



## **Contemporary research in Irish education: Volume 6: Book of abstracts of the 8th Annual Postgraduate Research Seminar**

Title	Contemporary research in Irish education: Volume 6: Book of abstracts of the 8th Annual Postgraduate Research Seminar
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# Eight Annual Postgraduate Research Seminar (PGRS)

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*Contemporary Research  
in Irish Education*

**Book of Abstracts**

APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup> 2019

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School of Education  
National University of Ireland, Galway



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh



## Welcome and Introduction

We are delighted to welcome you to the 8th Annual Postgraduate Research Seminar of the School of Education, NUI Galway. A central part of the School of Education's recurrent *Research Seminar Series*, this annual research colloquium affords the School's master and doctoral researchers the opportunity to present their research to colleagues and peers.

The seminar furthermore provides opportunities to share and discuss the School of Education's graduate research, and the broader conceptual and methodological contexts within which that research is undertaken.

This book of abstracts is the sixth in the series, *Contemporary Research in Irish Education*. As in the previous publications, this year's book of abstracts includes synopses of current and ongoing graduate research within the School of Education, NUI Galway.

The research summarised in the 2019 Book of Abstracts engages with and addresses salient questions and topics in contemporary educational research, both in Ireland and internationally.

Building on the successes of the previous seminars, and as a publication output from this year's colloquium, this book of abstracts includes the programme for the School of Education's 2019 Postgraduate Research Seminar and abstracts of the presenters, outlining their respective research questions, methodologies, data collection and analysis.

We would like again to congratulate the presenters in the seminar this year and their supervisors, and to thank all involved in organising this evening's event, particularly those colleagues who are chairing the respective parallel sessions. We look forward to an interesting, insightful and productive discussion and sharing of contemporary, critical educational research.

Le gach dea-mhéin,

*Dr Elaine Keane, Director of Doctoral Studies*

*Professor Gerry Mac Ruairc, Head of School*

*Dr Cornelia Connolly, Chair of Research Committee*

*Dr Tony Hall, Deputy Head of School*

School of Education, NUI Galway

**School of Education, NUI Galway**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Annual Postgraduate Research Seminar (PGRS)**

**SCHEDULE**

**5.15-5.30pm: Welcome (STC)**

Welcome & Overview (Dr. Elaine Keane)

**5.30-7pm: Parallel Session I**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Mary Nihill</b> Learning to Be a School Leader in Ireland	<b>Seun Adebayo</b> Changing Demographics: Challenges of Irish Primary School Teachers in Multicultural Classrooms	<b>Alan Kinsella</b> Exploring the Use of Exploratory Mixed Methods when Carrying out Research with School Leaders
<b>Anthony Kilcoyne</b> School Leadership Professional Development: Imposed, Opposed or Proposed?	<b>Hannagh McGinley</b> Staff and Student Perspectives on the Intercultural Approach to Education: Misunderstandings, Resistances and Discomfort in Intercultural Education	<b>Jim King</b> The Importance of Action Research in Teacher Education
<b>Maria Alvarez-Rementeria</b> Teacher Continuous Training as a Resource to Build More Inclusive Schools	<b>Michelle Mitchell</b> Is Ireland 'Ticking the Box' on Deaf Education?	<b>Orlaith Kelly</b> Blended Learning Design in Accounting: Theory-informed Practice
<i>Venue: STC</i> <i>Chair: Dr. Ian Munday</i>	<i>Venue: G023</i> <i>Chair: Dr. Elaine Keane</i>	<i>Venue: G024</i> <i>Chair: Dr. Veronica McCauley</i>

