PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence: USVreact

Computing in the Curriculum: Identifying and responding to the challenges

SOCIALLY CRITICAL RESEARCH AT THE RESEARCH/ POLICY INTERFACE

FEATURING

RUTH BOYASK
CHRIS BROWN
CARMEL CAPEWELL
EMMA RENOLD
SUE SENTANCE
ANNIS STEAD
VANITA SUNDARAM
MARIA TERESA TATTO
How to guide

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More information about BERA can be found at www.bera.ac.uk
## NEWS AND COMMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>From the BERA President...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>News</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Why the Nature of Educational Research Should Remain Contested:</td>
<td>David Aldridge, Gert Biesta, Ourania Filippakou and Emma Wainwright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing the new Editors of BERJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Diversity and Resolving the Digital Skills Crisis</td>
<td>Vladlena Benson and Stylianos Hatzipanagos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>BERA’s Commitment to Delivering Greater Impact and Engagement</td>
<td>Nick Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Communicating Your Research: A publisher’s perspective</td>
<td>James Clark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Vivienne Baumfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Computing in the Curriculum: Identifying and responding to the</td>
<td>Sue Sentance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Improving Teaching and Learning in Schools Through the Use of</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Research: Exploring the impact of research learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## BERA FORUMS AND PARTNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>BERA Postgraduate Forum events</td>
<td>Georgie Shaw, Yuwei Xu and Oliver Hooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The View From... SERA in Scotland</td>
<td>Stephen McKinney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>About Research Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## THE VIEW FROM... SERA IN SCOTLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The More-Than of Research: Making AGENDA, a young people’s</td>
<td>Emma Renold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guide to address gender and sexual violence in schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Socially Critical Research at the Research/Policy Interface</td>
<td>Ruth Boyask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence: USVreact</td>
<td>Annis Stead and Vanita Sundaram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The Lived Experience of Glue Ear: Listening to the voices of mothers</td>
<td>Carmel Capewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Constructing Research Impact in Teacher Education through</td>
<td>Maria Teresa Tato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Collaboration and Capacity Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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From The BERA President...

2018 – ANOTHER BIG YEAR FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.

I know, I know…every year seems to be important these days, and to have more than its fair share of opportunities, threats and challenges. But as I look out of my window in early January, this is certainly my feeling about the year ahead for BERA.

There is a lot on the BERA agenda for the coming year. As we move into 2018, the ground rules for the next Research Excellence Framework have taken shape and the senior figures in the panels and sub-panels have been announced. My congratulations on behalf of BERA to Professor David James of Cardiff University, so recently a colleague on BERA Council who was responsible for our membership committee and instituting our Postgraduate Forum on being appointed as the chair of sub-panel 23, Education.

At the time of writing, we are also expecting the British Academy and Royal Society working group on educational research to publish its findings soon, and for BERA to be taking the lead in a response.

Not that BERA’s own in-tray is exactly empty. We have been working hard on a major exercise updating and revising our ethical guidelines, for which BERA is widely known, and are planning for this to be finalised and publicised in the coming months. We are also moving forward with our international strategy with the aim of completing our initial plans in this area later in the year.

And at the start of this new year, this may be as good a chance as any for me to remind members where all this work is coming from.

Like all charities and learned societies, BERA depends greatly on the voluntary, unpaid commitment of its members across the research community. This means a lot in these days of Full Economic Costing, when all activities are calculated to the last penny by institutions of higher education.

We really appreciate the support of the elected trustees who are members of BERA Council, as well as the energy of the other BERA members who contribute to our committee work, the convenors of our special interest groups, and the editorial support for our blog and journals. Thanks are due also to heads of department who provide the means for this leadership resource to be sustained.

And last, but assuredly not least, we can acknowledge the hard work of our headquarters team at Endsleigh Gardens in London – Nick Johnson the executive director, Sarah Fleming (membership and engagement manager), Marie Blythe (events manager), Ross Fulton (our new publications manager), David Chatterjee (finance and administration officer), and Zita Dargužytė (events assistant). We have steadily built up this team over the past five years, and BERA is a lot more professional, and has more to offer its members, as a result.

So thanks to all at the start of another big year, and I’m looking forward to working with you all on our common goals.

Professor Gary McCulloch
UCL Institute of Education
Updates from BERA

PUBLICATIONS MANAGER JOINS BERA OFFICE

In November 2017 we welcomed Ross Fulton to a new role in the BERA office: Publications Manager. Ross will oversee the Association’s four peer-reviewed journals, this magazine, the BERA Blog and our website, and will work to support and collaborate with editors, editorial boards and publishing partners.

Furthermore, over the coming months Ross will be working on plans to improve and expand BERA’s publications portfolio and digital presence to ensure that we expand our impact and reach, particularly among practitioners and policy-makers, and to develop publishing’s vital contribution to BERA’s income. He plans to consult members on any major new proposals, but invites anyone to contact him with their ideas and feedback at r.fulton@bera.ac.uk.

Ross’s previous role was as Managing Editor at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), a social and economic policy thinktank, where he managed the editorial, design and production processes for high-impact research reports and other outputs, including the in-house academic journal IPPR Progressive Review (formerly Juncture); he was also a hands-on copyeditor, typesetter, proofreader, infographics designer and web manager. Prior to that, he worked as an editor in commercial and academic publishing at Bloomsbury, the Quarto Group and Tara Books, and in marketing for Oxford University Press.

Before joining BERA he completed a part-time MSc in Sociological Research at the University of Manchester, which focussed on qualitative and quantitative research methods. His research project investigated how the experience of having a parent admitted to residential care affected how adult-children in ‘early old age’ (aged 59–69) thought about their own later lives – and how their imagined, future ‘possible selves’ motivate their current behaviour and, in particular, their forward planning.

REF 2021 NOMINATIONS

Many congratulations to former Council member David James upon his appointment as the Chair of the Education sub-panel for the next REF.

BERA’s own panel, led by John Leach with the support of Margaret Brown and Andrew Pollard to manage endorsements and nominations from members of BERA, completed its work before Christmas. In making our overall nominations, the group ensured that all nations and all fields have been appropriately represented, and that an appropriately diverse cross-section of BERA members have been nominated to the Sub-panel. BERA has been committed to nominating a knowledgeable, skilled, diverse and talented pool of candidates for membership of the sub-panel.

BERA’S WORK IN WALES

We have been in detailed discussions with the Welsh Government about running a one-day conference later this year to inform and promote the future development of educational research in Wales. This event will support the strategy of developing a research-driven education system with a teaching profession that is well informed, learning from excellence at local, national and international levels, and engaging actively with educational research and higher education institutions. It will also seek ways of enhancing the capacity of educational research in Wales.
BERA AND THE CHARTERED COLLEGE OF TEACHING

BERA has held very positive discussions with the Chartered College of Teaching (CCT) about how we can support one another’s objectives. In the medium term, we hope this will lead to joint events, involvement in one another’s publications and a role for the CCT at BERA’s annual conference.

An immediate outcome is that we have agreed that all participants on the CCT’s Chartered Teacher Programme will now receive automatic BERA membership, in an initiative that furthers the Association’s commitment to supporting teachers and promoting collaboration between practitioners, academics and policy-makers to shape future curricula in schools.

The aim of the CCT, which opened its doors in January 2017 (and is conveniently located directly upstairs from the BERA office), is to raise the status of the profession, and to support teachers to acquire the expertise necessary to maintain excellence in teaching and secure the best outcomes for children and young people. The Chartered Teacher programme, which offers an accredited, career-long professional development pathway, is central to achieving these goals.

The Chartered Teacher programme began as a pilot in January 2018. Over a period of 14 months participants will undertake a range of different assessments – including the completion of a professional development plan, a small-scale research-based improvement project, and a portfolio of videos of practice, work samples and reflections – that allow them to showcase their knowledge and skills as they work towards Chartered Teacher status. Participants will be offered a variety of opportunities, including taking part in workshops and training to develop practice in key areas, and interviewing experts in the field of their research-based improvement project. Upon completion they will be able to use the postnominal ‘CTeach’.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Council has co-opted Kevin Smith of Cardiff University to join its number. Kevin brings a lot of experience and differing perspectives to Council as well as ensuring that a Welsh voice is heard around the table. A full profile of Kevin will appear in the next issue.

At the time of going to press, the election period for four new positions on the BERA Council (our board of trustees) had closed. The winners of this election as well as that of the next Vice President will be announced via the Newsletter and the website, and the successful candidates will be featured in the next issue.

THE BERA BCF CURRICULUM INVESTIGATION GRANT

Following a highly competitive call for applications, Dr Vladlena Benson’s collaborative project, entitled Integrating Digital Competencies into Preparing Young BME and FEMALE Entrepreneurs, won the inaugural grant. We are pleased to include her research produced from the grant in this issue of RI on page 8.

