4. **Action Research in Higher Education: evaluating an intervention in doctoral students’ development of critical writing and reviewing skills.** Joan Smith  
University of Leicester

The presentation outlines an action research project in which we trialled innovative strategies to develop EdD students’ critical writing and peer reviewing skills, by engaging them in a process of peer assessment. The project began with an intensive, residential critical writing weekend and culminated in the establishment of a student-led, peer reviewed journal. We report on students’ perceptions of their involvement in the project as a transformational experience. Students were interviewed before and after the intervention, and reported shifts in their understanding of criticality, peer review and critical writing. Perhaps more importantly, there were significant shifts in their perceptions of themselves as capable of and confident in their criticality. Learning was enhanced through critical friendship, and students derived a sense of belonging to a research community in which they were playing a meaningful role. Critical friendships were established that would thrive beyond the life of the project. We consider the implications of the project for teaching and supervisory pedagogies at postgraduate level.