**7-7.15pm: Break for Refreshments**

**7.15-8.45pm: Parallel Session II**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Sarah Carroll</b> The Strengths and Sources of Irish Primary Pupils' Science Self-Efficacy Beliefs and their Perceptions of Scientists as Science Self-Efficacy Influencers	<b>Miriam Colum</b> Leadership, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEN): What the Literature Tells Us	<b>Michael McNamara</b> Assessment in the Digital Age
<b>Adriana Cardinot</b> Facilitating Conceptual Change in Astronomy Education through Game-Based Learning	<b>Rachael Comer</b> Understanding the Cervical Screening Behaviour of Women Over 50 Years	<b>Gemma O'Callaghan</b> Creativity in Computer Science in Senior Cycle Education
<b>Gary McConway</b> The Teaching of Enterprise in Irish Second Level Schools: An Analysis of the Antecedent and Contextual Factors which Deliver Success for All	<b>Aine Bird</b> Exploring Community Stewardship through Place-based Learning: Evaluating Impact and Potential for Knowledge Transfer	<b>Ronan Connolly</b> "This class and the online community here are totally awesome": Reflections on User Feedback from Cycle 1 of the Design-Based Research Project <i>Gaeltacht.net</i> .
<i>Venue: STC</i> <i>Chair: Dr. Kevin Davison</i>	<i>Venue: G023</i> <i>Chair: Dr. Manuela Heinz</i>	<i>Venue: G024</i> <i>Chair: Dr. Niamh Flynn</i>

**8.45-9pm: Close: (STC)**

Close (Dr. Elaine Keane)

## Learning to be a School Leader in Ireland

Mary Nihill

The focus of this doctoral study is leadership development as a vehicle for realising change in the practice of school leaders. The proposal being explored is that this change in practice brought about by quality professional development, will result in improved pedagogy leading to improved learning outcomes for students. Thus at the core of this thesis is an exploration of the impact of professional development on student learning outcomes. The thesis will propose and test a model of professional development for school leaders on the leadership continuum. The proposed model will then be evaluated in terms of its use by a number of providers as a framework for their professional development provision for Irish school leaders through the use of case studies.

Like many other jurisdictions, there has been growing attention to the pivotal role of school leaders in improving the quality of education in Ireland. In Ireland, the development of the Quality Framework for Leadership and Management as part of the “Looking at our Schools 2016, has brought a focus to the importance of leadership for good learning outcomes for students and the need to develop leadership qualities and skills from the outset of a career. Additionally, the formation of the Centre for School Leadership in 2015 was a recognition of the central role of leadership to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning for all students. Themes that are emerging in the literature include amongst others issues such as:

Who are the leaders in Irish schools currently and is there a change in the understanding of what is meant by school leadership in Irish school system?

What exactly is meant by professional development?

How to evaluate the impact of any professional learning event on improved learning outcomes for students?

Key Words: Professional Development, School Leadership, Impact

Abstract: Is Ireland ticking the box on Deaf education?

Globally speaking, there are conventions and laws in place to provide the basic needs of children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, 1990 (UNCRC) has been signed and ratified by 196 countries and includes all members of the United Nations (excluding United States of America). The United Nations Convention on Persons with Disabilities, 2006 (UNPWD) has received 164 accessions and ratifications; with only 89 ratifications and accessions received for the Optional Protocol. Ireland signed the UNPWD in 2007 but only ratified it in 2018, not signing the Optional Protocol. Without the Optional Protocol being ratified, there is no recourse for people with disabilities if the delivery of basic needs e.g. health, education, etc. have not been provided.

In order to provide the best education it is important to understand what is required. Article 23 and Article 28 of the UNCRC clearly state what is required for education. Countries that have signed and ratified the UNPWD are required to develop and carry out the policies set out (Article 4). Specifically dealing with Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing children's education two articles are provided: Article 24(3)(b) "Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community" and (c) "Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development." Sign language is the first language for those who use it to communicate with others and who rely on it for learning and expression. Additionally, without access to information for the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing cohort in society, this cannot be provided (Article 9(2)(e)(f)(g)).

However, it must be asked whether countries that have signed and ratified the UNPWD have implemented those requirements? In Europe, Scandinavian countries have indeed made some obligatory changes, but many have not. Looking to Ireland, is this the case: are we only ticking the box? Ratifying the UNPWD is particularly relevant because in December 2017 the Recognition of Irish Sign Language Bill, 2016 was signed into Irish law. This is the result of Deaf communities for demand for unequivocal legal recognition of their language. The legal recognition of sign language has been passed by 36 countries, with most countries located in the European Union and this may have prompted the legislative powers in Ireland to do the same. Yet, since the Irish Sign Language Bill, 2016 was enacted, how has this changed education for the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing in Ireland? What must be done in order to create an inclusive, equitable and successful education for this community?