This was a new award developed by the British Curriculum Forum to support school- and college-led research with a focus on curriculum inquiry and investigation.

The BERA BCF Curriculum Investigation Grant for 2018–2019 will open in April 2018. For more information visit https://www.bera.ac.uk/about/bera-awards/curriculum-grant.

CORRECTION

Eagle-eyed readers will have spotted that some production gremlins crept into the printed version of the last issue and our new Events Assistant Zita Dargużyte was pictured looking rather too much like Gerry Czerniawski! Here is the correct picture of Zita.
A set of important questions emerges from the state of contemporary education: What counts as educational research? What, for that matter, counts as education? Is there a ‘gold standard’ of educational research? Who is best placed or best qualified to carry out educational research? How can a journal focusing on the four nations of Britain also serve an international academic community?

The editors of an academic journal in any field right now must also ask what a journal is, and what its role is in the present academic and professional climate. What are the implications for a journal, and the field it serves, of open access, changes in forms of electronic publishing, and interaction with social media? Who reads an academic journal, and how do readers find and access a particular article? The days in which anyone ‘reads’ a single paper issue of a journal from cover to cover are surely numbered.

We are delighted to have been invited by BERA to edit BERJ at a time when the field and disciplines of educational research, and the publishing practices that have traditionally served them, are in question. Our vision is that BERJ retains its hallmark of excellence and continues to showcase the best British and international research in education. At the same time, we hope that the journal will set the agenda for exploring the boundaries of educational research, how educational research relates to policy and practice, and who educational research is produced by and for.

The increasing international interest in evidence-based policy over the past two decades has been accompanied by a narrowing in the kinds of research that policy-makers often seem to be prepared to accept as evidence for what works in educational contexts. At the same time, ‘grassroots’ professional movements have joined the call for research into educational effectiveness that can be easily accessed, digested and put to use by practitioners. Attempts in various national contexts to establish the randomised control trial as the ‘gold standard’ for educational enquiry have fuelled hopes for the establishment of an educational science oriented toward social improvement. But such moves have also met with resistance and criticism from academics and practitioners across these national settings.

The nature and size of the part that educational research can play in the ‘education debate’ is a highly contested question across many quarters of society and academic endeavour. It is fitting and essential that this question should be asked in and around the pages of this journal. As editors, we do not represent a particular position on this question so much as a commitment to establishing and preserving the journal as a location where the question can be debated with sophistication.

The specific contribution of this journal can be to ensure high standards in the practice, dissemination and interrogation of educational research regardless of discipline, and to be a site for communication across the different phases and forms of educational research. We wish to uphold standards of ethical and intellectual integrity. We seek to promote research that recognises the theoretical assumptions researchers have made about the nature and aims of educational activity. We hope that the reflexive nature of the journal will encourage contributing authors to ask difficult questions about the nature and role of
evidence across the different domains of educational enquiry, and to be able to justify a particular approach to educational enquiry and recognise its limits. We welcome contributions from the broadest range of approaches to research. We want the journal’s editorial activity to keep open debates about the nature, scope and value of educational research, and would resist attempts to privilege evidential concerns over the normative, or the practical over the theoretical. We aim to increase the proportion of work that considers educational questions in their full range of ethical, political and theoretical significance.

We acknowledge that educational research is often conducted within a specific educational phase or context and from a particular disciplinary perspective. We encourage the submission of work that concentrates on a particular national context or educational phase, or that represents a specialised disciplinary approach, provided that it raises or addresses questions that have the potential to engage those working in different disciplines and in different educational contexts. We hope to maintain the diversity of topics and perspectives that is a recognisable feature of the back cover of any recent issue of the journal, as long as this work speaks to the wider educational community – of researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. In addition, we commit to pro-actively pursuing the ongoing discussion about what counts or should count as educational research. It is important to us that educational research remains contested.
According to the Government Response to the Digital Skills Crisis Report (HoC-STC, 2017), 12.6 million adults in the UK lack basic digital skills, and this skills gap is costing the UK economy £63 billion a year in lost GDP. Chakravorti and Chaturvedi (2015) warn of the global consequences of the digital skills shortage for the digital economy and the entire workforce. The lack of takeup of STEM subjects by female students at secondary schools and A-levels continues to widen the diversity gap in digital careers. The BERA BCF Curriculum Investigation Grant undertaken by researchers at University of West London explored the barriers and enablers of gender diversity in digital skills delivery at schools (KS3–KS4) and colleges in order to open up a wider range of careers paths in technology. Raising awareness of career and entrepreneurship opportunities in the digital economy among female students is essential. The timeliness of the project was manifested in its alignment with Mayor of London Sadiq Khan’s launch of the women’s equality campaign, #BehindEveryGreatCity, in 2018.

MOTIVATION FOR ACQUISITION: DIGITAL SKILLS
The growing investment in digital skills education and curriculum development over recent years has not resulted in the narrowing of the skills gap. We started our research based on Sharpe and Beetham’s (2010) ‘pyramid’ of digital literacy development model. The work of Belshaw (2011) identified eight elements of digital literacy: cognitive, constructive, communication, civic, critical, creative, confident and cultural; this has been useful, and it guided our initial inquiry. Furthermore, recent research indicated barriers to the development of digital skills, including school culture, lack of funds, lack of strategy and lack of commitment (Walker et al, 2016). The misconception that learners are ‘digital natives’ and therefore digitally fluent has generated assumptions around pedagogy and led to inconsistent implementation of the digital skills curriculum. These considerations created patchy approaches to digital skills teaching (Hall et al, 2014), which have been significantly influenced by idiosyncratic environments in schools.

The project team gathered pupils’ insights into the barriers to developing skills in problem-based activities conducted at secondary schools. The research revealed that girls in KS3 to KS4 had negative perceptions of their digital skills. Focus group discussions with students showed that technology careers, and STEM in general, were perceived as being out of scope for girls; this was instilled long before the GSCE level. Technology careers and entrepreneurship are perceived as too hard to pursue, and risk avoidance (particularly financial risk) is still high on the list of their perceived barriers. The good news is that female students are highly competitive and excel at problem solving. The discussions with teaching and careers staff at schools helped to construct curriculum interventions needed at school and college level to inspire female students to choose STEM subjects.

EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS IS KEY
As part of the project dissemination strategy, a full-day workshop entitled ‘Women in Digital Innovation’ invited digital economy leaders and technology entrepreneurs to share their ideas with educators. Elena Spinel, CEO of Acorn Aspirations, presented her work on developing tech skills for 10–18-year-olds through hackathons, encouraging problem-solving and innovation. Through the panel discussion, it emerged that framing the digital skills curriculum as ‘problem solving’ helps to overcome the preconceived idea of technology being a ‘boys’ subject’, and could make digital skills more appealing to female students.
DISCUSSION
There is a relationship between diversity and digital skills, and the ways in which these are embedded in the digital curriculum. The factors influencing effectiveness of the digital curriculum that emerged from this project were diversity, inclusiveness and innovation. These three factors determine both teaching effectiveness and which pedagogical approach is chosen. They are particularly important given that the skills shortage that digital skills education must address also affects the professionals who are charged with delivering that education. For example, Hargittai and Shafer (2006) argue that even qualified professionals often fail to demonstrate a robust relevant background, while only 35% of computer science teachers in schools have a relevant degree.

But where the resources are scarce, innovation in teaching practices and the involvement of industry professionals in generating new curriculum ideas are essential.

The Royal Society Science Policy Centre (2014) describes the role of school education in preparing a digitally-skilled UK workforce as nurturing students with strong information literacy and a mindset that is flexible, creative and adaptive. According to 2015 survey data, 60% of 12-year-old girls in the UK perceived digital technology as too difficult to learn, “boring and techie” and suited for boys, while only 14% of parents said they understood career opportunities for their daughters in STEM, and much less in digital entrepreneurship (HoC-STC, 2017). Addressing diversity in the student body is a challenging goal and compels teachers to be aware of the variety of forms that digital skills acquisition can take, as well as to become able to deal with related issues in practice (Dettori, 2013). Curriculum approaches should be geared towards embedding digital skills that encompass diversity.

Diversity, inclusiveness and innovation could shape our thinking of digital skills and how these can improve equity of participation of learners engaged in technology-enhanced learning. Inclusiveness and the debate surrounding that term in an educational context (that is, rejecting the use of means to separate students with special needs) acquire further significance when it encourages the use of technologies to support learning. Innovative practices across formal and informal contexts constitute a significant component of every successful approach to teaching digital skills.

