa Play', a global social enterprise that encourages young children to learn Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths through play. Sara designs educational kits such as DIY torches that ignite curiosity, creativity and confidence.



Keynote for The Teaching Council in Ireland

Dr Liam Guilfoyle, Senior Departmental Lecturer in Science Education, gave a keynote lecture at an event hosted by The Teaching Council in Ireland.

The keynote outlined research on the Researchers in Residence Scheme, conducted in partnership with the Council. The scheme investigates the affordances and challenges of implementing a funding scheme to partner schools with researchers in Higher Education to support schools' and teachers' engagement with and in research. The research has shaped how the Teaching Council has reconceptualised and improved how it supports teachers' research engagement.



Cutting-edge research, building stronger networks between the University and teaching practitioners, and improving access and opportunities for school pupils.

MAJOR PROJECTS AND IMPACT



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Introduction

How does a community produce rigorous research that not only impacts educational policy and practice, but also maintains strong ethical principles and care for the wellbeing of its members?



As a Department, we have been asking ourselves this question, and in the past academic year, we focused on carrying out empirical research about research culture to answer it.

The Department has invested funds to support three projects led by a team of researchers from different career stages to examine the nature of research collaborations, ethical acknowledgement of research contributions and example research problems where funding may be limited. Collectively, the ongoing projects are helping us not only to understand our strengths in nurturing a healthy research culture that produces robust knowledge but also to identify potential areas of improvement as we reflect upon our practices systematically through evidence.

At the heart of our Department is a profound belief in the power of education to change lives. Many of our projects in this past year have focused on issues of justice and fairness in education. Some examples of these projects have been highlighted in this report. We are mindful of emergent and pressing challenges, such as those presented by artificial intelligence and climate change, exploring how education can help address such challenges. We continue to be engaged in a diverse range of research areas related to medical education, assessment standards, learning with technology in families, reasoning in STEM, teaching of foreign languages, and international student mobility among others. The Oxford Education Deanery, our research-engaged professional learning partnership, is a creative hub for a range of stakeholders, for instance, teachers and school leaders, and amplifies the dissemination of practical resources such as those that can be used for the teaching and learning of race, belonging, migration and empire.

How we do our research is as important as what research we do and why. Our research is inherently interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, necessitating the use of diversity of methods including quantitative and qualitative approaches. The Department's Methodological Hubs provide plenty of opportunities for researchers across the Department to constantly learn about new tools and techniques in carrying out research including design-based research for developing and testing educational interventions in real-world settings and participatory action research. Our work also delves into fundamental philosophical questions such as what is meant by "educational research", exemplifying an important aspect of our reflective spirit in doing research.



We are mindful of emergent and pressing challenges.

Professor Sibel Erduran



The Department strives to foster a collaborative spirit, locally, nationally and internationally. Our researchers work hand-in-hand with individuals, groups and organisations in various settings, ensuring that their research findings have real-world applications. For example, locally, research on neurodivergence-inclusive learning engages students, educators and staff across various departments and units. Nationally, charities have collaborated with our researchers, for instance in developing tools to measure the success of care leavers. Internationally, our research has engaged communities to enhance education policies and practices in low-income countries. Despite the depth and breadth of research activity, the Department is not just a hub of academic activity; it is a place where the future of education is continually being reshaped, thanks to the collective effort of researchers, students and professional staff.

Professor Sibel Erduran
Director for Research

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Professor Sibel Erduran

Children's Information Project

The Children's Information Project is a five-year project funded by the Nuffield Foundation Strategic Fund to improve Local Authorities' use of information about children.

Lots of information is collected about the children, young people and families involved with children's services but this information is not always used to best meet the needs and interests of those children, young people and families. This project supports four local authorities to test the hypothesis that better use of information can drive improvements in children's outcomes. The resulting ideas and findings will then be tested with a wider Learning Network of 20 local authorities.

The project aims to improve understanding of how children's information, including but not limited to statistical data, might best be collected, collated, interpreted and used. Core to this is to ensure that diverse voices, including those of children, young people, families, and practitioners, are heard more clearly within children's information, are listened to, and influence how the information is gathered, shared, processed and used.

The project will examine whether and how these improvements can inform local authority children's services, leading to reduced inequalities, greater cost effectiveness, and better outcomes for the children, young people and families that they serve. These impacts are sought both in our four Learning Sites and through impact on wider policy and practice.

The project team has set up an Information Use Project in each site with commitment to making demonstrable progress on ethical and effective uses of information. Continued work is required to achieve testable improvement, however, we are developing a core set of transferable approaches that we think can credibly achieve the outcomes expected.

The project is led by the Rees Centre in the Department of Education, together with researchers at Sussex University, LSE, Manchester Metropolitan, UCL and Birmingham University. Research in Practice are partners in the project as are the four Local Authorities of North Yorkshire, Hampshire, Oldham and Rochdale. The lead researchers in this large team are Professor Leon Feinstein (Oxford), Professor Lisa Holmes and Professor Elaine Sharland (Sussex) and Dr Polly Vizard (LSE). Dez Holmes leads the work at Research in Practice.

Children of the 2020s

The Children of the 2020s study is a new nationally representative birth cohort study of babies born in England at the start of the 2020s, commissioned by the Department for Education. It will answer important scientific and policy questions about the family, early education and childcare determinants of children's cognitive and social-emotional development during early childhood, and their early school success.

The study is being led by Professor Pasco Fearon (UCL/ University of Cambridge) in partnership with Ipsos, and Dr Sandra Mathers (Oxford) is a study collaborator. Sandra is leading the strand of the study which gathers data on children's early education and childcare provision. The UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies and Birkbeck, University of London are also study collaborators.

The study sample has been drawn from HMRC Child Benefit records. Approximately 8,500 families have been invited to take part. The study is a five-wave longitudinal survey study of children from nine months to five years. The first wave of data collection was face-to-face and took place when study children were nine months old (Wave 1). A second face-to-face data collection will take place at age three (Wave 3), beginning in Autumn 2025. Non-face-to-face modes will be administered using a sequential mixed mode design with online and telephone surveys when children are aged two (Wave 2), four (Wave 4) and five (Wave 5).

Children
of the 2020s

Data collection includes assessments of child development; family socio-demographic characteristics; family structure; health and mental health; the home learning environment; and formal and informal early education and childcare provision. Additional data is being collected using an innovative smartphone app called BabySteps. This enables rich developmental and home environment measures to be gathered between study waves, via questionnaires and video and audio recordings. Children's early education and childcare providers will be interviewed at Waves 3 and 4. The study also includes ongoing linkages to parent and baby education and health records. Alongside project reports, each wave of data collection will generate high-quality, cleaned, and fully weighted datasets which are made available for analysis by approved external researchers.

The study will provide important information to guide policy and practice, and help inform the case for investment in early years provision and family services.

Children of the 2020s will provide robust, up-to-date research evidence on:

- How children born in the early 2020s are developing from age 9 months to 5 years
- The challenges and inequalities they and their families face
- The factors and mechanisms in the early years which affect later outcomes, including child characteristics, the home environment, and children's experiences in early education and childcare
- When developmental gaps appear, and the specific risks and protective factors.



Comparing UK policies, inequalities and outcomes in post-16 education and training



Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, this project examines post-16 Education and Training (E&T) in the UK. It analyses the divergent policy approaches to E&T across the four devolved nations and the implications for student pathways, experiences, labour market outcomes, and social inequalities within and between the four nations. The project is led by the Centre for Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) in collaboration with the Education Policy Institute (EPI).