Michelle Mitchell  
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## **Presenter Details**

*Name:* Alan J. Kinsella, [akinsella@gmail.com](mailto:akinsella@gmail.com)

*Title:* Exploring the use of exploratory mixed methods when carrying out research with school leaders.

## **Abstract**

Over the past three decades, the issue of data use by school leaders for accountability and improvement purposes has taken on increased significance in education policy and practice in most developed countries, including Ireland. This has come about in the context of neoliberal hegemony and the introduction of new public management systems within the education sector. International research suggests that the response of teachers and school leaders to this 'datafication' is multi-faceted and depends on a wide range of factors and contexts. This study seeks to identify the factors which impact on Irish post-primary school leaders' attitude towards and use of data with a view to providing insights into how data and evidence use may be facilitated and promoted in a constructive and effective manner.

This paper will focus on the use of the exploratory mixed methods approach to carry out such research among school leaders. It will examine the appropriateness of using this approach to identify and generalise key variables when carrying out research among school leaders and the steps taken to ensure research quality. It will also consider the potential 'insider' issues inherent in a practicing school leader carrying out research amongst his/her peers.



**Name:** Michael Mc Namara

**Title of Presentation:** Assessment in the Digital Age

**Abstract:**

My doctoral research aims to explore the impact of standardised assessment within the Irish primary school context. This study, which is qualitative in nature, collects and analyses the perspectives of key actors in this field, employing a social survey methodology. Here participants, primarily consisting of primary school teachers and principals in Galway city and county, were invited to complete an anonymous online qualitative questionnaire to collect as broad a range of perspectives relating to standardised assessment as was practically possible. Following the analysis of this data, a sub-section of these participants were then interviewed to delve deeper into emergent areas of interest.

Importantly, 'Expert interviews' were also undertaken with National Council for Curriculum and Assessment executives, a standardised test creator and a third level lecturer in this field. This multi-perspective approach has ensured a holistic and thorough exploration of the topic and will consequently impact positively upon the validity and generalisability of the research findings.

This presentation shall focus on the overarching theme of my study, assessment. Since commencing this doctoral study I have borne witness to the changing landscape of assessment in Ireland, most recently entering into it's digital age. During the course of this presentation, I shall explore this transition and outline how digital tools are now aiding to support and enhance assessment practices in the primary and post-primary context, from both a formative and summative perspective. Importantly, I shall also draw upon the analysis of data in my study to incorporate the perspectives of my participants to further contextualise this pedagogical evolution.

## School leadership professional development: imposed, opposed or proposed?

Anthony Kilcoyne

As the concept of change and the speed of change has exponentially transformed in recent times, school leaders have had to learn to live with ambiguity and embrace complexity. Not alone are schools responsible for the erstwhile core responsibility of the intellectual development of the child but also their personal, social, emotional and physical development within the milieu of an increasingly volatile, unstable, complicated and ambiguous world. Leaders have to grapple with a hue of academic excellence that frequently privileges narrow metrics while balancing the need for social justice and equity in delivering on a holistic vision for education.

With school leaders endeavouring to respond to the responsibility of the role and to operate on these shifting sands, the question remains as to how we can better prepare leaders to handle numerous and complex interactions daily and provide service for a diverse range of stakeholders. This view of the role is consistent with the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who understands practice as forever incomplete, immeasurable and always a state of becoming. (Eacott, 2011).

This focus of this paper is on the types and features of leadership professional development, how they are evaluated and what is driving the provision. In particular, it will explore professional learning communities and networks, which are becoming increasingly popular as social learning constructs in the professional development literature.