As part of the project sustainability strategy, the team is engaging with schools in the London metropolitan area to further contribute to innovative curriculum development, such as taking part in the Tolworth Girls’ School Y9 curriculum day. The project aligns with Mayor Sadiq Khan’s aim “to remove barriers to women’s success and level the playing field”. The team is also extending their support for the campaign and engaging with organisations sharing their commitment to the fight for gender equality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
This project was funded by the BERA BCF Curriculum Investigation 2017 grant. We would like to express our thanks to CompTIA, the Inspiring Future and SATRO charities for providing effective avenues for validation of the project results across a wider range of stakeholders.

REFERENCES

2018 POSTGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM SERIES

Cardiff
27th March 2018
Cardiff University

Stirling
23rd July 2018
University of Stirling

Staffordshire
22nd June 2018
Staffordshire University

Portsmouth
7th November 2018
University of Portsmouth

BERA WANTS YOU IF YOU:

- Are a postgraduate research student (PGR) or early career researcher (ECR) in education;
- Have ethical issues to discuss that have arisen (or could arise) whilst conducting your fieldwork (you can be at any stage of the research process);
- Want to meet up with peers from other institutions and share your research experiences;
- Wish to present your research in a more informal, safe, but ‘critical’ space, and to receive feedback from both peers and experienced academics.

YOU WILL:

- Deliver a 10–15 minute presentation on ethical issues that you wish to discuss from your research;
- Participate in discussions with peers and experienced academics on a wide range of ethical issues that researchers might come across in doing educational research.

THE EVENT WILL:

- Run from 10 am to 4 pm (subject to minor changes);
- Provide lunch and refreshments;
- Involve experienced academics acting as discussants;
- Have a maximum of 10 presenters for each symposium, to allow time for sufficient discussions;
- Offer travel bursaries of up to £75 per person for up to 5 applicants to each symposium.

BURSARIES AVAILABLE. FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:

WWW.BERA.AC.UK/EVENTS
In the latest revision to BERA’s strategic plan, agreed in 2016, one of the three priorities for the organisation was to foster research engagement. This has long been an important area of activity for BERA, but it has clearly become more of a focus in recent years.

This focus has taken several forms. One question to which we have devoted resources has been how we make use of our platforms and communications channels to support research engagement. This involved a major revamp of our website in 2014, the development of a strong social media presence and, perhaps most significantly, the launch of the BERA Blog in 2015. In the Blog’s first two-and-a-half years it saw over 350 articles posted and a total readership of over 500,000 people. Drawing contributors and readers from schools, policy-makers and HEIs, and from all over the world, the Blog is an increasingly important part of BERA’s work to foster greater research engagement.

BERA is committed to engaging directly with policy-makers and practitioners in setting an agenda for research. The year-long inquiry into research and teacher education that reported in 2014 was intended in part as a means of injecting evidence into a contentious issue of public policy. In supporting the inquiry and its outputs, and initiating the partnership with the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA), BERA Council was aiming to have a direct impact on the policy-making process. A similar sentiment lay behind the support provided to the ‘Respecting Children’ project, led by a coalition of special interest groups in 2015, which resulted in the publication of Fair and Equal Education – an evidence-based manifesto setting out how research should serve as the basis for future education policies. This approach has continued with a number of more recent policy interventions, including the consultation on the next REF, and BERA’s support for the More than a Score coalition, which campaigns for an assessment system that actively supports primary school children in their learning, and promotes excellent educational practice.

Our desire to engage with practitioners has been supported by increased bursaries for teachers to attend our events; our facilitation of networks and relationships with research users; and, most recently, by our new partnership with the Chartered College of Teaching (see page 4). The incorporation of the British Curriculum Forum into BERA in 2013 has also provided another direct means of engaging with the classroom. This has led to a new biennial Curriculum Investigation Grant, awarded for the first time last year: it has supported direct partnership work, as well as series of successful events drawing in a mix of teachers and researchers.

Indeed, BERA’s events programme is a fundamental part of the way in which we encourage conversation and debate across boundaries. Its growth – from a handful of events in 2013 to more than 50 in 2017 – demonstrates how much we promote and engage with a diverse audience. We also maintain and seek strong relationships with peer associations, both in the UK and internationally, and support our members to represent British educational research at a number of international conferences.

It is hard to separate engagement from impact in some ways, and a key objective of our engagement work is to support our members and the wider field to identify diverse pathways to impact. This resulted in the new award for Public Engagement and Impact, created in 2015 and featured in this issue. While this award specifically looks at examples of strong engagement work, it is just one part of BERA’s wider commitment to this agenda.
Communicating Your Research: A publisher’s perspective

By James Clark, Senior Commissioning Editor, Education, SAGE Publishing

In a world saturated by content, and where debate about educational research often polarises opinion, how can we ensure that authors achieve greater engagement and impact?

For academic publishers, the concepts of public engagement and impact sit at the heart of what we do. Publishing is driven by the desire to make meaningful connections with readers, communicating and disseminating ideas that further debate, provoke responses, inform learning and deepen understanding.

However, in this saturated world, getting research heard poses a challenge for both publishers and authors. There is, of course, no magic bullet here, but valuable results can be achieved when publishers and academics work together, playing to their own inherent strengths to showcase the value they offer. For publishers, this tends to be about facilitating communication and providing the apparatus and the means for authors to get their messages out to the wider world in the most clear and appropriate form.

Here at SAGE Publishing we’ve approached this from a number of different angles to offer researchers a range of platforms that sit alongside and complement our traditional publishing outputs. These allow researchers the opportunity to build on a journal article or book and to revisit and explore aspects of their work in ways that are more immediate and digestible to a wider audience beyond an author’s immediate research community. By developing these additional ways to talk and write about research, publishers are helping to diversify the channels through which ideas can travel beyond academia. We are very proud to sponsor the BERA & SAGE Public Engagement and Impact Award, an award that directly highlights and celebrates meaningful and impactful educational research. We are also innovating with new ways to connect authors with audiences, for example, by sharing their knowledge and experience to practitioners via our online webinar SAGE Early Years Masterclass programme which has launched in 2018, or communicating ideas beyond the written word through our SAGE Video collections. More broadly across the social sciences, our MethodSpace community connects researchers with others, allowing them to share expertise on the research process, including how to disseminate their work more widely. We are also a strategic partner of online journalism platform The Conversation, and I would encourage all academics looking to widen their writing output to explore opportunities here. For an education-specific focus, the BERA Blog is attracting a growing number of readers internationally.

While publishers can offer ways to amplify and refine lines of communication, what really matters is what is communicated and how. Rather than suggesting arbitrary dos and don’ts of public engagement, I would encourage academics to consider how public engagement can dovetail with existing aspects of academic life, rather than becoming a time-consuming bolt-on to existing ways of working. The online world offers many ways to do this, but this doesn’t mean that living on Twitter 24/7 is a prerequisite for everyone; social media does offer advantages (and accompanying pitfalls) but offline networking and debate through conferences, talks and exploring opportunities to discuss research within and beyond higher education, is as important as ever.

However you chose to explore this, a proactive approach to reaching out to find audiences, rather than waiting for them to find you, and an enthusiasm for communicating sophisticated ideas in ways that are accessible and meaningful, without sacrificing the rigour of your underlying argument, are essential qualities that, when combined with tools that publishers offer, can bring your work to a much wider audience.
Public Engagement and Impact

By Vivienne Baumfield, University of Exeter
Guest Editor and Chair of BERA’s Publications Committee

The core aim of BERA is to foster research engagement and strengthen the contribution educational research makes to improving the quality of life for everyone in society. As Chair of the Publications Committee, I am mindful of the important role BERA’s publications play and the contribution our publishers make to engaging researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in conversation. In this issue of Research Intelligence, we celebrate the achievement of the BERA & SAGE Public Engagement and Impact Award in promoting recognition and support for education research within the policy and practice communities. Making a difference to the quality of life beyond academia is not simply disseminating research; effective public engagement is about researchers listening and learning in dialogue with others. The 2017 winner of the award, Sue Sentance, draws upon existing good practice in Continuing Professional Development to reduce the barriers to effective computing education. The strapline of the Computing at School project, ‘there is no them, only us’, exemplifies the importance of collaboration so that teachers own the changes and each child has the opportunity of an outstanding education.

