Welcome to the second issue of the Research Bulletin for the Institute of Education.

Spring Term Seminars

Spring term seminars have again covered a range of topics and perspectives. The opening week of the International Centre for Studies in Education and Training (ICSET) brought with it a number of distinguished speakers from overseas, including Profs Ralph Salisbury and Ingrid Wendt who gave the keynote speeches at the opening ceremony.

Research methodology continued to be an area of focus within seminars, ranging from the development of effective questionnaires (Brian Fidler) to conducting qualitative research with children (Professor Richard Bailey, University of Birmingham).

As last term, Cathy Tissot organised a very well-received lecture on 3rd March which attracted a wide audience, as part of the Institute’s TDA/SEN project. Professor Tony Charman, Chair in Autism Education, Institute of Education, London spoke on the theme of: Social cognitive development in children with autism spectrum disorders: implications for everyday life. As with most IoE open seminars and lectures, Professor Charman’s lecture is available to view at: http://mediasite.reading.ac.uk/

We are always looking for research students and members of staff who would like to give a seminar, so please get in touch with me if you would like to be involved (s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk).

Professor Andy Goodwyn, Hilary Constable, TDA, Natalie Smith, TDA, Professor Tony Charman, and Dr Cathy Tissot.

Professor Brian Richards

Many colleagues and students, past and present, gathered on 19 March to mark the retirement of one of our most eminent and respected researchers, Brian Richards. We shall all miss his good-humoured, gentlemanly approach to research and teaching, and wish him all the best for his retirement. He will become an Emeritus Professor of the Institute in due course.

If you have an item of news that you would like to appear in the next issue, please send it to me at s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

Suzanne Graham, Director of Research
Research bids submitted

Several colleagues have submitted bids for external funding, as outlined below. Staff are encouraged to liaise with the Director of Research and with RES (via j.e.gilham@reading.ac.uk) when writing proposals.

Berry Billingsley, with the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion and the Faculty of Education, Cambridge: 'LASAR - Learning about science and religion: A project to investigate pupils' thinking about the relationship between science and religion within the secondary school context in England.' Submitted to the John Templeton Foundation.

Carol Fuller and Elizabeth McCrum: outline proposal submitted to the Leverhulme Trust, January 2009, to investigate 'Looked-after children: identity and education'.

Tony Macfadyen: 'Social aspects of learning in schools – the role of physical education teachers'. Submitted to European Collaborative Research Projects Grant

John Oversby: a) Proposal with Rayner Mayer, School of Construction Management and Engineering: Comenius project, 'Changing with the climate' (KYOOTO). b) Joint proposal with Brunel University: 'An animations project to support innovative learning in chemistry.' Esmée Fairbarn Foundation

Geoff Taggart: Expression of interest submitted to Escalate to carry out an evaluation of the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) as a tool in the training of Early Years Professionals. ELLI is an online questionnaire which provides respondents with feedback on their generic ‘learning power’.

Kriss Turner: National consortium (IoE, Anglia Ruskin, Sheffield Hallam, Cumbria, Wolverhampton, Derby, Plymouth and Salford) tender to CWDC to implement an Early Years practitioner-led research programme.

Publication news

The following recent publications by colleagues have appeared:


Conferences

Presentations given:


Conferences cont.


BERA 2009

A number of colleagues have successfully submitted abstracts for papers to be given at the BERA annual conference this September, reporting on work being conducted as part of ongoing and recent research projects:

- Winston Brookes will report on the training needs of mentors in relation to SEN;
- Tony Macfadyen, Yota Dimitriadi, Carol Fuller, Deb Heighes, Andy Kempe and Elizabeth McCrum will be presenting a range of papers on aspects of the research into Information, Advice and Guidance being conducted by the 14-19 Research Group;
- Member of the Creative Arts in Education Research Group (Gill Hooper, Nils Franke, Andy Kempe, Simon Floodgate and Mary Stakelum) will be presenting a paper on how students in arts subjects construct a teacher identity.

We encourage other colleagues to consider presenting at BERA in 2010.

Research-related events:

Various colleagues have been involved in the organisation of events:

**Early Years**

On 5 March 2009, IoE colleagues led a very successful and well-received conference at Windsor Race Course entitled ‘What the Early Years Foundation Stage Really Means’, which was attended by 250 delegates from colleges offering an Early Years Foundation Degree. A number of Institute staff were involved: Helen Bilton, Prue Goodwyn, Mandy Booty, Kriss Turner, Georgina Lovett, Geoff Taggart and Angela Mason. The keynote speaker was Sally Featherstone, a national Early Years figure. Prue and Helen ran workshops.