# Understanding the Cervical Screening Behaviour of Women Over 50 Years

Rachael Comer

## **Abstract**

**Background.** CervicalCheck, the National Cervical Screening Programme, was implemented in Ireland in 2018. Despite achieving their 80% population coverage objective in 2017, participation in women over 50 years remains low. Research has focused on barriers to screening participation and HPV vaccination in young women. Little is known about the cervical screening behaviour of women aged 50-65 years. Better understanding of these issues could help inform strategies to improve participation

**Objective.** To develop a theoretical understanding of cervical screening behaviour in women over 50 & identify organisational factors and interventions that affect participation

**Methods.** Located within an interpretivist paradigm, a constructivist grounded theory was employed. Overall, 32 women participated in one to one interviews. 16 women were up to date with screening, while 11 were not up to date and 5 women never had a smear test. Hard to reach groups to represent the population living in Ireland were included (5 women from the travelling group and 7 ethnic minority women)

**Findings.** The theory identified one core category ‘Spiralling Vulnerabilities’ that represented all of the participant’s main concern. Three sub-categories were raised by women to explain their cervical screening behaviour of women over 50 years living in Ireland. The three sub-categories are: Over-coming Resistance, Struggling with the sexual self and Feeling unsafe (but potentially powerful)

**Conclusion.** Information needs to be tailored specifically for older women. This should ensure that they understand the purpose of screening and its relevance to them. It will also inform smear-takers awareness of how women feel and help allay concerns of negative experiences and misconceptions. Changes to screening programme needs to emphasise that the procedure will be less uncomfortable with new HPV testing and self-testing kits.

## **Abstract – NUIG School of Education PGSR Conference 2019**

**PhD Student:** Seun B. Adebayo

**Supervisor:** Dr. Manuela Heinz

**Title:** Changing Demographics: Challenges of Irish Primary School Teachers in Multicultural Classrooms

With the increasing diversity in Irish society due to migration, education has become crucial for ensuring equality of opportunities for all. However, the recent UNESCO 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report finds that globally, “teachers need special training to develop strategies to deal with over-crowded, mixed-age or multilingual classrooms” to ensure quality education for all (UNESCO, 2019, p. 69). In Ireland, teaching has remained a respected profession with many teachers observed to have successful academic backgrounds. However, the profession has remained homogeneous despite the increasing diversity of students’ population in Irish schools (Heinz, 2008; Heinz & Keane, 2018). Furthermore, Doyle and Keane (2018) posited that necessary support is needed for teachers working in diverse classrooms in Ireland.

This paper which is part of a larger PhD study explores the challenges of Irish primary school teachers in meeting the diverse needs of students and multicultural classrooms for inclusive and quality education for all. The study will adopt a mixed method research strategy, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The study also employs the Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education theoretical framework to probe and classify the different cultural, political and economic factors that may affect primary school teachers in applying differentiation skills in Ireland.

In this presentation, I will focus on the preliminary findings emerging from review of literature which reveal that many mainstream primary school teachers were not adequately prepared to handle the diversity bulge experienced in many Irish schools. Consequently, differentiation was not seen among Irish teachers as a needed practice but a skill to be acquired to address the ‘diversity problem’ in Ireland. The implications of these findings are that research is needed to detail teachers’ daily practices in diverse and multicultural classrooms and how teacher education can adequately prepare teachers to apply inclusive pedagogy in Irish schools.

# Facilitating Conceptual Change in Astronomy Education through Game-Based Learning

Adriana Cardinot and Jessamyn Fairfield

School of Physics, National University of Ireland Galway

April 1, 2019

Game-based learning (GBL) has garnered much attention, showing that games improve understanding, confidence and are an important new tool in the teaching and learning of science. In this context, educational games can be an essential asset in the classroom by enhancing the learning process through play. However, the inclusion of games in astronomy education has been hampered by the lack of astronomy game resources validated in the classroom. This research aims to investigate the use of GBL activities in secondary students' conceptual understanding of the Earth and Space topics in the Junior Cycle specification. In particular, we are interested in how GBL facilitates the process of moving from a naive conception to another more robust conception, i.e., to what degree conceptual change occurs in ontological categories, and how to take into account the effects that GBL has on students' motivational constructs (affective domain). We hope that investigating the use of GBL for astronomy education through both ontological and affective perspectives may shed additional light on gaining an in-depth understanding of the ways students construct knowledge to support long-term learning. Furthermore, this research is guided by the design-based research (DBR) methodology, which blends research-based strategies and theory-driven for designing learning environments. This methodology focus on improving educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development, and implementation in real-world settings with the collaboration of researchers and educators. Within this research, educational games will be developed by both theoretical and empirical research findings. Through multiple iterations, these interventions are assessed in practice and then modified according to the findings of parallel evaluations.