The UK post-16 E&T landscape, particularly at levels 2-4, is a complex space covering a wide range of different offerings that cut across academic and vocational classroom-based education, as well as apprenticeships and employer-provided training. This is complicated by the fact that, since devolution, each UK nation manages its own E&T. Provision is shaped by different policy choices rooted in varying political, social, and economic contexts, labour market structures, and agendas. This means that each national system has increasingly different configurations of constituent institutions and E&T organisations, varying relationships with market logic, diverse localised ecosystems, and different roles for employers. This has significant implications for individuals, society, and the economic resilience of each jurisdiction.

This project, therefore, aims to gain a deeper understanding of this complex landscape, the key policy issues and challenges facing E&T, and the kinds of structures that best support young people's transitions from education to employment. It will develop policy recommendations about the best approaches to E&T system-design that will meet the needs of the economy, enable people to have successful careers and fulfilling lives, and lead to a more just and equitable society.

The study involves a mixed methods approach that combines comparative policy analysis, in depth case studies of six industries, quantitative analysis of participation and outcomes data, and engagement with a youth advisory group to ensure the voices of young people are represented. Emerging key findings highlight the damaging impact of significant policy churn and associated inequalities between nations. For example, Wales has the highest share of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment, or training in the UK at 11% of the age group and significantly fewer 16-18 year olds are taking apprenticeships in England (20%) compared to the other nations (e.g. 37% in Scotland; 52% in Northern Ireland). Read more in the interim report published in January 2024.

The project team (Dr James Robson, Dr Mariela Neagu, Professor Susan James Relly, Dr Luke Sibieta) is now working with policymakers across all four UK nations to co-develop and implement key recommendations related to E&T system coordination, funding structures, participation, wider evaluation of E&T pathways, and national management of outcomes data.

Emerging key findings highlight the damaging impact of significant policy churn and associated inequalities between nations.



Empowering school leaders in Kenya through remote coaching technologies



The goal of the Empowering School Leaders project is to develop, test, and implement context-appropriate mobile phone-accessed technologies to support the growth of emerging school leaders in the most marginalised communities in Kenya. The project is a collaboration between Professor Rob Klassen from the Department, education charity Dignitas, spin-out EdTech company Teacher Success Platform, and the Kenyan Ministry of Education.

The foundational research for the project (2015-2021) developed and tested a digital scenario-based learning intervention that uses interactive classroom simulations to enhance the classroom readiness of beginning teachers in the UK and Australia. From 2021-2023, the team worked with Kenyan education charity Dignitas, whose work has benefitted more than 6,000 school leaders in nearly 1,500 schools in Kenya and South Sudan. Working together, they co-developed a remote coaching tool called LeadNow, designed to measure and nudge competency gains for school leaders. The technology was recognised with a QS Reimagine Education Gold Medal for Breakthrough Technology Innovation in Education (2022) and a robust research base supports the effectiveness of the intervention.

The current phase of the work, titled Transforming Schooling into Learning (TSIL), is funded by the Oxford Social Sciences Business Engagement Seed Fund, a funding scheme designed to promote mutually beneficial relationships between social science researchers and external stakeholders. The team has expanded to include Thomas Godfrey-Faussett, a DPhil from the Department, and Liz Maxwell, an Educational Consultant from Teacher Success Platform.

The project is building a competency framework and new scenario-based learning content for the government-sponsored TSIL initiative focused on two under-served Kenyan counties, Kisumu and Makueni counties. This collaboration aligns the project with national education policies and fosters a sense of ownership among government actors.

The TSIL project has already demonstrated a significant impact on teaching practices and learning outcomes in Kenyan schools. The overall reach for the project includes 50 schools in two remote counties, 200 teachers and school leaders, and nearly 18,000 children. In Phase One, local experts collaborated with the team to develop new modules focusing on effective teaching, improving teaching and learning, and effective leadership. These modules provided training and coaching resources, tailored to different stakeholder groups. Positive results from these initial sessions underscored the SBL approach's effectiveness in enhancing a competency-based curriculum implementation.



Q3. You are Senior Teacher at Upendo Primary school and feel overwhelmed by the idea of finding and integrating digital resources into your school. You worry that locating suitable materials online and adapting them for classroom use would be too time-consuming amidst your already demanding schedule.

Rate the appropriateness of the following responses →

In Phase Two, an expert concordance panel determined the scoring key for each set of responses. This phase involved refining the scenarios based on quantitative and qualitative analyses. Phase Three focused on analysing concordance data to identify and revise underperforming items, leading to comprehensive refinement in Phase Four. The project is supported by the Kenyan Ministry of Education-hosted Technical Working Group, thereby aligning the project with national education policies and fostering a sense of ownership among government actors.

Extensive testing in the next year in Kusumu and Makueni counties will refine the competency frameworks and content, making the technology context-appropriate for a range of Kenyan settings. The project also plans to disseminate the tested models and resources to a broader spectrum of end users, including government practitioners and other stakeholders, to enhance the nationwide implementation of the competency-based curriculum. Next steps include developing LeaderCoach, a low-bandwidth AI-supported interactive chatbot, to provide coaching solutions tailored to the needs of emerging school leaders in remote, low-connectivity areas.

An Early Career Researcher's Project

Belonging to the Difficult Past: What can history education offer to racially marginalised youth?



History curricula are becoming more diverse. Movements like Black Lives Matter, Rhodes Must Fall, and the 1619 Project have all developed learning materials that reflect diverse experiences. However, even when curricula appear to tick all the diversity boxes, students still end up feeling like outsiders in their own classrooms and countries. My British Academy project is thinking about why this might be, and what educators can do about it.

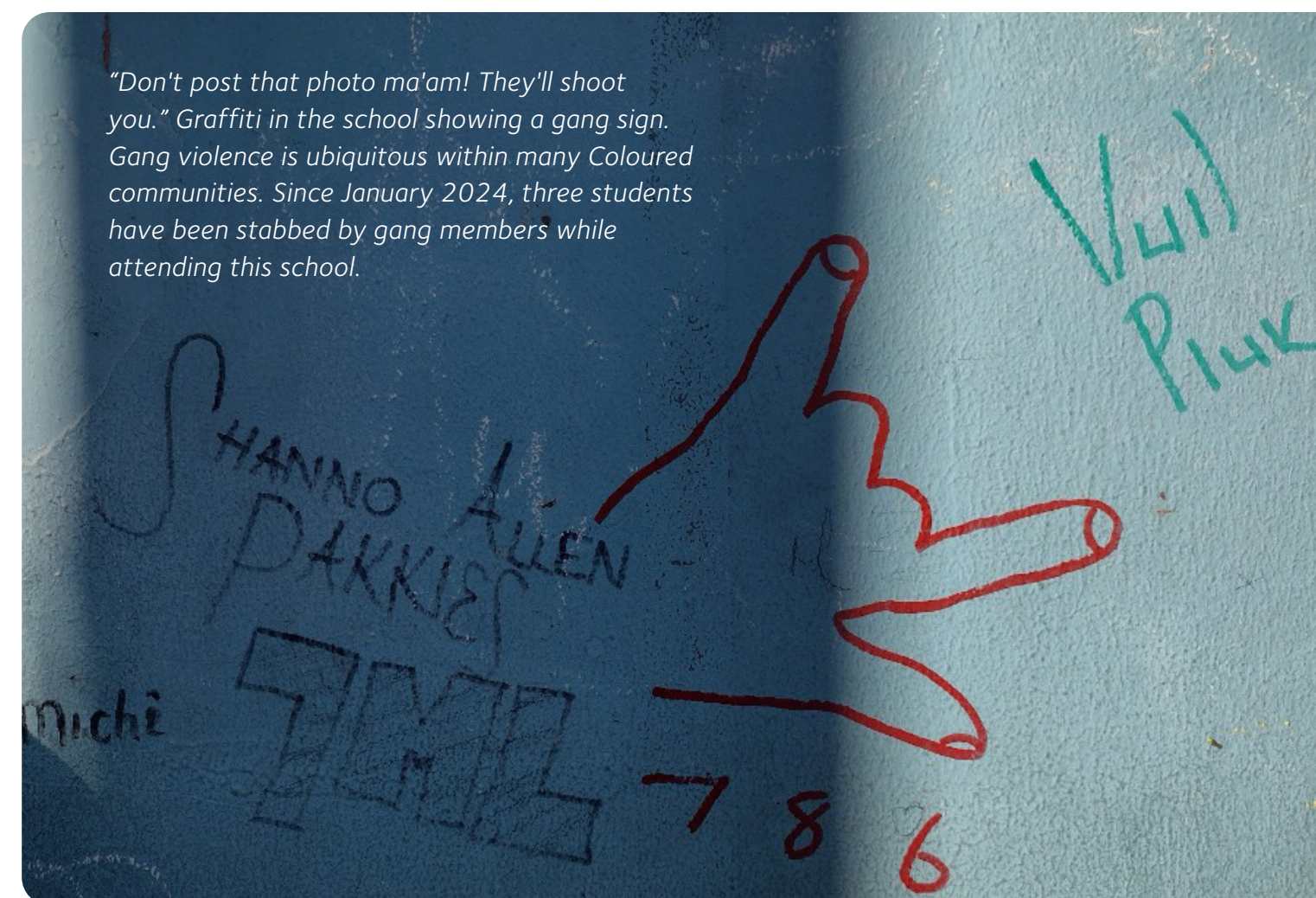
During my PhD I conducted a 10-month ethnographic study of four Grade 9 history classrooms in Cape Town, each representing a different racial demographic. The students that most perplexed me were those from a majority Coloured school. Coloured people – classified as a distinct racial group during apartheid – came only slightly above Black people in the hierarchy of racial privilege. I was therefore surprised that despite discrimination under apartheid, and a post-apartheid national curriculum which foregrounds racial equality, the students in this school held fast to their belief in racial hierarchies. They reminisced about an apartheid they had never experienced, and aspired to escape South Africa.