Each contributor to this issue adds a dimension to our understanding of engagement and impact. Chris Brown’s account of working with schools shows how research can be used to inform practice when it is germane to the questions being asked. Relevance is achieved by establishing the connection with the problematic situation: if this is done, the full range of types of research have the potential to make a difference. Emma Renold asks ‘How can we make our research findings come to matter in the world?’ She describes the challenges and affordances of conducting research on sensitive topics that become mainstream, and met by a flurry of policies and practices. Her work provides practical examples of how we might respond in meaningful and ethical ways with who, how and where we engage to connect meaningfully with the lives of children and young people. The issues raised by Emma Renold are also addressed by Ruth Boyask, who considers how the concept of counterpublics can assist critical researchers to act more strategically to exert an influence on policy. Mainstream public opinion can be influenced if researchers focus their attention on changing the opinion of accessible publics rather than those in distant policy spheres. Recognising and contributing towards alliances across counterpublic spheres, where compatible ideological or ethical discourses circulate, can lead to an influence on policy that might otherwise appear out of reach for socially critical researchers. Annis Stead adds the dimension of embedding a training programme based on research evidence at the institutional level. The training was designed to equip university support staff in delivering supportive and empathetic ‘first responses’ to disclosures of sexual violence. Carmel Capewell’s research bridges the fields of ‘education’, ‘health’ and ‘psychology’ in order to encourage professionals to engage with parents/carers and young people and listen to their experience of the day-to-day impact of a condition known as ‘glue ear’. Having a presence on social media proved to be a factor in accessing and using this knowledge to co-construct support. Finally, Maria Teresa Tatto’s project in the US considers how best to tackle concerns that research findings do not have the desired impact, highlighted in the 2014 BERA-RSA Inquiry and all the more pressing in the contemporary climate of disregard of ‘experts’ and scientific evidence in policy circles. She recommends working with ‘street-level’ bureaucrats who are closer to practitioners and typically can exercise a degree of discretion in the mediation of policy to meet the exigencies of the contexts of practice.
Every time we turn on the TV or radio, we hear of a new innovation in health, science, engineering, entertainment and so on that has been enabled by new technological advances. Artificial intelligence, big data and cybersecurity are now all fields that are increasingly impacting on society. In this context, few people would disagree that there is a need to educate young people in a range of skills that will help them to participate and drive forward an increasingly computer-driven world. Skills that involve being an effective end user of computer software are important but clearly no longer sufficient: we need to introduce young people to the world of algorithms, data and programming to enable them to understand not only current technology, but an unknown technological future around the corner. All children need to leave school able to make informed decisions about the use of technology in their lives, even if they do not directly work in computing-related fields.

To support this educational need, a new Computing curriculum was introduced in England in September 2014, comprising three strands: computer science, information technology and digital literacy. The latter two have already been taught in schools for many years but the computer science strand had not been taught in schools to the pre-16 age group since the 1980s. In the new national curriculum, Computing is a mandatory subject from age 5–16. This is a significant curriculum change, and as all readers will be aware, curriculum change impacts teachers hugely. The question then becomes how teachers can be supported and upskilled to deliver new material in the classroom; and more than this, how teachers can own the changes and develop into leaders in this new subject area.

Two Royal Society reports have been widely influential in firstly announcing the need for this change (2012) and secondly, and very recently, evaluating current computing education in school in the UK (2017). The latter report highlights the challenges faced by teachers feeling unprepared to deliver the computing curriculum and recommends that significant Government funding is provided to support teachers. For several years there have been grass-roots and volunteer-driven initiatives within the community of computing teachers and other stakeholders to provide training, mentoring and support in the new elements of the Computing curriculum. At the heart of this support has been Computing At School1 (CAS), a community with some 29,000+ members which has grown from the ground up to provide face-to-face networking opportunities via CAS Hubs, peer-to-peer training via CAS Master Teachers and sharing of resources via an online community website, amongst many other things. The strapline of Computing At School is ‘there is no them, only us’, and it is a body of people who ‘seek to support and empower each other in an inclusive and self-sustaining body so that each child has the opportunity of an outstanding computer science education’ (CAS mission2).

Supporting teachers who find themselves needing to teach the computer science aspects of the Computing curriculum is more than simply running a range of courses on how to program, although this is where the support began. Drawing on existing good practice in CPD, which suggests that it needs to be collaborative (Cordingley et al, 2004), sustained (Guskey & Yuon, 2009), and combining a range of different elements (Kennedy, 2005), the CAS model for supporting teachers provided a holistic approach, as shown in Figure 1. This work draws on situated learning

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1 http://www.computingatschool.org.uk
2 http://www.computingatschool.org.uk/about#purpose

By Sue Sentance, King’s College London

Sue Sentance, King’s College London, was awarded the BERA & SAGE Public Engagement and Impact Award for 2017 for her work to reduce the barriers to effective computing education. Here she explains the background to this work and why it is important that more research in the area of computing education is initiated and funded.
theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the importance of communities of practice. Many of the aspects shown in the diagram were developed by CAS within the Network of Excellence, funded by the DfE from 2013-2018, and are documented elsewhere (Sentance et al, 2014). The aspects that I have been most involved in are the development of the BCS Certificate for Computing teachers (an online accreditation and training programme for in-service teachers) and facilitating classroom-based research projects for teachers of Computing (Sentance et al, 2018). However, there is plenty of room to scale up these efforts, as highlighted by The Royal Society (2017).

Figure 1: CAS model for implementation of PD in Computing

As time has gone on since the curriculum change, it has been increasingly apparent in working with teachers that we need to work out ways of making the curriculum more accessible to children, and in particular how to develop a secure understanding of computer programming concepts. The current work we are involved in at King’s College London is around the development of approaches to the teaching of programming that can be used in lessons to help students understand hard-to-understand concepts and to build confidence. This includes a pedagogical approach called PRIMM (Predict-Run-Investigate-Modify-Make) which draws on many years of research around the teaching of programming to novices. Previously these novices were university computer science students: we now have to find ways of making some of the same content accessible to every KS3 student. It is important for children to explore and be creative in their development of computer software – but without ways of developing a deep understanding of how it works their attempts to get beyond the basics will end in frustration and disappointment. In our research we work closely with teachers using design-based research methodology.

The Royal Society recently called for a focus on rigorous educational research in school Computing (2017). Existing research in this area has largely been carried out in computer science departments with undergraduate students: my belief is that we need to start to situate this research in education departments. There is much scope here for exciting interdisciplinary work, and at King’s we are just setting up a new Computing Education Research Centre (CERC) linking Education, Informatics and Digital Humanities, in which we will work closely with teachers to further develop impactful research.

I was very honoured to be presented with the BERA & SAGE Public Engagement and Impact Award and have worked with many inspiring people nationwide in these efforts to make computing education both deliverable by teachers and accessible to students. We are just at the beginning of a journey in computing education, with still much work to be done, but I believe the direction of travel is the right one and would encourage others to get involved in some of the many exciting research opportunities in this area.

REFERENCES

FORTHCOMING BOOK:
Research-informed teaching practice (RITP) involves teachers and school leaders engaging with high quality research evidence, with the purpose of using any insights gained to improve specific aspects of teaching and learning in their schools (Coldwell et al., 2017; Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2017). Opinions on how to facilitate RITP differ, sometimes vehemently. As such it is worth stating that the project detailed in this article is informed by the idea that most pertinent and high quality research - from qualitative data and case studies, to the work of Hattie (2011) and the Education Endowment Foundation (and preferably a combination of the two) - can be used to inform practice as long as it is germane to the questions being asked. Furthermore, because education is a place-based activity, in which knowledge of context and cohort matter, and because teachers themselves also possess significant experience and practical knowledge, we should think of RITP as something that involves a combination of knowledge types (for example research and practice knowledge as well as data) (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2017). Successful RITP-type activity is thus seen to encapsulate situations where, after engaging with research, teachers challenge and augment their understanding and, correspondingly, develop new approaches to teaching that are designed to improve student outcomes in a contextually meaningful way.

RESEARCH LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Research learning communities (RLCs) are groups of teachers, typically facilitated by a university researcher, who engage with research-evidence in order to enhance both their practice and also the practice of their colleagues. RLCs have been developed from a programme of research undertaken over the past four years, focused on establishing effective ways of connecting research and practice (for example, Brown, 2017a; Brown & Zhang, 2016a, 2016b). The RLC approach thus represents a synthesis of this work and, correspondingly, is grounded in a number of core research-informed ideas. One example is the idea that RITP is most effective when it involves engaging teachers in a facilitated process of learning, designed to help them make explicit connections between research knowledge and their own practitioner-held knowledge and experience. RLCs are also grounded in the notion that the effective scale-up of research-informed interventions will be dependent on there being ’the right people in the room’ - those with the influence and authority to lead educational change (see Brown, 2017b, for detail on the key factors underpinning the RLC approach).

In terms of their practical implementation, the RLC process involves teachers and school leaders engaging in four workshops held over the course of a school year, each corresponding to a stage in the RLC ’cycle of enquiry’. Specifically, participants engage with research and are then supported through the four workshops to: 1) relate this research to their own practical knowledge and knowledge of their context; 2) develop an intervention, grounded in research findings and their own practical knowledge, and designed to improve specific aspects of teaching and learning (that is, achieve a teaching-related goal or vision); 3) trial and refine their intervention to maximize its effectiveness; and 4) ascertain impact and roll out impactful interventions within and across schools. In between workshops, participants are expected...
to work with school colleagues to share research knowledge and to enable colleagues to assist with the development, trial and roll-out and the impact assessment of interventions.