As part of this research, an astronomy board game based on the new JC Irish Science Syllabus has been developed to investigate its effectiveness for the teaching and learning of Earth and Space topics. We have also developed six astronomy game-based learning workshops targeted at post-primary students which will soon be trialled. During our presentation, we will discuss the potentials of using GBL for promoting conceptual change in astronomy education and show our preliminary findings from our first school pilot trial.

**Acknowledgements** This research is supported by CAPES-Brazil, grant number DOC-PLENO - 88881.128466/2016-01.

# **Creativity in Computer Science in Senior Cycle Education**

**Gemma O'Callaghan**

Creativity is at the core of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills defined by business, government and education leaders. The European Commission has published a number of reports asserting the need for the higher order thinking skills such as creativity and critical thinking. Nationally we have seen a number of reports published by the Department of Education and Skills which re-enforce the importance of the inclusion of such skills in our curriculum at second level. The introduction of Computer Science at Senior Cycle, will change the way Irish schools approach computing and information technology – replacing the idea of IT literacy and passive consumers of computing to innovators, creators and designers. Incorporating the senior cycle key skills, one of which is creativity, are core to the development of the Senior Cycle Computer Science curriculum. Teachers are central to the development of creativity in computer science students and as such their perceptions of the subject and its implementation are critical. Contradictory conceptions of creativity have been found in studies completed in EU countries. The research indicates that teachers' attitudes to creativity can be enhanced following the participation in a creativity focused professional development program. There is a need currently for investigative research into Irish computer science teachers' conceptions of creativity as no other studies exist.

The objective of my research is to identify the opportunities and challenges incorporating creativity into the computer science senior cycle and to provide support to pre-service teachers through the development of an appropriate teaching intervention. The research will follow an action research approach where the phases of problem identification, intervention design, intervention implementation, review and evaluation will be completed. The research questions to be answered will dictate the types of research methodologies employed.

**Gary McConway:**

**The teaching of Enterprise in Irish Second Level Schools: an analysis of the Antecedent and Contextual Factors which deliver Success for all...**

Entrepreneurship is universally lauded as a means to creating young innovative citizens who benefit the local and national economy while also being one of the eight EU key competences. Its primacy is articulated in a myriad of European Commission and national reports and embedded in second level curricula and specifications. However, the delivery of these enterprise programmes in second level schools remains ad hoc and sporadic while measuring the success of enterprise education remains problematic due to the nature of the content and the lack of specific certification at second level.

Much of the associated research literature focuses on the 'what' and 'how' enterprise should be taught, but a paucity remains in what shapes the ideal context for the delivery of enterprise programmes and what particular factors predispose a teacher, a school or community to develop excellence within the field. This study seeks to identify and analyse the primary factors, be they antecedent or contextual which facilitates this success in selected 'exemplary' schools by engaging with the relevant stakeholders.

Using purposeful sampling and qualitative research methods in five second level schools framed in a case study methodological approach, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key personnel within the schools. Using a grounded theory approach based on Charmaz's constructivist model (2006), key concepts emerged which now form the basis for discussion and analysis.

This presentation will explore the emergent themes forming the basis of the discussion chapter.

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative data analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

## The Importance of Action Research in Teacher Education

### *Abstract*

*Computational Thinking* provides a framework for studying computing, but also has wider application: *i.e.* recognising aspects of computation in the world, and applying mental agility, tools and techniques in order to reason about natural, social and artificial systems and processes. *Computational Fluency* means having the cognitive ability to tackle problems by breaking them down into solvable parts and devising ‘algorithms’ (by creatively applying a problem-solving cycle requiring transferable mental skills such as *decomposition*; *pattern matching*; *abstraction*; and *automation*) to develop and test solutions. Computational fluency and thinking (CF/T) skills are increasingly critical, as the use of computation becomes central to every activity—including pedagogy. As computers become more intelligent, they have accelerated the requirements of human understanding, so it’s increasingly expected that the educational research community will take responsibility for producing *evidence-informed research* providing the critical research base to argue for, and ultimately introduce as a fundamental, integral component of the national curriculum, computational fluency and similar higher-order thinking skills.