Rather than engaging with how students felt alienated in a democratic South Africa, I initially dismissed their apartheid nostalgia as a racism that not even a progressive history curriculum could counter. However, over time I started to notice the ways in which the curriculum gaslit the experiences of Coloured youth post-apartheid. Experiences of sky-rocketing poverty, unemployment, and gang violence were lost within narratives of 'rainbow-nation' progress. If these students were taught a history that did not whitewash over the social crises taking place in Coloured communities, would Coloured youth feel more connected to a democratic South Africa?

My current project explores these ideas of history and belonging through an ethnography of a majority-Coloured school in Johannesburg. I am interested in what students learn about South African history both at home and in school, and the ways in which Coloured identities and experiences entwine or diverge from the national narrative. Through daily observations of history classes, interviews with teachers, students, parents, and class discussions in extra-curricular history clubs, I am exploring the nuances of how historical understanding contributes to young people's ideas about their place in the world.

It is clear from this research that many students are deeply interested in historical questions that affect their communities, even as they disengage from history classes. Yet, in the absence of a formal curriculum that can explain their lived reality, students turn either to the memories of elders or the mythologies of gangs. As I work with students to historicise the violence and decline of historically Coloured communities, we inevitably subvert textbook narratives. How this leads students to feel about their place in South Africa is yet to be seen.

Dr Natasha Robinson





Approaches to setting GCSE standards

Funded by Qualifications Wales, the exams regulator for Wales, this project looked at how standards are embedded throughout the lifecycle of a qualification and how GCSEs would change if a different approach to standards were taken.

No approach to setting standards is perfect, each has pros and cons, and different implications for fairness. Often stakeholders mistakenly believe that GCSEs are norm-referenced, where candidates rank is compared to the population of students. In fact, the project was unable to identify a norm-referenced qualification anywhere in the world. GCSEs are attainment-referenced. Candidates receive grades that reflect their holistic attainment in the qualification at a standard which is comparable with the attainment required for that grade in previous year's qualifications. To achieve this, when setting grade boundaries, senior examiners are guided by both statistical information and their scrutiny of candidates' performance. The advantage of this approach is that it allows the performance context to be considered, for example whether an examination is harder or easier than those set in the past. This is a matter of fairness to students.

Many stakeholders have argued for a criterion-referenced approach to standard setting. They believe that this would be more transparent – candidates would receive grades that tell us whether they met pre-determined performance criteria. Indeed, the original intention in the 1980s was that GCSEs would be norm-referenced. However, despite attempts to define increasingly specific criteria, there were issues with the consistency of teacher judgements which risked unfairness to students and this plan was abandoned.

Attainment Referencing

Overall judgment about the position of the grade boundaries using a range of evidence about students' attainment:



Quality of students' work



Statistics



Difficulty of assessments



Research

This research was conducted to inform debate about approaches to standard setting in the new GCSEs being designed to assess the Curriculum for Wales. Standard setting is a complex and technical process so to aid stakeholder understanding one strand of the project involved the production of a series of podcasts. The first podcast explained the pros and cons of criterion-referencing. The second podcast debunked the myth that GCSE are norm-referenced and explained how standards are really set. And the third podcast explained why it is that GCSE grade boundaries change from one examination series to the next.

The research team comprised Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Michelle Meadows, Dr Stuart Cadwallader, Dr Lena Gray, Professor Gordon Stobart, Thomas Godfrey-Faussett, Candace Debnam, Nuo Chen and Luke Saville.



AWARDING COMMITTEE



Information considered by the committee includes:

- Question papers and mark schemes from this year and last
- Students' work close to the cut-scores
- Statistical data
- Oral reports from the Lead Examiners & Moderators
- Relevant research

Excluded Lives: The political economies of school exclusion and their consequences

The main objective of this four and a half year Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded research project was to develop a multi-disciplinary understanding of the different political economies and consequences of school exclusion across the UK.

In this research, home international comparisons of historical and current policy, practice and legal frameworks relating to school exclusion were conducted for the first time.

The research has shown that permanent school exclusion has long and short-term consequences in terms of academic achievement, wellbeing, mental health, and future employment prospect. Rates of permanent and fixed term exclusions are higher in England than the rest of the UK and disproportionately affect young people with special educational needs and disabilities, who are in care, who live in poverty, and pupils from Gypsy and Roma, Traveller of Irish heritage or Black Caribbean ethnic groups. The project team has had significant contact throughout the Excluded Lives project with policy teams from the Exclusions and Suspensions unit in the Department for Education and the violence reduction team in the Home Office, resulting in changes in key wordings in government guidance on exclusions and behaviour.

The team are now working collaboratively with leaders from the Association for School and College Leaders, National Association of Headteachers and the Local Government Association to develop materials aimed at UK government policy makers, local authorities/trusts, school leaders, practitioners, families and young people setting out the key findings and guidance on policy implementation and the implications of exclusions at all levels.



The Principal Investigators at the Department are Dr Ian Thompson and Emeritus Professor Harry Daniels. More information and details of the expansive research team are available on the Excluded Lives website.

Lit in Colour: What effect does studying a set text by an author of colour have on students?

In 2019 Pearson introduced a new set of diverse set texts to their Pearson Edexcel English Literature GCSE.

The Lit in Colour Pioneers Pilot programme aims to remove the barriers that prevent teachers from switching to more diverse set texts on the Pearson Edexcel specification. Namely, the expense of buying new books, the lack of an existing set of resources, the lack of knowledge of the text, and the lack of time to invest in developing new knowledge, resources and schemes of work.

