

The Inclusion in Education and Society Research Group

Trinity College Dublin

In collaboration with the  
Centre for Special Needs Education and Research  
Group (CeSNER), University of Northampton

## 'Approaches to Inclusive Research in Education: Opportunities and Challenges'



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN  
COLÁISTE NA TRÍÓNÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF DUBLIN



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHAMPTON

Inter University Symposium Journal

Volume1, June 2014  
Edited by Paula Flynn

School of Education  
Trinity College Dublin



*Inter University Symposium Journal*

*Volume 1, June 2014*

Editor: Dr. Paula Flynn, Trinity College

© 2014, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin

Printed by: Custodian



## CONTENTS

- 2 Using comparative case studies in educational research: principles and practices.  
*Richard Rose & Michael Shevlin*
- 11 Using 'voice' as a research approach  
*John Kubiak & Miriam Twomey*
- 31 Working hard to try to include the hard to include  
*Meanu Bajwa-Patel & Phil Ellender*
- 46 ABSTRACTS - Group One
- 46 Dandy George Dampson
  - 47 Stella Long
  - 48 Genevieve Murray
  - 49 Remi Odunsi
  - 50 Saneeya Qureshi
- 51 ABSTRACTS - Group Two
- 51 Meanu Bajwa-Patel
  - 52 Emma Farrell
  - 53 Paula Flynn
  - 54 Benny Kuruvilla
  - 55 Vivian Rath
- 56 ABSTRACTS - Group Three
- 56 Carmel Capewell
  - 57 Kate Carr-Fanning
  - 58 John Kubiak
  - 59 Patricia McCarthy
  - 60 Abide Zenega

62 ABSTRACTS - Group Four

62 Phil Ellender

63 Colin McElroy

64 Aoife O'Brien

65 Miriam Twomey

66 Yu Zhao

68 Approaches to Inclusive Research in Education:  
Opportunities and Challenges

68 Group One

69 Group Two

75 Group Three

85 Group Four

## Editorial Note

The Inclusion in Education and Society Research Group, hosted the first Inter-University Symposium between the Schools of Education from the University of Northampton and Trinity College Dublin on 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. The focus of the event was encapsulated in the title, '*Approaches to Inclusive Research in Education: Opportunities and Challenges*' and included three keynote presentations and subsequent round table discussions of four participant groups, all of which addressed ethical issues and/or research methods relevant to 'Inclusive Education' research.

The idea for this symposium was the brainchild of Professors Richard Rose and Michael Shevlin who have enjoyed a long and successful research partnership. Doctoral students and recent graduates from both universities participated in the round table collaborations and presented feedback to a plenary discussion before the conclusion of the symposium.

This journal is an opportunity to disseminate the keynote papers and lively collaborations from the group discussions ably compiled by rapporteurs amongst the participants.

In the first paper, Rose and Shevlin critically examine 'case study research' and conclude that data generated from this approach needs to be managed systematically and with care, in order to yield useful and trustworthy data. Kubiak and Twomey draw on their doctoral research studies to introduce and analyse creative methodological strategies that can effectively elicit 'voice' in inclusive research. In the final keynote paper, Bajwa-Patel and Ellender address the challenge of including the views of all strata of society, in particular the 'hard to reach', and provide an overview of methods and techniques that can be helpful when trying to access research participants who are often marginalised in society.

'Abstracts' included in this publication provide snapshots of the

research activity and interests of the doctoral graduates and students who participated in the symposium. Despite the broad range of subject matter and methodological approaches represented across the participants, significant areas of commonality were interrogated and discussed at length during the round table discussions and these issues as relevant to inclusive research are presented through the rapporteur submissions for each of the four groups.

The topics which were discussed across the tables and represented in the paper submissions of the rapporteurs include ethical issues related to the sensitive nature of data generated through 'inclusive research'; the challenges associated with 'sampling' and 'access'; the position of the researcher in a relationship with co-researcher participants, most particularly the perceptions associated with 'insider' or 'outsider' or indeed 'limbo status' of the researcher; disclosure of 'insider' status for some researchers and ethical implications in the research relationship; the 'language of research', including paradigmatic stance and philosophical assumptions.

The range of issues will be of interest to many researchers but most particularly, to those negotiating the terrain of inclusive research. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the contributors for their participation in a truly enjoyable and stimulating meeting of research minds through the collaboration of two groups; The Centre for Special Needs Education and Research Group (CeSNER), University of Northampton and The Inclusion in Education and Society (IES) Research Group, Trinity College Dublin.