This thesis will critically examine **1) the relevance of CF/T constructs in pre-service teacher education** and **2) the usefulness/practicality of incorporating computational thinking as a means for developing pre-service teacher competencies**. Teacher education is a continuous process, and through the adaptation of an *Action Research* based approach, it is intended to transform theory and knowledge into meaningful and concrete applications—(thus, it is hoped, facilitating, empowering and enhancing pre-service teachers’ professional development)—through a series of weekly seminars aimed at synthesising important elements of learning and knowledge: *e.g. self-reflective enquiry, rationality, justification, understanding, and context*. In a time of social, economic, policy, legislative, cultural, and religious change, there’s increasing recognition of the complexity of the teacher’s role: In this particular instance, it’s hoped that the adaptation of an action-research-based approach will be a significant step toward bridging the overarching thesis’ objective.

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## **Blended learning design in accounting – theory-informed practice**

**Orlaith Kelly**

In a changing educational landscape, this study investigates the effects of blended learning on learning experiences in accounting at tertiary level. There has been a decline in the popularity of accounting as a subject choice at leaving certificate level and as a college course choice in Ireland in recent years, coupled with a dearth of research into Irish accounting education practices. Innovative education methods are vital to ensure the quality and attractiveness of accounting programmes going forward. There is great potential to utilise technology to change accounting education to the greater benefit of the diverse learners in our classrooms. Blended learning is an educational approach which delivers learning activities using a combination of face-to-face and online learning modes. This study introduces innovative teaching strategies in introductory accounting education through the use of blended learning to enhance the learner experience while aiming to achieve deep learning, increased student engagement and self-directed learning. A design-based research approach is utilised where iterative cycles of the blended learning design are enacted, with design changes implemented in collaboration with key stakeholders.

A mixed methods approach is being employed to yield data-rich responses with the collection of quantitative and qualitative data through use of questionnaires, focus groups, student learning journals, learning management system (LMS) activity logs, exam result analysis and instructor field notes. The researcher is currently conducting the second iteration of the blended learning design, which has been informed both by theory and feedback from cycle one. The presentation will focus on the theoretical underpinning of the design, analysis of data collected during the first iteration of the design and the changes implemented in design cycle two.

## **The Teacher Continuous Training as a Resource to Build More Inclusive Schools**

### **Abstract**

Inclusive Education has become one of the primary ongoing challenges of our current educational systems. Taking into account that teachers are one of the the main focus of how we can implement change, Teacher Continuous Training (TCT) is, therefore, a vital resource to improve school practices towards Inclusive Education (IE). This project was created based on a previous study which analysed the training courses that Primary Education Teachers took between 2010 and 2015. Having found the major training areas that teachers were most interested in, we discovered that it was absolutely necessary to give a voice to the obtained data, thereby, deepening the study through qualitative fieldwork.

Thus, the subject of the study is the TCT as a resource to improve school practices towards IE. The final objective is to develop a proposal for improvements of the TCT system in order to boost its impact on building better teaching practices, in terms of inclusion and equality. For that purpose, this project aims: 1. To determine the teacher's preferences regarding the different factors of TCT (contents, methodologies, duration, trainers' profile); 2. To describe how training experiences have facilitated their skills in responding to diversity; and 3. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the training courses, thereby, highlighting the gaps of the teachers' needs.

The methodology is based on a case study that will be developed on Kukullaga Primary School (Basque Country, Spain). The qualitative data record strategies involves in-depth interviews and discussion groups, focusing on the Primary Education Teacher's perspectives about their training experiences. In addition, it is planned to include other Educational Community members' opinions and beliefs, such as the Schools Management Team and the PTA (Parents Teacher Association), in order to have a wider vision of the school's approaches and practices towards inclusion.