This programme represented an unprecedented opportunity to examine what the effects are of studying a text by an author of colour in the UK. Pearson and Penguin Books funded a mixed methods research project commissioned by the Lit in Colour campaign to look at student and teacher experiences, recruited from among participants in the Pioneers Pilot. The research team is composed of Dr Velda Elliott, Dr Kyle Davison, Danielle Watkis and Ben Hart.

Students and teachers who were studying one of the Pioneers texts for GCSE completed surveys before and after the teaching of the text. These surveys included measures for empathy, attitudes to school and to English specifically, reading frequency and a measure of cultural competence. Separately 10 schools participated in interviews with teachers and pairs of students to gather qualitative experiences around the texts.

This research is the first to show empirical quantitative evidence of the impact of studying a text by an author of colour at GCSE, drawing on an anti-racist framework which links together cognitive empathy, prosocial behaviour and school belonging. It will speak to teachers and schools who have been considering changing their modern set text for GCSE English Literature to one by an author of colour but who have not yet taken the plunge. It also has the potential

to impact policy level curriculum change and to stimulate other exam boards to follow suit in supporting schools to diversify their set texts.





Repair-Ed: Reparative Futures of Education

Repair-Ed (Reparative Futures of Education) is a five-year research project funded by UK Research and Innovation. It involves working with 10 primary schools, including state and private, and their surrounding communities across Bristol. The team want to understand the nature of educational injustices within and between different parts of the city as well as how school-communities understand forms of redress and repair for the future.

The project focuses on racial and class injustices in education as well as their intersections with other forms of social inequality. The idea of repair and redress requires us to understand how such injustices have been created, experienced and resisted in the past as much as in the present, to guide action for the future. Through community partnerships and participatory research, we hope to make a lasting contribution to knowledge and action for educational justice in Bristol.

The project is funded by UK Research and Innovation. It's led by a team of researchers, guided by a steering group and advisory board. The Repair-Ed Research team is: Professor Arathi Sriprakash, Dr Alice Willatt, Claire Neaves, Dr Annabel Wilson, Ishani Parekh, Asia Guiliani and Priyanka Soni.

The project aims to:

- Deepen understandings of experiences of schooling, past and present, across the city's geographies of deprivation and advantage
- Build a shared recognition of educational injustices to understand our collective responsibility
- Work with schools and communities to explore what reparation in Bristol's school system might look like and how it might offer new reconstructive approaches to educational justice



What does the research involve?

- School-based research – We are spending time in schools, carrying out interviews and focus groups, and drawing on participatory methods to explore how geographies of opportunity across the city shape educational injustices. We are engaging children (Key Stage 2, aged 7–11), head teachers, teachers, and teaching assistants.
- Place-based research – Drawing on participatory mapping, walking methods and interview approaches, we are researching with former school pupils and 'community experts' to learn more about the political economies surrounding each school (e.g. urban infrastructures, services, housing, employment, etc) and how these shape educational opportunities for children.
- Creating a People's History of Schooling – Through reflective interviews and participatory approaches we are exploring memories of childhood experiences of primary schooling in Bristol. The People's History of Schooling will bring together interconnected accounts of racial and class injustice in education, their intergenerational echoes, and the possibilities for reparative redress.
- City-wide dialogues, workshops and events – Working with creative and deliberative dialogic approaches we are bringing different groups (teachers, parents, community organisations, students, school leaders) together to build collective responsibility and shared recognition of education injustices and co-create ideas for redress and repair.



Responsible Knowledge Exchange, Engagement and Impact 2021-24

Across the UK and internationally, research is subject to careful monitoring and increasingly principled evaluation. While standards exist for responsible research and innovation practice, equivalent evidence-informed expectations have not been articulated in relation to Knowledge Exchange Engagement and Impact (KEEI) activities.

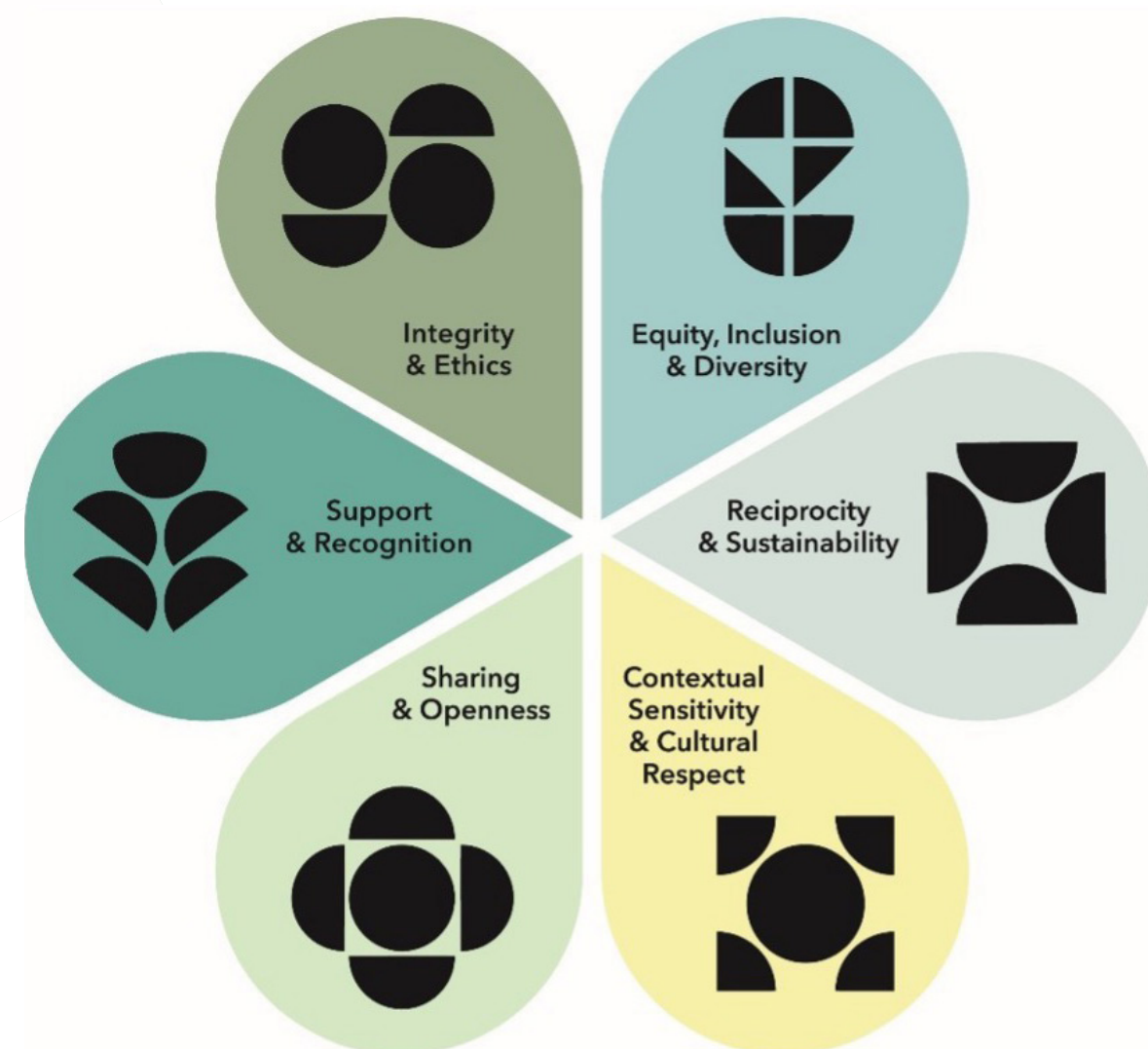
The Responsible Knowledge Exchange, Engagement and Impact 2021-24 (RKEEI) project has undertaken research through literature reviews, interviews and workshops bringing together KEEI professionals, senior leadership and researchers at all career stages to conceptualise RKEEI and co-create a framework to support responsible KEEI practices. The framework underlines commitments to: 1) Ethics and integrity; 2) Equity, inclusion, diversity and belonging; 3) Sustainability and reciprocity; 4) Contextual sensitivity and cultural respect; 5) Sharing and openness; 6) Support and recognition.