THE SETTING

Over the past two years, I have been working with the reception teachers from the Chestnut learning federation1 - a family of three small Church Infant Schools based in Hampshire - who wanted to use the RLC approach to develop research-informed interventions to improve the writing outcomes of their summer-born children (those children born between 1 April and 31 August and who typically have lower educational attainment, as measured by standardised tests, than those born at the start of the year). The RITP resulting from the RLC activity appears to be responsible for a substantive increase in the federation’s summer-born children’s outcomes: in 2014-15, 60% of summer-born children in the federation achieved the expected level of the Early Learning Goal (ELG) for writing compared with 87.5% of their autumn-born peers and 67.3% of summer-borns in Hampshire. Following year one of the RLC (2016), 86% of summer-born children met their ELG for writing: an improvement of 26%. This improvement was also sustained in year 2 of the RLC (2017), with 82% of summer-borns meeting their ELG for writing. In comparison, over the same period the federation average for all children achieving the ELG for writing has remained at 83%.

Although these figures do not provide a concrete demonstration of causation, by undertaking interviews with the teachers involved and employing a theory of action framework to examine what types of RITP teachers intended to engage in and why (Wenger et al, 2011), I was able to trace a logical path from the development, trial and roll-out and the impact assessment of interventions. Participants argued that increased engagement in research, and the understanding that emerges from it, can help teachers engage with research-evidence and that research engagement leads to improved KS2 outcomes.1 It is suggested therefore that this RLC case study provides an example of how research activity, and the understanding that emerges from it, can be developed into an intervention (the RLC model) which itself can successfully drive improvements in classrooms and schools.

Respondents also suggested that Leuven scale data showed greater engagement in learning by summer-born children, and that their own interviews with summer-born children indicated greater confidence and understanding. It was these changes in knowledge, practice and children's engagement, participants argued, that then led to a subsequent increase in summer-born attainment. These findings thus augment recent randomised control trial evidence suggesting that the RLC model helps teachers engage with research-evidence and that research engagement leads to improved KS2 outcomes.1

REFERENCES

How can we make our research findings come to matter in the world? How might we respond in meaningful and ethical ways with who, how and where we engage? What are the challenges and affordances of conducting research on sensitive topics that have rapidly become mainstream, and which are being met by a flurry of policies and practices that fail to meaningfully connect with children and young people’s lives (Ringrose & Retallack, 2017)?

Inspired by Karen Barad (2007) and Rosi Braidotti’s (2006) relational and affirmative ethics of responsability, and joining a rich history of feminist and queer research scholarship, activism and collaborative practice (see for example, Talburt, 2018), I have been exploring what else our research on children and young people’s experiences of sexual harassment and violence can do, be and become. One ‘minor gesture’ (Manning, 2016) in this journey has involved co-producing a national educational resource, Agenda: A Young People’s Guide to Making Positive Relationships Matter (Renold, 2016).

Over the past seven years, I have brought young people, academics, practitioners, policy-makers and NGOs together through a series of research projects and engagement conferences in Wales. Each event has foregrounded the importance of listening to and acting upon children and young people’s own concerns and needs to be more actively involved in challenging and changing a ubiquitous culture of everyday sexism and sexual harassment across local and global contexts. AGENDA is thus the outcome of extensive long-term collaborations, including the establishment of the cross-party group ‘Children, Sexuality, Sexualisation and Equalities’ and partnerships with third sector organisations, and schools and youth groups across Wales.

The original idea for the resource was sparked from the recommendations of the Boys and Girls Speak Out research (Renold, 2013), which was extensively cited by the Welsh Government throughout the four stages of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (2014-2015) and the subsequent national Good Practice Guide for educational practitioners on whole-school approaches to address VAWDASV. A key part of this national guidance encourages young people to start up or get involved in campaigns and awareness-raising activities to address gender-based violence in their schools. Following the publishing of this guidance, I proposed the development of a young people’s guide via twitter to Assembly Member Leighton Andrews. Over the following months, and with funding from the ESRC Impact Accelerator Fund, and full support from the Welsh Government, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, NSPCC Cymru and Welsh Women’s Aid, we designed The StARTer Project (Safe to Act, Right to Engage and Raise). Working intensively over 12 months, the StARTer project brought together a young people’s steering group and a range of practitioners (teachers, youth workers, artists and policy officers).

In total, more than 50 young people were involved in advising on and producing the multi-media content and design. Inspired by the Latin definition of AGENDA, ‘things to be done’ or ‘matters to be acted upon’, the final product was an illustrated and interactive 75-page
bi-lingual online tool-kit to enable young people to creatively and safely raise awareness of gender-based harassment and violence in their schools and communities.

With a strong steer from the young people’s advisory group, AGENDA was designed so that 11-18-year-olds can explore the issues they are interested in at their own pace. It showcases the different ways in which young people in Wales and across the world have raised awareness of how gender-based and sexual violence impact upon their lives and the lives of others. Topics include: gender discrimination and stereotypes, sexual consent, LGBTQ+ rights, street harassment, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and relationship abuse. AGENDA thus explicitly sets out to counter all the negative ways in which many of these issues are framed and foregrounded in policy and in practice by offering an affirmative, ethical-political and creative approach to engage deeply entrenched and complex issues and experiences.

Indeed, the ‘making’ of ‘making positive relationships matter’ is central to the resource and draws extensively upon more than 10 years of working with creative pARTicipatory methodologies (see, for example, https://www.productivemargins.ac.uk, https://wiserd.ac.uk/young-people-and-place-project). The use of creative methods, such as the visual arts, poetry, movement and drama, are showcased throughout the resource to demonstrate how arts-based pedagogy can support young people to make the personal political without revealing too much of themselves. For example, in the activity *What Jars You*, young people are encouraged to write down issues that ‘jar’ them about inequality and unfairness. Case studies also include LGBTQ+ and feminist youth groups delivering staff workshops on gender diversity using card games and cooking. Graffitied ruler-skirts have been worn in school assemblies to speak out about unwanted touching and sexually abusive banter, and physics concepts like force, friction and gravity have been used to explore coercion and control in teen relationships through movement and sound.

Educational resources need to be used, funded and supported. Making AGENDA matter since its launch in November 2016 has involved embedding it into practice through sustaining and building new collaborations via outreach work in schools and youth groups, and hosting training and engagement workshops via local, national and international workshops at conferences, including police officers, teachers and youth workers. To date, we have reached more than 3000 young people and practitioners, trained more than 40 AGENDA youth ambassadors, and partnered with the US organisation SPARK (sparkmovement.org). We are currently in the process of developing case studies for primary AGENDA (age 7-11) and are exploring the development of a UK-wide version.

Only time will tell how AGENDA continues to matter. It’s still too risky and lively for some! Glimpses of its potential, however, can be witnessed in the creative ways in which young people and practitioners are adapting its contents to address forms of gender and sexuality discrimination, abuse and violence that are all too often silenced, simplified or sensationalised in schools and beyond.

To download the resource go to: www.agenda.wales.

To find out more about how young people are using the resource, go to: http://www.genderandeducation.com/conferences-and-events/past_events/young-people-light-up-the-agenda-for-a-better-sex-and-relationships-education/ or watch here: https://vimeo.com/224546331.

To read more about how pARTicipatory methodologies can support creative research-activisms on sensitive topics, see Renold, 2018, and Libby et al, 2018.

**REFERENCES**

How many education researchers feel that informing policy through their research is beyond their reach? The Respecting Children and Young People project that I led for BERA from 2013 to 2015 engaged a varied and large number of educational researchers, all committed to equality and social justice, and many who drew from different theories critical of society’s foundations and critical of prevailing policy and practice. Reflecting upon the project, it seemed that policy influence felt especially out of reach for socially critical researchers. Research on research utilisation and knowledge mobilisation explains and gives credence to this phenomenon. The research and policy interface is a relationship of power, and what we experience as a limit to the influence of our research comes about by power exercised through social and discursive practices. Socially critical research is not essentially without value when created in a world dominated by practices of market exchange, but its value is restricted largely to its economic value rather than how useful it might be for developing socially just educational policies (Mangez & Hilgers, 2012; Lubienski, in press). In this environment, the researcher who produces socially critical research – and it is not an easy task given that the cultural resources that enable its production are very unevenly distributed – generally sits outside of the research/policy/practice nexus. Yet, being limited to the position of social critic is neither practical for researchers held to account for the impact of their research nor desirable for those who hold knowledge that may alleviate social ills.