## Leadership, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEN): What the literature tell us.

Miriam Colum

This presentation is grounded in research for a Doctoral study exploring leadership and the inclusion of students presenting with special educational needs (SEN), specifically emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), in primary schools in Ireland. Utilizing a Foucaultian lens, the study questions and challenges the compartmentalisation of target groups of students constructed through forms of discourse and discursive practices on SEN with a particular focus on the identification of needs and inclusion in settings through knowledge of traditional, sometimes referred to as 'best', inclusive practice. This is anchored around Foucault's notions of webs of power, discourse, discipline and subjectification thus critiquing and problematizing understandings of educational leadership. The Foucaultian position here is not an engagement in a debate on the philosophical assumptions of the truth, but moreover, mapping the system in which the subject (student) is situated positing that the advent of inclusive practice best serves the target groups. Central to the enactment of practices emerging from this construction is the position of educational leaders, their role in inclusion and the comprehension of power along with the Foucaultian conception of power as 'productive'. To establish this understanding, documentary research was undertaken to identify, define and examine literature in terms of what constitutes leadership and SEN.

The presentation will focus on a systematic review of literature and will outline the key themes from a selection of this research. Adopting Foucaultian theory, it seeks to deconstruct the notion of traditional understandings of educational leadership as an all-knowing approach and demonstrate how leaders are unsure in their roles and how Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) have taken up the mantle that appropriates inclusive practice for students presenting with SEN. This extends beyond what is considered the norm as the 'right way' or 'best practice' but cogitates on reflective and reflexive practice in both the overt and tacit discourse of leadership and how leadership oscillates depending on factors within the school system.

“This class and the online community here are totally awesome”: Reflections on User Feedback from Cycle 1 of the Design-Based Research project Gaeltacht.net.

Ronan Connolly

This presentation reports on a design-based research project to develop an online community of practice among ab initio Irish language learners living overseas, while concurrently producing an educational design framework for adaption into similar language learning contexts. There has been limited research into the use of online social learning tools for minority language learning among overseas learners. Consequently, there has been a lack of robust and reusable models to guide and inform design-based research in this context, and particularly among a unique cohort such as overseas Irish language learners. This research aims to address this problem and shed light on the most effective methods in which to help international learners connect and collaborate through Irish. Research data have been gathered using a mixed method approach.

This paper will reflect on the initial needs survey and first design cycle of this project, titled IDIRLÍON, which took place in Oct/Nov 2018. It will also outline some of the reflections and adjustments made for the current Cycle 2 iteration. This includes the OverCs Language Learning design framework, which emerged from the pilot cycle in Nov 2018. This model enumerates key criteria and principles for designing, implementing and evaluating online social technologies to enhance language learning in an online community of practice.

**Title:** Staff and Student Perspectives on the Intercultural Approach to Education: Misunderstandings, Resistances and Discomfort in Intercultural Education

**Field of Study:** Intercultural Approach to Education/Traveller Education

**Contact Details:**

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**Abstract:**

In the Irish context, the intercultural approach to education has been ‘adopted’ as a means of catering for the increasing diversity in Irish schools (Kitching and Curtin, 2012). The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) produced Intercultural Educational Guidelines (IEGs) for primary and post-primary schools in 2005. The IEGs conceptualise intercultural education as education which “respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity” and “which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination and promotes the values upon which equality is built” (p. 3). While a copy of the IEGs were sent to all teachers throughout the country, no in-service training regarding how to use them was provided research found that the IEGs sat gathering dust on shelves in schools (Bryan, 2010).

My research is a qualitative study that explores how the intercultural approach to education is being understood and implemented in post-primary school at the local level in relation to Traveller students. For the purpose of this seminar, I will focus on presenting the data from one of my findings chapters, of which there are four in total. This presentation will share a few of the themes which have emerged from the data collected in semi-structured interviews with research participants (including staff participants, non-Traveller settled Irish students, minority student participants and Traveller student participants). These themes can be summarised as follows:

- Superficial ways in which the staff participants understand and practice inclusive education in a diverse DEIS school
- Managing challenging student behaviour in the diverse DEIS school setting
- Intercultural approach to education as it is being understood in a diverse DEIS school setting, particularly in relation to Travellers.

Discussion of the above themes will be framed within a critical race analysis. The presentation will close with a review of the possible implications that such themes may have for the implementation of the intercultural approach to education.