The project has generated a RKEEI Principles document which outlines six principles reflecting the dimensions of the framework and, derived from them, 21 more concrete commitments for institutions, researchers and professionals to adopt the principles in their practice. A training resource is also being prepared to dovetail with research practice training

across the University. These resources will be complemented by a reflection, self-assessment and planning tool tailored to researchers, professional staff and organisational leadership. Finally, a journal article will elaborate on project design and will discuss in more detail the analytical insights and conceptualisations behind the framework, as well as the enabling factors and challenges of RKEEI across finance, strategy, operation, recruitment, capacity-building, training, evaluation, external relationship management and other individual attributes.

The project has received very positive feedback across Oxford and beyond. It is having impact on policy and practice at Oxford, including in the refreshed Public and Community Engagement with Research Strategy and the forthcoming Research Practice training developed by the University's Research Practice Group. A series of meetings with the steering

The framework underlines commitments to:



group and sub-groups are also being conducted to inform the refreshed Knowledge Exchange Strategy of the University. More broadly, the project will provide recommendations for an expanded conceptualisation of responsible research and innovation nationally and internationally, to include KEEI, and for embedding RKEEI into organisational strategies and professional development programmes.

This project is co-led by: Professor Alis Oancea and Aileen Marshall-Brown with funding from Higher Education Innovation Fund, ESRC Impact Acceleration Account, Wellcome Institutional Strategic Support Fund, and the Research England Research Culture Fund. The project team comprises of Dr Juliet Scott-Barrett, Wanlin Cai, Lavinia Kamphausen, Claire Macleod, Liz Polding and Szilvi Watson.

The project will provide recommendations for an expanded conceptualisation of responsible research and innovation nationally and internationally.



Project FutuRISE (Future-Oriented Learning for Inclusive Science Education)

Project FutuRISE was funded jointly by ESRC Impact Acceleration Accounts and EU Horizon 2020, and it was implemented as part of the FEDORA Project in partnership with the Museum of Natural History in Oxford.

The Principal Investigator was Professor Sibel Erduran and Co-Investigator was Dr Olga Ioannidou. The project extended the approaches developed in the FEDORA Project to engage local and regional secondary schools in future-oriented science education.

The overall objective of the project was to support students in dealing with timely and pressing issues related to science and society. There is an increasing need for future citizens to acquire skills that are required to grapple with societal challenges such as climate change. Workshops were conducted in the museum and students were taught future-scaffolding skills needed to construct visions of the future that empower action in the present in a responsible and sustainable way. Future-scaffolding skills include scenario thinking, systems thinking, thinking beyond the realm of possibilities, action competence, risk as well as uncertainty and management of complexity.

Apart from future-scaffolding skills, Project FutuRISE aimed to foster pupils' engagement in activism, taking pupils' identities such as gender as well as their career aspirations into consideration when teaching science, particularly in transition from secondary education to tertiary education or employment. Lesson resources have been designed to capitalise on such features in enriching the teaching and learning of science in an inclusive way, particularly in the context of climate change education.



Impact of disadvantage on preschool children's trajectories

The project “Secondary Analysis of SEED Data Related to Disadvantage”, undertaken by Emeritus Professor Edward Melhuish and Dr Julian Gardiner, was funded by NESTA and used data from the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED). It explored the impact of early childhood education and care and economic and non-economic aspects of the home environment on children's outcomes at the start of primary school.

A broader understanding of child disadvantage considers the home environment in ways that are not primarily economic. The report produced a measure of non-economic disadvantage considering both home and economic disadvantage as predictors of children's outcomes.

Home and economic disadvantage were largely independent. Both were associated with poorer cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes at the start of primary school, with children who experienced both types of disadvantages most strongly affected. Also, the amount of and quality of group early education and care affected children differently dependent on the nature of disadvantage. Thus, the effects of the quantity and quality of the early education and care are moderated by child disadvantage.

These results indicate that a perspective considering both home and economic disadvantage may help formulate policy for early childhood services. Economic disadvantage is more straightforward to document but more information about home disadvantage is needed. Once an effective and consistent strategy to learn more about home environments is developed, initiatives to improve the home environment for children can be better targeted.

Some recent developments include the Department for Education's funding for the National Children's Bureau, National Literacy Trust, Peebles, and the Foundation Years Trust to deliver a range of projects to support the home learning environment, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Furthermore, the quality of early childhood education and care matters most for disadvantaged children. There should be further consideration of how early education and care is provided for children with differing experiences of disadvantage and of how to enhance quality. In particular, involving more staff with higher qualifications, giving them more opportunities for continued professional development (CPD), and enabling them to think about training and career progression, which together with better pay, should limit staff turnover.

Supportive activities for early childhood education and care such as inspections and staff development, should focus on supporting disadvantaged children. The analyses reveal that structural factors affect early education and care quality and are amenable to policy and legislative action. These structural factors include setting size, age range, staff qualifications, staff turnover, staff CPD and training.

nesta



New Project Awards

Building Futures: Establishing a Collaborative Education Initiative in Kenya

Business Engagement Seed Fund,
University of Oxford
Professor Robert Klassen

Belonging To The Difficult Past: The Potential of History Education to Foster Positive Belonging Among Racially Minoritized Youth

British Academy
Dr Natasha Robinson

Centre for Global Higher Education 2024-2029

Economic & Social Research Council
Dr David Mills

Effects of Interventions on Protection/Recovery from COVID Impacts

Education Endowment Foundation
Dr Ariel Lindorff

Engagement with Legal Apprenticeships: Examining Best Practice for School Outreach Initiatives

Edge Foundation
Dr James Robson

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Mathematical Reasoning Programme for Year 2 Pupils Using an Online Professional Development Training Model

Education Endowment Foundation
Professor Gabriel Stylianides

Evaluation of the Talking Time Programme

Education Endowment Foundation
and Department For Education
Dr Sandra Mathers

Evaluating the Impact of Talking Time on Language-Supporting Practice

The Nuffield Foundation
Dr Sandra Mathers

Excluded Lives (OPEN Workshop)

Oxford Policy Engagement Network,
University of Oxford
Dr Ian Thompson

Exploring 'Tech for Good' in Education: Practitioner Experiences of Developing Socially Impactful Technology

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Professor Rebecca Eynon

Exploring Generational Differences in the Use of Gender-Inclusive Language Amongst Medical Students and Staff in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Dr Debbie Aitken

Exploring the Role of Creative Participatory Methods in Understanding the Lived Experiences and Afterlives of Educational Injustices

Participatory Research Seed Fund,
University of Oxford
Dr Alice Willatt

Generative AI Video Resources

University of Oxford
Dr Jeremy Knox

How Can We Teach More Inclusive Histories in African Schools?