**Evacuees research**

A series of workshops and an exhibition were organised at the ESU, Dartmouth House in London on 23rd March, to formally end Phase 1 of the SeaVac project. This is a joint research enterprise between the Institute of Education, the Imperial War Museum and the English Speaking Union led by Martin Parsons. The exhibition will be coming to the IoE and to MERL in the near future. Phase 2, looking specifically at SeaVac education in the USA and their assimilation into American society, will commence next term.

**BERA SIG Literacy and Language One Day Conference April 30 2009**

Several colleagues were involved in this conference, held at the Institute of Education (Carol Fuller organising), with papers from Rhona Stainthorp, Viv Edwards and Mariotte Ngwara, Michael Lockwood, Eileen Hyder and Andy Goodwyn, as well as speakers from a range of other universities. The day ended with a stimulating plenary on the question ‘Research evidence suggests that at least 20% of adults in England are still functionally illiterate, that is over 5 million people; who, or what is to blame?’

**Stories Across Africa** – see project blog: http://africanlanguagematerialsforchildren.blogspot.com:80/

Viv Edwards and colleagues working on a Leverhulme-funded project, ‘Interdisciplinary perspectives on African language publishing for children’ met with representatives from Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, Tanzania and Rwanda at the University of Reading, 23-27 March to discuss issues relating to their work. The project has two main components: a case study of African language publishing for children in South Africa, and the evaluation of the first pan-African project to produce materials for multilingual education.
Art exhibition

John Mitchell is holding an exhibition of his work in a central London gallery. The exhibition, held at the Westbrook Gallery, and called Taxonomical Musings, includes examples of recent work in sculpture and an audio installation. John’s work aims at a radical testing of artistic boundaries, employing un-traditional materials. The exhibition will run from Friday April 24th for four weeks.

Future research conferences and events involving IoE colleagues:

Martin Parsons will be leading the ‘Third International War Child Conference’, 9th-11th September, at Bulmershe Court. This will be an international conference with at least three speakers from Australia and New Zealand, six from the USA, and colleagues from various parts of Europe.

Martin will be establishing an exhibition at MERL from the 7th Sept to 31st Dec 2009, to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Evacuation: ‘Rural refugees: Evacuees in the countryside 1939-45’. This will include photos, artefacts and written material, and also a series of lectures.

Tony Macfadyen is jointly organising the Berkshire Schools / University of Reading Physical Education Conference, to be held at the IoE on 23rd June 2009.

John Oversby is convening the PALAVA Reading Science Education Teacher-Researcher Conference, Saturday 13th June, Institute of Education: 9.30 am - 2.30 pm. Presentations to include: History and Philosophy in Science Teaching; Action Research in Science Teaching; Cognitive Dissonance - Challenging Children’s Alternative Ideas.

Contact(j.p.oversby@reading.ac.uk) for free registration details.

Institute of Education Research Day, 25 June, 9.30-5pm

Staff and research students from all Research Groups will be presenting aspects of their research work. Please come along and support them!

Graduation:

Two students from the IoE received their PhDs at the Graduation Ceremony held in December: Dr Carol Fuller, for her thesis ‘Girls and their Ambitions: A Sociological Study of Educational Aspirations’, and Dr Laurel Pegg, for her thesis ‘Auditory, visual, linguistic, kinaesthetic and synaesthetic modes of mental imagery in children’s music memory processes’. Our congratulations to both of them.

Sharing good research practice

As one of his parting words of wisdom, Brian Richards has suggested that each Research Bulletin include ‘tips’ for good research practice. This seemed like such a good idea that Brian has been asked to make the first contribution! Here it is:

‘When analysing data, keep a detailed record of exactly what you did and why (for example, if you had to make decision about how to code something, record how you arrived at that decision). The same applies to the labels that you give to any variables (especially in computer-analysed data) - make them very detailed and explicit. If you have to leave the analysis for a while, taking these steps will ensure that you understood what you did and why when you eventually return to the data.’

Research students

In March, PhD student Sarah Smart gave a fascinating seminar entitled ‘What does it mean to be/work for social justice? An exploration of the meanings of social justice to twelve activists.’ Eileen Hyder presented a paper at the BERA Language and Literacy Conference (see above), on ‘Reading groups for visually impaired people’.

All research students are encouraged to give a seminar at the IoE, either as part of the Thursday seminar series or within their Research Group meetings.