A strand of work I have been developing with colleagues in the United Kingdom and beyond considers whether socially critical researchers can more actively pursue policy influence. The aim is not to disregard the limits to the influence of socially critical research, which we recognise and can pinpoint in our own work, but to open up thought, discussion and action on mitigating the effects of oppositional ideologies and activities. Recently, I have been editing a journal special issue entitled From Critical Research to Policy with co-editors Katy Vigurs and Christopher Lubienski that builds on a BERA symposium that we took with Ruth Lupton, Liz Todd, Jocey Quinn and Michael Apple to the AERA Annual Meeting in 2015. The special issue has five articles developed from the symposium and another two – one from the BERA Research Commission on Poverty and Policy Advocacy, and another from Australian colleagues Stephen Heimans and Parlo Singh. Contributors responded to the following three questions:

- What can we learn from our experiences at the interface between critical research and policy?
What does systematic research on knowledge production, expertise and utilisation tell us that could be applied to strengthening pathways between critical research and policy?

How might this knowledge influence a new agenda for critically-informed education policy and practice?

The seven articles vary in their level of optimism, yet even the authors most critical and resigned to the complexity of engaging policy-makers in critical work suggest options for critical researchers. Policy may take an actively blinkered stance to critical research because the status quo accepts inequality as its precondition, yet there are ways critical researchers can be useful (Quinn, 2017). Researchers can gather accounts of lived reality of educational policies and the practices within their remit that can deepen and strengthen research participants’ own understanding of their situation and inform their actions (Ivinson et al, 2017). Alternatively, critical researchers can accept the model of economic exchange that is imposed upon research and engage with policy-makers on those terms (Lubienski, 2018), even though it risks co-option of a critical agenda and the dilution of critical ideas.

In my view, there are three important considerations for strengthening pathways between critical research and policy that emerge from our collective work. The first is for socially critical researchers to deepen understanding and document the limits in relationships between research and policy. Reported in one of the special issue papers is an analysis of 85 high quality impact case studies (ICS) submitted to the Education Unit of Assessment in REF 2014 by 21 universities (Laing, Mazzoli Smith & Todd, 2017). The analysis revealed very little research using the methods of critical education research (that is, solely qualitative or theoretical approaches) mentioned in ICS, and therefore, Laing et al conclude, deemed by the submitting universities to be impactful. The independent review of REF 2014 led by Lord Stern (2016) also suggested that the interpretation of impact by the submitting institutions was narrow. This is knowledge of importance to educational researchers to share widely within HEIs and research networks.

Education policy sociology of the past 30 years highlights the non-linear construction of policy, and more recently suggests that contextually bound networks of power and influence generate, interpret and convey policy through enactment (Heimans & Singh, 2017). The second consideration for researchers is to think more carefully about the different roles they might adopt in respect of policy influence. For example, Ruth Lupton and Debra Hayes (2017) suggest that researchers can conceptualise their role as pedagogical in their relationships within policy networks, which is a more realistic expectation than achieving direct transmission of critical knowledge into policy.

Thirdly, insights on the social and discursive production of policy should encourage critical researchers to think more carefully about the contexts in which they engage. The paper I wrote with Katy Vigurs (2017) draws upon public sphere theory to conceptualise different forms of public in public engagement. Understanding our position in relation to mainstream and countercultures can assist critical researchers to act more strategically. First, by focusing their attention on changing the opinion of accessible publics rather than those in distant public policy spheres; and second, by recognising and contributing towards alliances across countercultural spheres where compatible ideological or ethical discourses circulate, and may come to influence the opinions of mainstream publics.

REFERENCES


This article details the impact of work by Professor Vanita Sundaram and Annis Stead (Principal Investigator and Research Fellow respectively, University of York) on the project titled Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence. As well as transforming the university context, and creating a lasting legacy at six institutions, research evidence has been disseminated at a local and national level. The project was put forward for the BERA & SAGE Public Engagement and Impact Award.

**COLLABORATIVE DESIGN**
Funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (under the Daphne Programme for Preventing Violence against Women, Children and Young People) action research took place across seven European countries with at least 13 higher education institutions beginning May 2016. The aim of the project was to create, deliver and evaluate a specialist training programme aimed at university support staff. Based on research evidence, the training was designed to equip staff in delivering supportive and empathetic ‘first responses’ to disclosures of sexual violence. Each partner university created a programme that was specific to its local and cultural context, following research interviews with stakeholders (including student representatives) to assess the specific training needs within the university community. The training was then designed including in iterative consultation with local sexual violence services to ensure ‘best practice’ was recommended. These services included: Independent Domestic Advice Services (IDAS), Survive and the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre. An intended outcome of such action research was that survivors of sexual violence would feel more supported by their institutions, and might therefore feel more comfortable in disclosing or reporting such incidents. Further, generating empathy for survivors, and an awareness of the harmful cultures which normalise sexual violence, among university staff may encourage training participants to challenge harmful behaviours.

**DELIVERY AND EVALUATION**
At the University of York over 80 student-facing staff members were trained during the academic year 2016/17 across a variety of student-facing welfare and support departments. The training was delivered by members of staff from the university counselling service, and researchers in the field of gender-based violence from the Department of Education. In order to evaluate the programme, each participant completed a brief knowledge questionnaire before and after the training, rating their understanding of sexual violence, types of disclosure and availability of support on a 1-5 Likert scale. Statistical comparison of the pre- and post-training questionnaires indicates a significant improvement in knowledge following the training, on all of the 17 measures: p<0.05 using Wilcoxon Signed Rank test. Further, in open-text questions,
participants evaluated the training programme favourably and claimed that it met their training needs. These findings indicate that the training was successful in educating participants on sexual violence and in generating empathy for survivors/victims.

**EMBEDDING**

As a project team we have worked to embed this training programme at the institutional level in a number of ways. Firstly, printed resources were disseminated to all academic supervisors in time for the new academic year 2017/18; these featured 'top tips' on responding to disclosures of sexual violence and signposted to sources of support for survivors in the university and local community. Secondly, the team have met with Human Resources to develop a training package, which we hope can be delivered to all staff members at the institution. Work is currently underway to make a significant portion of the information available online. Thirdly, members of the project team have attended meetings of the Higher York Student Health and Wellbeing network, which is aiming to create an action plan for supporting students, following a city-wide student health needs assessment. The expertise and practices garnered through USVreact will therefore inform educational institutions across the city of York, and hopefully continue to be disseminated within the university.

**LEGACY**

A requirement for all European partners was to train a further 80 staff at Associate Partner institutions; facilitators at York St John University and Lancaster University have been trained to roll out the programme in Spring 2018. Additionally, Prof Vanita Sundaram was successful in obtaining an ESRC Impact Acceleration grant to support extending partnership to a further three Northern institutions over the next academic year, each responsible for training another 80 staff members.

The institutions taking this training on board will be worked with collaboratively to create locally-specific changes to the materials. Training has begun at the University of Bradford and Northumbria University, with plans in place to deliver training at the University of Leeds. In total, it is intended that more than 500 staff members across six universities will participate in the training programme by the project end. Training materials are hosted online so that any institution may access them.

This research project has dovetailed with another funded project where Prof Vanita Sundaram is the academic lead, and Annis Stead (along with Laura Nicklin-Reeves) is also a Research Fellow. The latter project is funded by the HEFCE Catalyst fund for Safeguarding Students and involves using an adapted version of the USVreact training programme in order to train student leaders on receiving disclosures of sexual violence. Without the impressive feat of delivering an institution-wide training programme for staff, the University of York’s bid for HEFCE funding might not have been successful. At the time of writing, the shortened training programme has been delivered to more than 5000 students, both student leaders and incoming students. Preliminary findings suggest that the training has effectively educated students on issues of consent and sexual violence.

As well as the significant impact described above, project members have also presented progress reports on the research at local public engagement events: Pint of Science, a talk for the York Union (student society) and the Bradford Diversity Festival 2017. Findings from all European partner institutions were presented at a one-day conference in London in November 2017, and local and Associate Partner findings were disseminated via a conference at the University of York on 27th February 2018.
From first undertaking this research, I kept in mind the importance of raising awareness and increasing the understanding of the educational impact of this common childhood condition. At the centre was to share the experience of mothers and young children. Glue Ear, or Otitis media with effusion, is a predominantly childhood complaint believed to affect up to 80% of children under the age of 7 years. It is caused by a build-up of sticky fluid (glue) in the middle ear resulting in temporary hearing impairment (Vergison et al, 2017). It can be accompanied by ear infections and pain. It occurs globally and has been documented since Egyptian times. It is described as trivial and not impacting children’s development. Generally missing from the literature is the perspective of families and young people about how Glue Ear has impacted their lives. This disassociation between the person and the condition is underlined when research findings are described in terms of ‘ears’ (Carlson & Carlson, 2003). By adapting the Photovoice methodology (Capewell, 2014) all participants individually constructed visual images and short written descriptions. Involving both adult and young people’s perspectives of the same situations demonstrates different interpretations (Capewell & Ralph, 2015).