Africa Oxford (AfOx) Catalyst Grant,
University of Oxford
Dr Abigail Branford

How to Change the Past: Learning from Shifting Policy in African History Education

Fixed Term Researcher Fund, Social
Sciences Division, University of Oxford
Dr Abigail Branford

Investigating Expert Views about the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Science and Implications for Education

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Professor Sibel Erduran

Learning in Families through Technology (LiFT) 3.0

Soremartec S.A
Professor Victoria Murphy

Language Learning through Technology

KE Seed Fund, University of Oxford
Dr Elizabeth Wonnacott

Measuring Outcomes for Carers

OPEN Seed Fund, University of Oxford
Dr Nikki Luke

Mental Health in Schools with Diversity. Access and Barriers to Mental Health Support for Pupils: Monitoring, Need and Priorities

NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical
Research Centre
Dr Julia Badger

New Approaches to Teaching the History of the British Empire

ESRC Grand Union Postdoctoral
Fellowship
Dr Abigail Branford

Pupil Interactions and Networks in Special Schools

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Dr Julia Badger

Reparative Futures of Education

UK Research and Innovation/ European
Research Council
Professor Arathi Sriprakash

Reparative Futures of Education - Engagement Fellowship

Social Sciences Engagement Fellowship,
University of Oxford
Professor Arathi Sriprakash

Rethinking Teacher Recruitment: New Approaches to Attracting Prospective STEM Teachers

Economic & Social Research Council
Professor Robert Klassen

Risks and Benefits of Digitalisation of Education from Perspectives of the Users, Producers, and Regulators

British Educational Research Association
Dr Lulu Shi

Skills for Sustainable Farming Futures

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Dr James Robson

System-Thinking Approaches to Tertiary Education Policymaking

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Dr Xin Xu

The Five-Year Itch: Developing a Proof-of-Concept Intervention to Retain Early Career Teachers

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Professor Robert Klassen

Understanding and Supporting Neurodivergent-inclusive Teaching at Oxford

University of Oxford
Dr Xin Xu

Unlocking Impact: The Power of Writing Workshops for Doctoral and Early Career Health Professions Education Scholars' Development in Southern Africa

British Academy
Dr Danica Sims

What Matters to Students: Co-Producing Solutions to Level Up

Public Policy Challenge Fund, Oxford
Policy Engagement, University of Oxford
Dr James Robson

Who Influences the Career Choices of Young People in Care? Vocational Identity Formation in the Absence of Family Support and Influence

John Fell Fund, University of Oxford
Dr Mariela Neagu



TEACHING AND LEARNING



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Introduction

In 2023 we welcomed a record number of new students: 436 across our nine programmes. Students came from 49 countries, from Argentina to New Zealand, Bangladesh to Uzbekistan, Lesotho, Lebanon and Lithuania, to join the community in Norham Gardens. At the same time our first ever cohort of MSc Medical Education were completing their two-year part-time degrees successfully.



It's been an outstanding year for quality assurance in the Department. We celebrated an exceptionally positive outcome from the periodic review of the MSc Applied Linguistics for Language Teaching. The review panel had highlighted ways that the course had been designed to support part-time students, including the "Appetizer, Main Course, Dessert, and After Dinner Mint" teaching model. Perhaps the first time an 'after dinner mint' teaching model had been discussed at a Divisional Quality Assurance Committee! We also celebrated an excellent outcome from the PGCE Ofsted inspection, retaining our 'Outstanding' rating. More importantly the inspectors recognised the strength of our partnership with local schools that underpins the entire programme, and the principled approach to teacher education that we follow.

One exciting development in the teaching and learning in the Department is the approval of our first two PG Diplomas – in teaching students with English as an Additional Language, and in Early Childhood Education. These diplomas follow a new distance learning format, after a summer residential week, enabling a much wider range of students to access the teaching and expertise the Department has to offer. They focus on the practical application of research to students' own contexts, while maintaining our high academic standards. The staff who have worked so hard to develop these fantastic new qualifications are looking forward to welcoming the first cohort of students in autumn 2025.

We are also preparing a range of new programmes associated with the wonderful gift from the Swire Foundation that will fund our new Centre for Chinese Learning and Teaching. As well as a pathway on the MSc in Learning and Teaching which will focus on Mandarin teaching, we are developing a new PGCE in Mandarin, as well as a part-time distance learning PG Diploma in the Teaching of Chinese. The first cohort on the MSc will begin next academic year, with the other programmes intended to take their first students in Michaelmas 2026. But there's a lot of hard work to do before then!

We have a terrific Academic Administration team, who do so much work behind the scenes. This year among other things they have worked with the University in the revamp of the online admissions system – and more challengingly, helped the academic staff get to grips with it. They are key people in our students' lives, keeping the cogs of teaching and learning turning in the Department. Together we work to provide our students with an empowering educational journey so that they can change the world for the better.

Associate Professor Velda Elliott
Director for Graduate Studies

“ Student Experience Emma Ashton

Doing a PGCE is not just about a year of training to become a teacher—it is the entry point into education and a major decision to embark on a teaching career. For me, it was also a decision to retrain and return to university as a mature student.

After spending the last 20 years in a successful senior career in marketing, was I completely sure I was making the right decision to enter education, with all its challenging headlines, and choose Oxford? Absolutely not! However, I am delighted to confirm that I made the right choice, as both teaching and Oxford have surpassed my expectations.

What attracted me to Oxford was the opportunity to be trained by the very experts who write the textbooks, and there is an undeniable buzz in that. I was pleasantly surprised to find these experts not only approachable but also genuinely invested in the wellbeing of their students. It has been a pleasure to train with the English PGCE cohort. They are a dedicated, passionate and lively group entering the teaching profession, and they pass

my litmus test: would I be happy to have my kids taught by them? Definitely yes—they would be in very good hands.

The well-designed and carefully considered programme of study, combined with excellent relationships with quality partner schools, provides a robust foundation for teaching and sets the stage for continuous professional development. I have enjoyed the opportunity to develop my academic specialism, build research-informed practice and cultivate the skills to be a reflective practitioner. Feeling well-trained after an excellent gestation period, I am now ready to venture into the big, wide world of teaching with the best possible start in life from Oxford.



New Doctorates

Adamseged Abebe

Education and Ethnic Conflict: A Study of Politicization of Ethnic Identities and Loss of Hope in Ethiopia
Supervisors: Jason Todd and David Mills

Fatima Ahsan

Change in ELT Practitioners' Conceptualising of Teaching and Learning: Voices from Higher Education in Pakistan
Supervisors: Ian Thompson and Helen Walter

Yousef Aleghfeli

The Educational Resilience of Unaccompanied and Separated Children
Supervisors: Leon Feinstein and Sonali Nag

Dominik Bulla

Achievement motivation amongst Rwandan secondary students. An empirical investigation of its internal and external nomological network.
Supervisors: Stephen Strand and Lars-Erik Malmberg

Lisa Cherry

How do care experienced adults who were also excluded from school make sense of belonging?
Supervisors: Alis Oancea and Nigel Fancourt

Kyle Davison

Academic help-seeking interactions in primary school classrooms
Supervisor: Lars-Erik Malmberg

Rachel Gardner

The development and evaluation of a preschool language enrichment programme: Can a practitioner-delivered, multi-tiered, short-term intervention improve early language outcomes?
Supervisors: Charles Hulme and Sandra Mathers

Arzhia Habibi

Expressions of Global Citizenship Education in Chinese Higher Education
Supervisors: Alis Oancea and Nigel Fancourt

Lucy Hunt

Learning to navigate 'unsettlement': young refugees' (re-)engagement with post-15 education in Greece
Supervisors: David Mills and Joanna McIntyre

Rowland Anthony Imperial

A Critical-Ethical Politics for Transnational Commercial English Language Teaching: Conjectures, Contradictions, Affects, and Possible Just Futures
Supervisor: Heath Rose

Bernard Lee

Jesuit Higher Educational Leadership: A Case Study of Universities in Asia
Supervisors: Liam Gearon and Steven Puttick

Soyoung Lee

Academic self-formation in local and international higher education: Evidence from South Korean students
Supervisors: Simon Marginson and Steven Puttick

Isaac Lim

Interprofessional Care: A Sociology of Expertise Perspective
Supervisor: Ian Thompson