### References

Bryan, A. (2010). Corporate multiculturalism, diversity management, and positive interculturalism in Irish schools and society, *Irish Educational Studies*, 29(3), pp. 253-269.

Kitching, K., and A. Curtin. 2012. Addressing the Concept and Evidence of Institutional Racism in Irish Education. Cork: School of Education, University College Cork.

<https://cora.ucc.ie/handle/10468/816?show=full>

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). (2005). *Intercultural education in the primary school, guidelines for schools*. Retrieved September 26, 2009, from

<http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Publications/Intercultural.pdf>

## **The strengths and sources of Irish primary pupil's science self-efficacy beliefs and their perceptions of scientists as science self-efficacy influencers**

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Science self-efficacy i.e. confidence in doing science tasks successfully, is positively linked to interest and academic performance in science. Science self-efficacy (SSE) originates from four sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional state. Teachers, family members and peers can be providers of these sources, however the influence of scientists is unknown. Furthermore, there have been no published studies investigating the SSE beliefs of Irish primary school pupils, possibly due to the lack of a suitable instrument. Here, we describe a study with two aims: 1) Assess the strengths and sources of pupils' SSE beliefs as they relate to the Irish primary science curriculum, 2) Through hypothetical scenarios in interviews, investigate pupils' perceptions of scientists as potential SSE influencers. To achieve these aims a novel questionnaire was developed: the Irish Science Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (IS-SEQ-C). The IS-SEQ-C contains five sections, each assessing a different aspect of SSE. Statements are answered using a 7-point Likert scale (from negative (1) to positive (7) rating statements).

The IS-SEQ-C was completed by 282 pupils (49% girls,  $M_{age}=11.8$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ) from 6<sup>th</sup> class in 12 local Galway Schools. Questionnaire results indicated that participants were least confident in 'Science' ( $M=5.00$ ), compared to 'Reading', 'Writing' and 'Maths' ( $M=5.77$ ,  $M=5.65$ ,  $M=5.48$ , respectively). Of the four sources, pupils reported receiving verbal persuasion from non-scientists the most ( $M=4.63$ ), closely followed by mastery experience ( $M=4.36$ ). Interview responses ( $N=25$ , 14 girls and 11 boys) suggested that participants believe verbal persuasion from scientists would be very effective as they are perceived to be "experts" in science, yet participants reported receiving very little of this in the questionnaire ( $M=2.57$ ). Further results detailing participants' confidence across the learning outcomes of the science curriculum and detected differences between genders will be presented.

## **Exploring Community Stewardship through Place-based Learning: evaluating impact and potential for knowledge transfer.**

**Áine Bird**

Established in 2008, Burrenbeo Trust ([www.burrenbeo.com](http://www.burrenbeo.com)) is a landscape charity dedicated to connecting all of us to our places and our role in caring for them. Following a place-based learning model, Burrenbeo coordinate and deliver programmes for primary and secondary schools, a heritage walks and talks series, community celebrations, conservation volunteering and training events. Place-based learning is focused on using local resources to teach and learn for the benefit of both participants and places. While the concept of place originated in the discipline of geography, place-based projects are interdisciplinary in approach. Place-based research and associated outputs are sensitive to multiple contexts incorporating learning about local built and natural environments, underpinned by an understanding of cultural heritage.

Since securing an Irish Research Council employment based research grant in October 2018 a study evaluating the community stewardship impact of the past ten years of programming, and subsequently the potential for knowledge transfer from this has commenced in the School of Geography in NUIG in partnership with the Burrenbeo Trust. This study will consider the impact of a place-based learning approach on community stewardship. Stewardship implies caring for what we value; building on the concepts of active citizenship and environmental stewardship, community stewardship represents a bottom up approach to the conservation of local places and their communities. Phase one of this study will evaluate the impact of Burrenbeo Trusts' programmes to date. This initial evaluation will focus on cataloguing and analysing the extensive existing feedback archive, interrogating the data in relation to attitudes and behaviour of participants. This will include quantitative and qualitative analysis. Building on these evaluations, phase two will look to facilitate dissemination and delivery that is sensitive to local contexts across interested communities throughout Ireland.