Currently no apparent support groups exist for young people or their parents. Questions on internet forums relating to Glue Ear go unanswered by professionals. It is generally not considered a ‘special need’ or a ‘chronic childhood condition’ (Mokkink et al, 2008). This potentially leaves parents feeling isolated and/or frustrated when trying to gain support. My research into Glue Ear developed with the aim of achieving information about the impact on the quality of life of those affected by the condition. My work seeks to:

- provide information to parents and young people about Glue Ear;
- change educational professionals’ understanding of it;
- encourage healthcare professionals to engage in dialogue with parents/carers and young people about their experience with it; and
- identify ways that children and young people can express their knowledge and understanding of their experience of its day-to-day impact and the support they need.

I view my research as interdisciplinary rather than bound to fields such as ‘education’, ‘health’ or ‘psychology’. I have made national and international conference presentations at the European Conference of Educational Research (ECER), British Society of Audiologists (BSA), ESPO European ENT Paediatric Consultants Conference and BPS Division of Child and Educational Psychology (DECP), Australian Association of Educational Research (AARE), Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE), Otitis Media Society (whose membership is primarily in the USA and Australia), and the International Association of Special Education (whose membership comes mainly from developing countries).
At ESPO, the representative of the Turner Syndrome society asked me to present at their parent conference about the impact of Glue Ear and how to support their daughters. The Chair of the Smith-Magenis Syndrome society saw a posting on the Turner Syndrome website and contacted me to do a similar presentation at their parent conference. Parents at both conferences reported that my session gave them better understanding of why their children could become frustrated by not hearing clearly and actions they could take to alleviate stress. Similarly, I have been asked to present at universities for students on Special Education, Social Work and Children’s Nursing courses. Students have commented that insight into how Glue Ear affects children has changed their practice. I believe all early years training providers should include Glue Ear in their courses.

The Editor of the DECP journal asked me to write an article identifying some of the developmental issues that could arise from Glue Ear. I have written invited articles for the BSA journal (Audacity), Assessment and Development Matters (BPS) and Support for Learning. From follow-up conversations after conferences with professionals, I have learned that their practices have altered. An educational psychologist said she understands the potential impact of a history of Glue Ear and an audiologist now makes a conscious effort to ask children about their hearing loss and its impact on their day-to-day life.

My presence on social media (Twitter, Facebook) has led to contact with parents and professionals. Some parents have become involved in my research as participants, and reflecting on their experience has led to adjustments in gaining their child’s attention. One mother explained that her child is now more assertive as to what he requires to understand speech, such as making sure others face him. This has led him to feel more confident.

Posting on Twitter led to an invitation to present to a group of researchers about ways in which young people can be involved in research and the new insights this provides once their views are incorporated into the research process. Another Twitter invitation resulted in my writing materials for the MSc for Teachers of the Deaf at Birmingham University. At an Early Years conference in 2017, following a question I posed, I was asked to become involved with The Ear Foundation, presenting at a Glue Ear awareness day for parents and professionals. Consequently, I am developing relationships with ENT consultants, Teachers of the Deaf and audiologists. I continue to welcome opportunities to engage with various stakeholders so as to ensure optimal impact of my research on wider society and improve the lives of those impacted.

REFERENCES

Constructing Research Impact in Teacher Education through International Collaboration and Capacity Building

By Maria Teresa Tatto, Arizona State University

The final Report of the BERA-RSA Inquiry (2014) into the contribution of research to build the capacity for a self-improving teacher education system concludes that the UK “lacks a coherent plan for teacher research and development, [and that] teachers’ experience of professional development in most parts of the UK is fragmented, occasional and insufficiently informed by research.” This situation reflects that of other countries but it is in contrast to that of internationally well regarded education systems such as those in Finland, Canada and Singapore. The updated seven background papers commissioned by the Inquiry have appeared in a special issue of the *Oxford Review of Education*. The most important take away from the 18-month inquiry is illustrated in the words of John Furlong:

“Teachers and students thrive in the kind of settings that we describe as research-rich, and research-rich schools and colleges are those that are likely to have the greatest capacity for self-evaluation and self-improvement.”

Nevertheless, the production of research-informed knowledge to enlighten practice has proven difficult. Some in the field have attributed the difficulty to teachers’ and teacher educators’ lack of access to resources, knowledge and skills to address challenging situations in practice (Hill, 2003).

A different way of thinking about lack of impact could be the traditional separation that has existed between those who do research and those who are involved in the practice of teaching and educating teachers. The notion of researchers looking-in to explore contexts, conditions, activities, knowledge and so on to then inform practitioners and others about what works and what does not, has resulted in years of missed opportunities for growth and advancement in the field of education. How has this occurred? One possible explanation is that teachers have not been prepared to engage in rigorous research on their own practice. In many contexts, teachers follow a pre-designed curriculum typically prepared and evaluated by others. Only in a few cases, such as in Finland, are teachers expected to use research-based evidence to self-regulate, and are accordingly prepared differently.

The lack of research-rich schools is likely to be a direct reflection of the state of teacher education. Indeed, while teacher educators may engage in research on teachers and teaching, this research has rarely been fully collaborative (for example, with and for teachers), agentic (Bandura, 2001), interdisciplinary, reflective, relational and rigorous (Tatto, 2017). Consequently, much of the research that has been produced in education has lacked power to influence practice and policy in important ways.

New initiatives worldwide, however, are altering the research landscape. As the new *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Clandinin & Husu, 2017) makes clear, while contested, research is increasingly interdisciplinary, moving away from traditional silos, and becoming more agentic, collaborative and international.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN AGENTIC RESEARCH STUDY

In the rest of this piece, I summarise an example of international research in teacher education that was developed by a team of teacher educators across 17 countries who, with the support of measurement, sampling and statistics experts, engaged in a rigorous exploration of their teacher education programmes. Researchers in the study, known as TEDS-M 2008, constructed a common language to help design an international and comparative study, and together questioned assumptions about how and what future teachers learn, and used findings to influence their own practice and future policy.

Teacher educators in collaboration with their future teachers explored the knowledge outcomes of their own primary and secondary teacher education programmes within each country. Because knowledge of teaching is acquired within content contexts, mathematics was selected as a focus of the study (the rationale for the selection of mathematics is the large amount of international research that exists as a result of large-scale assessments such as TIMSS and which paved the road for the development of common understandings). The study developed the capacity of teacher educators to continue collecting data from their programmes, with several researchers...
establishing an ongoing research agenda based on what they learned from the TEDS-M study.

For brevity, this summary refers to the secondary study only (for a more comprehensive description of the TEDS-M study, consult Tattoo, 2017; Tattoo et al, 2012).

**STUDYING SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION IN 11 COUNTRIES**

The secondary programmes studied were in Chile, Germany, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States (three more countries also collected secondary programme data but they were excluded from the analysis because they did not meet the coverage requirement to ascertain representativeness).

The research questions explored the following questions.

- What is the level of the mathematical content knowledge and mathematical-pedagogical content knowledge that future secondary teachers attain within countries?

- How are specific characteristics of future teachers (such as socioeconomic status, age, gender, prior attainment and beliefs) associated with their attained levels of knowledge?

- What are some of the key learning opportunities available to future secondary teachers in their teacher education programmes, and how are these associated with their attained levels of knowledge?

The assumptions behind these questions had to do with the design of opportunities to learn that teacher education programmes offer, with selection strategies, and with the knowledge and beliefs that future teachers attained against programme and system expectations.

The analysis of the data showed wide variability across countries in the knowledge for teaching mathematics that future secondary teachers attain. Programmes’ selectivity, mathematics-rich opportunities to learn, and views critical to traditional orientations to learning to teach mathematics were associated with higher and deeper levels of mathematical knowledge and mathematical-pedagogical knowledge, after controlling for individual characteristics. These findings helped teacher educators realise that in their own countries (with some exceptions, for example, Russia) much of the variation affecting outcomes was occurring within programmes, revealing a field in need of coherence (albeit not uniformity).

**CONCLUSION**

Going back to John Furlong’s reflection on the BERA-RSA Inquiry, the TEDS-M study serves as an example of a research-rich undertaking by teacher educators that led to developing ‘capacity for self-evaluation and self-improvement.’ Teacher educators who implemented the study used the results to inform and review their programmes and their practices and to, in some cases, influence teacher education policy at the local and federal levels (for example, Avalos et al, 2010; Cañadas et al., 2013, among others). Overall, the TEDS-M effort highlights the importance of self-study and self-regulation in teacher education as a means to influence practice at the ground level and eventually policy at the meso and macro levels. Moreover, the contribution of the study goes beyond informing local practice; it has enriched the field, given that the resulting rich database is publicly available for further analysis. A new book is forthcoming, illustrating the use of the TEDS-M data for secondary analysis (Tatto et al, forthcoming).