Tiarnach McDermott

Mapping the Evolving Landscape of Child-Computer Interaction Research: Structures and Processes of Knowledge (Re)Production
Supervisors: James Robson, Lars-Erik Malmberg and Niall Winters

Anay Nangalia

How do teacher educators engage with Indian education policies?
Supervisors: Nigel Fancourt and Diane Mayer

Amanda Nutall

Becoming, being, belonging: teachers' experiences of identity transitions during Master's level research
Supervisors: Katharine Burn and Ian Thompson

Vânia Pinto

The role of foster carers and children's outcomes in England and Portugal
Supervisors: Judith Sebba and Neil Harrison

Fumiaki Sagisaka

Comparative case studies on the schooling mechanisms and the process of school improvement at public and low-fee private primary schools in rural Kenya
Supervisors: David Johnson and Ariel Lindorff

Jonah Stewart

On the institutional work of widening participation practice
Supervisors: Velda Elliott and Ann Childs

Rich Taylor

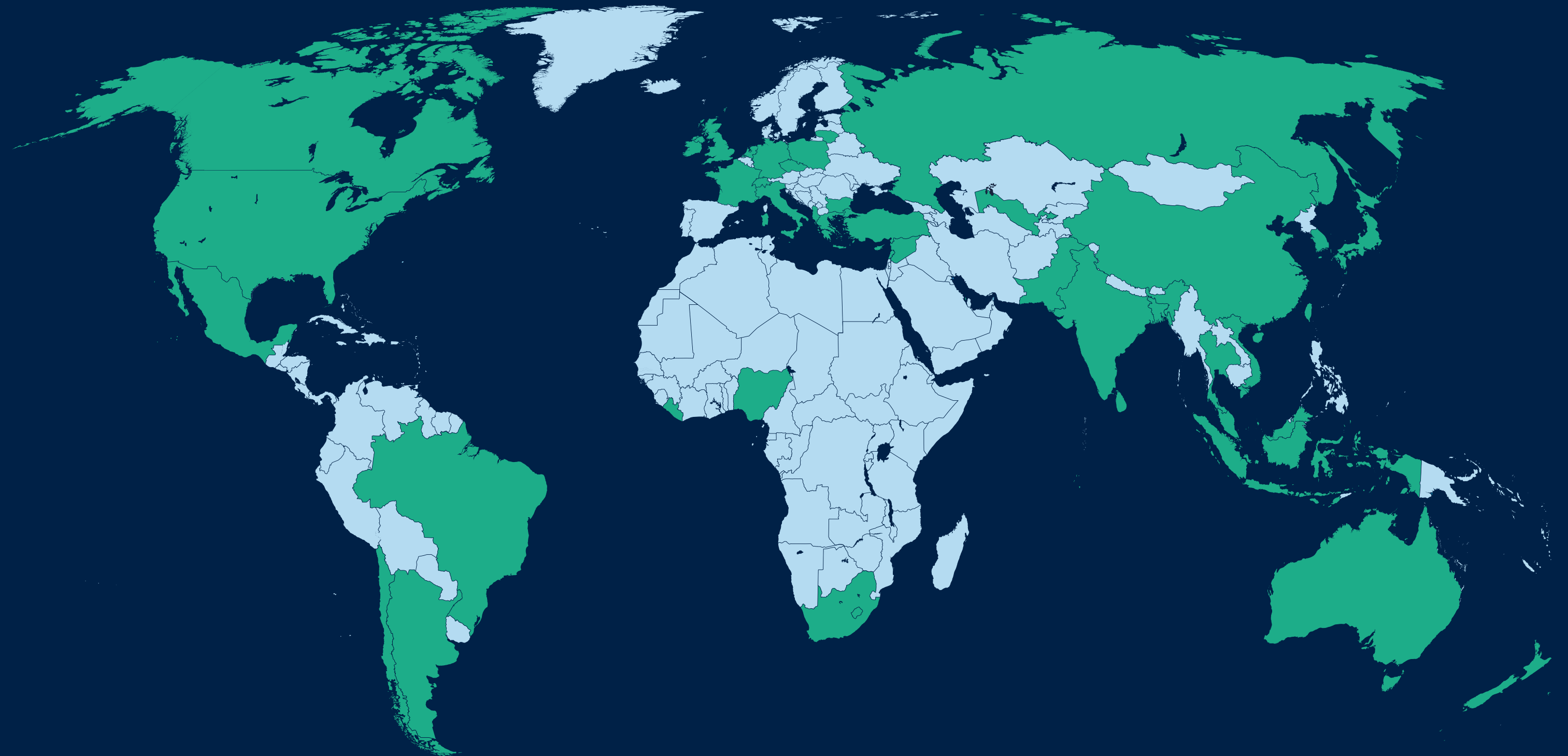
Key Words for Learning Science: the Structure of Students' Sign Networks in Mechanics
Supervisors: Judith Hillier and Ann Childs

Miranda Voss

Missing "the little things that make you human": Medical students' experiences of digital teaching and learning
Supervisors: Niall Winters and Anne Geniets

Students' Countries of Origin

 STUDENTS' COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



Alumni Spotlight

Dr Lila McDowell



I had no intention of getting my DPhil when I arrived at 15 Norham Gardens in the early autumn of 2007. I had just graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in Public Policy Studies and was planning to get my MSc in Educational Research Methods before pursuing a career in education policy.

It was the qualitative interviewing that I did as part of my MSc dissertation – then just an intellectual exercise to demonstrate my mastery of the methods we had learned – where I caught the bug for research in general and for my topic in particular.

My master's and then doctoral research focused on questions that by 2008 had only been investigated quantitatively: the connection between education and incarceration in the United States. 25 years of tough-on-crime legislation on both the federal and state levels had resulted in a phenomenon we now refer to as mass incarceration, with the Pew Center in the States reporting that as of 1 January 2008, more than 1 in every 100 adults in the U.S. was incarcerated in a prison or jail. This same tough-on-crime approach had made sentencing harsher, rehabilitation programmes such as education significantly less available, and had disproportionately impacted people of colour, women, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The limited research conducted on the connection between education and incarceration showed that those

“

Our students are getting out, staying out, and using their voices and their leadership to make a difference that research alone could never have achieved.

Dr Lila McDowell

who pursued higher education while in custody fared better after prison than those who did not. But the studies were quantitative in nature, defined success almost exclusively by rates of re-offending, and left academics and practitioners alike unable to articulate the 'secret sauce' behind undergraduate education in prison.

While the punitive policy environment had all but eliminated education

programmes in prisons across the U.S., a few small grassroots efforts had managed to emerge. One such programme was Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, a nonprofit organisation that served as a student advocate and third party facilitator between New York correctional facilities and universities willing to accredit courses offered within them. Hudson Link hosted me to conduct six months of ethnographical observation and autobiographical writing workshops with men in the programme, in order to better understand how students use higher education to make sense of their experiences and move forward with their lives.

I was 23 years old the day I started work on my DPhil, and you probably could have surmised as much from talking to me that first term: I was hopeful and naïve enough to believe my work would change the world, not realising that single pieces of research never do – and in most cases, never should. I was confused when Professor Lunt told us that we should not be thinking of our DPhil thesis as our magnum opus. You simply could not

have convinced me that the research conversations I was having with incarcerated Hudson Link students – data points I described in painstaking detail while on the train home from the prison each day – was not the most important work I would ever do.

I passed my viva voce without corrections, celebrated with five years' worth of friends and classmates at the Royal Oak on Woodstock Road, and submitted a bound copy of my original contribution to knowledge to the Bodleian. Truth be told, I have no idea how much impact that piece of writing

has had, or ever will. I do know that the work I've done with the knowledge, skills, and relationships I gained through my doctoral project has played a small but meaningful part in changing the landscape of incarceration in New York. When I conducted my research there were 250 incarcerated New Yorkers pursuing higher education; today that number exceeds 2,000. The results of higher education and other progressive justice reform measures are also clear: when I published my thesis in 2012 there were 70,000 people incarcerated in New York; today, there are fewer

than 35,000. Now as Deputy Director of Hudson Link, I am working with colleagues in a well-developed field of both practice and research to coordinate our efforts and help people get free. Our students are getting out, staying out, and using their voices and their leadership to make a difference that research alone could never have achieved. Professor Lunt was right: the research mattered, but it was nothing in comparison to what I would do with it, and to the honour of serving beside our students as an ally in the fight for justice.

Lila McDowell with Jessica Latorre, Stanley Leon and Deborah Fitzgerald at Shawangunk Correctional Facility



New Appointments

Academic

Julia Badger

Departmental Lecturer in Child Development and Education

Lauren Elise Hammond

Departmental Lecturer in Geography Education

Robert Klassen

Professor of Education

Jeremy Knox

Associate Professor of Digital Education

Arathi Sriprakash

Professor of Sociology and Education

Robert Ward-Penny

Departmental Lecturer in Mathematics Education

Lucy Wicks

PGCE Curriculum Tutor

Professional

Amy Bennett

Course Administrator

Anna Illingworth

PGCE Coordinator

Kristina Khoo-Rhodes

Communications Officer

Alexander Lennartsson

IT Support Officer

Grace Parsons

HR Manager

Ljiljana Rosic

Operations Assistant/ Receptionist

Kristijan Stojanovic

HR Officer

Alice Willington

Project Officer

Silke Zahrir

Course Administrator

Research

Valentina Andries

Postdoctoral Researcher

Eireann Attridge

Research Assistant

Gardiana Bandeira Melo

Postdoctoral Researcher

Antonin Charret

Research Assistant

Louise Couceiro

Postdoctoral Researcher

Mercedes Crisostomo

Postdoctoral Researcher

Holly Jenkins

Research Fellow

Elizabeth Kimber

Research Officer

Heike Krusemann

Research Assistant and Schools Liaison Lead for Language Learning as Expectation

Sin Hang Law

Researcher

Jiayi Li

Researcher

Youchuan Ma

Researcher

Madeleine Masters

Research Assistant

Anay Nangalia

Research Assistant

Claire Neaves

Researcher

Jessica Pilgrim-Brown

Researcher

Corinne Prescott

Research Facilitation Officer

Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh

QFI Research Officer

Natasha Robinson

Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Jinyu Shi

Research Assistant and Programmer for Project Language Learning as Expectation

Rebecca Snell

Research Officer

Penelope Woods

Postdoctoral Researcher

Claire Stewart-Hall

Research Fellow in Reparative Studies of Education

Isobel Talks

Postdoctoral Researcher

Sophie Thompson-Lee

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Louise Vincent

PGCE Admissions Doctoral Fellow

Alice Willatt

Research Fellow in Reparative Studies of Education

Yushan Xie

Research Assistant

Honorary Research Fellows

Honorary Fellows provide a significant level of contribution to the department in the form of mentorship, teaching, supervision, collaborative research and/or professional practice, grant applications, ambassadorship, examination, assessment and development of the academic programmes. This year, the following new fellowships were granted:

Dr Ghazala Bhatti

Bath Spa University

Professor Nicole Mockler

University of Sydney

Professor Anil Kanjee

Tshwane University of Technology

Professor Neil Selwyn

Monash University

Honorary Norham Fellows

Dr Travis Fuchs

Independent Researcher

Dr Pinar Kolancali

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Dr Joanne Caddy

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Visiting Professor

Visiting Professors are outstanding in their field of work and are nominated by the Department. Our current Visiting Professor is: **Professor Kathy Hirsh-Pasek**, Temple University.



Engage with us

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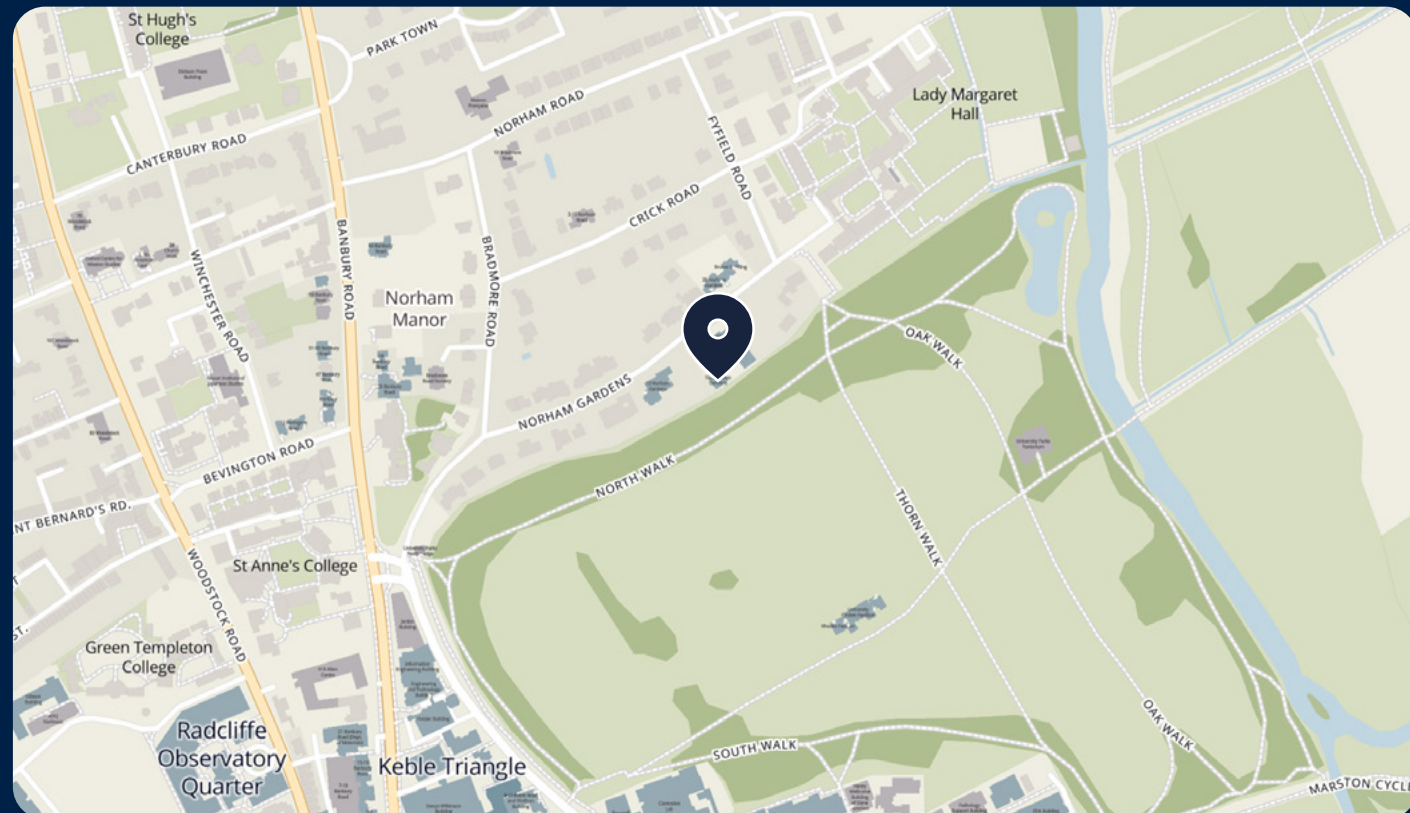
Write to us

Department of Education
University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX2 6PY

Call us

+44 (0)1865 274 024

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