**REFERENCES**

+ Tattoo, M.T. (2017) The Role of Comparative and International Research in Developing Capacity to Study and Improve Teacher Education. In M. A. Peters; B. Cowie & I. Menter (Eds.), A Companion to Research in Teacher Education. Singapore: Springer.
The PG Forum has had a productive 2017, with more exciting events planned for 2018. In 2017, the PG Forum convenors ran symposia at locations in Portsmouth, Keele, Glasgow and Bath. These events were aimed at supporting PG Forum members to share their diverse and challenging methodological dilemmas. All events were well attended and feedback was highly positive with enthusiasm for “more of the same (please!)”.

A further event focusing on creative and innovative methodologies was jointly run by the PGR/ECR networks of BERA and SERA, supported by the BERA Research Methodology in Education SIG and Coventry University. The event was well received by participants, who found the day inspiring, enabling them to leave with new ideas and feeling very motivated to move forward with their own research – hopefully incorporating some creative and innovative methodologies along the way!

In response to the positive feedback received from PG members, a further four symposia have been proposed for 2018 with a theme of ‘ethical dilemmas in educational research’. In a drive to encourage collaborative enterprise, the PG Forum have teamed up with Cardiff University DTP students to host a joint-badge event with a focus on ethical dilemmas in educational research. A further one-day writer’s workshop has also been developed in conjunction with BAICE (the British Association for International and Comparative Education) for March 2018, where delegates can gain valuable experience into writing for publication from experienced professionals in academia and media. Further information about this event can be found at: https://www.bera.ac.uk/event/bera-baice-18.

The PG Forum convenors would like to encourage further collaboration between SIGs as well as promoting PG membership. Interested parties are invited to contact SIG convenors with any proposals for further joint events that will contribute to supporting the PG membership section of BERA.

The PG Forum convenors are also keen to encourage PG members to contribute to the BERA Blog with any questions or topics they would like to discuss.

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” Benjamin Franklin

By Georgie Shaw, Yuwei Xu, Oliver Hooper, Convenors
I commence by recognising the excellent leadership of the two previous Presidents, George Head and Laura Colucci-Gray, and the unwavering support provided by the Vice President (incoming President 2018–19), Stephen Day. Further, SERA has been fortunate that the members of the Executive are very willing to work hard and contribute to the activities of SERA.

SERA has operated over the past few years within the unsettling contexts of Indyref and Brexit. We have been anxious that these have not distracted us from the other major issues that have had an impact on education. As an Executive, we have frequently discussed the limitations of the human and financial capacity that is available to us, and we have made collective decisions to focus our energies on a number of initiatives and activities. I wish to highlight four themes: networks; early career researchers; links with external bodies; and conferences.

NETWORKS
Over the past four years we have revived the SERA networks. The networks are each focused on a major national and international topic in education, and provide an interface between academic research and policy-makers, practitioners, school leaders and other relevant parties. All the networks are active throughout the year and bring together very diverse groups of people. The Scottish Physical Education Network and the Leadership in Scottish Education Network have arranged a series of very well attended and well received seminars and workshops. The Poverty and Education Network organised a joint seminar with the BERA Research Commission on Poverty and Policy Advocacy. The Early Years Network is recommencing activities.

LINKS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES
SERA has consolidated existing links with national and international partners and has established or re-established relationships with other parties. The increasingly close cooperation between SERA and BERA has been very fruitful.

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS
The SERA Executive has remained committed to supporting early career researchers. We have recently established an Emerging Researchers Network and there is a longer standing, and very active, SERA Research Students’ Network, which has organized a number of highly successful BERA-SERA postgraduate research events.

CONFERENCES
The final theme is conferences. The conference continues to be a major highlight of the year and the conferences during my time as President have continued to expand the modes of delivery (including paper, symposium, workshop, roundtable, three-minute thesis and Pecha Kucha) and the international dimension of the conference. We continue to attract participants from a wide variety of countries. In the past few years we have introduced a session for newly qualified teachers on the last day of the conference and this has proved to be highly successful.

All of the activities that have been outlined above require strategic vision and operation but also dedication and commitment from the SERA Executive and SERA members to ensure their continued success.
UPCOMING SIG EVENTS

This year BERA will be hosting a series of exciting and influential events at some of the most innovative colleges and universities in the country. Below are just some of the events organised by our special interest groups (SIGs).

**THE ETHICS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH**
28 March 2018, The Open University
9.30am–3.30pm

**DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH: MAKING AN IMPACT**
7 June 2018, University of Cumbria
9.30am–4.00pm

**RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY IN THE CLASSROOM**
9 June 2018, University of Suffolk
9.00am–4.00pm

**PESP INVISIBLE COLLEGE 2018**
10 September 2018, The County Hotel, Newcastle
10.00am–4.00pm (tbc)

**THE IMPACT OF POLICY ON LEADERSHIP PRACTICE: GROWING A RESEARCH AGENDA**
13–14 September 2018, Newcastle University
7.00pm–8.00pm & 10.00am–3.30pm

BURSARIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE EVENTS ABOVE. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.BERA.AC.UK/EVENTS
CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE ISSUES OF RESEARCH INTELLIGENCE

We are looking for suggestions for future themes and guest editors for those themes. If you have an idea you would like to discuss with our Publications Committee, please contact publications@bera.ac.uk.

RI (Research Intelligence) is BERA’s primary record of members’ contributions to the field. Each issue is dedicated to a holistic investigation of a topical theme of interest to the field of educational researchers, and those with an interest in the impact of educational research on policy and practice. We regularly invite contributions from researchers at different stages in their career to demonstrate the Association’s commitment to engagement, capacity and dissemination.

OPINION AND GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS – THE BERA BLOG

The BERA Blog has been established to provide research informed content on key educational issues. Members wishing to respond to a published RI article should consider the BERA Blog as the best means of doing so.

The Blog editorial team welcome articles of 500-750 words (including any references) that are:
· short reports or summaries of research;
· opinion pieces;
· responses to policies;
· experiences as an educational researcher;
· experiences using research.

Prospective contributors should ensure their contributions:
· are research informed;
· avoid jargon, dense language and excessive references;
· provide links to sources where possible;
· use inclusive and non-derogatory language;
· do not include obscene or rude content, or content that belittles or attacks persons or groups;
· do not link to profane, obscene, rude, or illegal material or to sites that knowingly violate intellectual property rights.

Please see: www.bera.ac.uk/blog for more.
All BERA Blog submissions should be sent to: publications@bera.ac.uk.

NOTES FOR RESEARCH INTELLIGENCE CONTRIBUTORS

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KEY DEADLINES

01 MAY 2018
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DEADLINE
ALL PRESENTING AUTHORS TO BE REGISTERED

20 MARCH 2018
Authors notified of outcome of submission

23 MAY 2018
Authors notified of date and time of presentation

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

PROFESSOR CAROL VINCENT

Carol Vincent is a professor of sociology of education at UCL Institute of Education. She has extensive writing and research experience, especially with regard to families and their relationships with the education system. Recent ESRC-funded projects include work with colleagues on the educational strategies of the Black middle classes, and on children’s and adults’ friendships across social class and ethnic difference. A book focusing on this last project is due to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2018 under the title of “Friendship and Diversity”. Carol is currently working on a project funded by a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship on teachers’ understandings and promotions of British values.

PROFESSOR SUE DOCKETT

Sue Dockett is Professor of Early Childhood Education at Charles Sturt University, Albury, Australia. Over more than 30 years, she has been actively involved in early childhood education as a teacher, academic and researcher. Much of Sue’s current research agenda is focused on educational transitions; in particular, transitions to school and the expectations, experiences and perceptions of all involved. This research has been published widely, and has had substantial impact on policy, practice and research. Complementing her research around educational transitions is research that incorporates children’s perspectives, engages with families in diverse contexts, reflects upon the practices of educators, and explores the importance of working with communities.

PROFESSOR PAUL MILLER

Paul Miller, PhD, is Professor of Educational Leadership & Management in the School of Education & Professional Development at the University of Huddersfield, UK, and the first black academic to be appointed to a Professorship in Educational Leadership & Management at a British university. He is President of the Institute for Educational Administration & Leadership- Jamaica (IEAL-J); a member of the Board of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM); a member of Council of the British Educational Leadership Administration Society (BELMAS); and a member of the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM) Technical Working Group on Educational Leadership & Teaching Innovation.

PROFESSOR LINDSAY PATERSO

Lindsay Paterson is Professor of Educational Policy in the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh. His main academic interests are in education, civic engagement and political attitudes. He has published widely on the expansion and purposes of higher education, on social mobility, on the relationship between education and civic values, on the twentieth-century history of Scottish education, and on Scottish politics. He has provided policy advice to the Scottish Parliament’s Education Committee and to the Scottish Government. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.