*Paula Flynn, June 2014*







## Using comparative case studies in educational research: principles and practices.

*Richard Rose, University of Northampton &  
Michael Shevlin, Trinity College Dublin*

Case studies that provide insights into phenomena within educational settings have proven popular with many researchers (Stake 1995; Merriam 1998; Denzin and Lincoln 2003). However, educational researchers need to be aware that the use of case study has been the focus of some criticism by a number of writers (Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2001; Bennett & Elman 2006;).

The concerns expressed are generally focused upon a lack of rigour in data collection and the limited generalizability of findings. Flyvbjerg (2006 p.221) in recognising the justification of some of these criticisms defines a series of common 'misunderstandings' or oversimplifications with regards to case studies. These he suggests have their origins in a lack of attention given to theory, reliability, and validity. In making these observations he recognises that there have been many instances where researchers have produced case studies that are uncritical and offer only limited empirical evidence to justify the claims made about what they are intending to demonstrate.

Flyvbjerg proposes that case studies, in order to be effective, must provide narratives that fully reflect the intricacies and contradictions of real life situations. He asserts that case study research as a method has a significant role to play in the social sciences but only when the cases have been generated through the use of well-structured and transparent systems of data collection and analysis. Support for this argument comes from Yin (2009) who demonstrates that case studies

which have drawn upon data from a variety of sources can provide a trustworthy means of triangulation based upon recognition that any subject studied is likely to be strengthened when based upon multiple perspectives and interpretations.

Generalization is an issue that, with some justification, recurs in many critiques of case study. Flyyberg once again can aid our understanding of how this issue can be addressed by educational researchers. He suggests that generalization is not always a requirement within research in the social sciences, especially where the researcher is concerned to obtain a detailed analysis of a specific unique situation, such as might exist in a school or group of schools.

In these circumstances, he suggests, a case study may provide an illustration which adds to our understanding of a specific situation and may provide the foundations for further discussion and analysis. Bassey (1995; 1999) in introducing the concept of 'fuzzy generalization' takes this argument a step further. He explains his ideas around this concept by stating that in examining a number of cases with similar conditions (for example, primary schools) we may not be able to generalise in the traditional sense, but may be able to make informed suppositions.

We can do this by using phrases such as "having found similarities across ten primary schools, it is likely that we will find these in others". Fuzzy generalization, he suggests, is acceptable in the field of education where there are few absolutes and there are dangers in making statements of certainty. In educational research the notion of absolutes is questioned by many researchers (Wellington 2001; Hartas 2010) and Bassey argues that it is right to justify the use of case study on the basis of a need to examine and discuss phenomena which appear to be typical of what is being observed in a number of similar situations.

Educational researchers do, of course, need to follow careful procedures if case study research is to be used as a central part of an investigation. It is essential that those who use case studies clearly record the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the data used for the reporting of findings. Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) suggest that in educational research where the intention is to provide a detailed illustration of a school or other educational setting this is best achieved by ensuring that a range of perspectives from individuals associated with that school are examined in detail.

Gillham (2000) demonstrated how the use of multiple case studies can be useful in comparing phenomena within a range of settings. He suggests that by focusing upon a specific issue, such as the management of behaviour across a number of schools, it is possible to establish what kinds of provision may be seen as typical of schools as a whole. This approach may have advantages in the accumulation of data from multiple sites that may have some (fuzzy) generalizability to a wider educational context. However, it is important that educational researchers take account of the variables across schools that may impact upon the trustworthiness of interpretation.

### **Developing Case Study Research**

In designing case study research it is important to be aware of the many variables that characterise educational provision. These may include geographical and demographic factors, such as location in urban or rural environments, or the influence of church or single sex schools or populations with high numbers from ethnic minority groups. These factors will invariably impact upon the ability to be able to make comparisons across cases. A model for the development and interpretation of case studies therefore must be developed which

allows for comparison of phenomena across schools in a manner that enables discussion of commonalities and exceptionalities. These two concepts may be defined as follows:-

***A commonality:*** Phenomena that were seen to be common across schools and might therefore be used to formulate 'fuzzy generalizations'.

***Exceptionalities:*** Phenomena that were seen in only one or a small number of schools and cannot therefore be generalized beyond the specific location.

Other researchers, such as Yin (2009) describe cases that may be defined as 'representative' or 'typical' and others that are 'extreme' or 'unique'. The issue here is one of being able to acknowledge that when comparing data across cases there are likely to be features within all schools that are similar, and others that are unique to the individual establishment.

These terms are important in maintaining the credibility of research because a well reported weakness of multi-site case studies is the potential to report findings as being representative of a system when they provide a view obtained from only a limited number of locations.

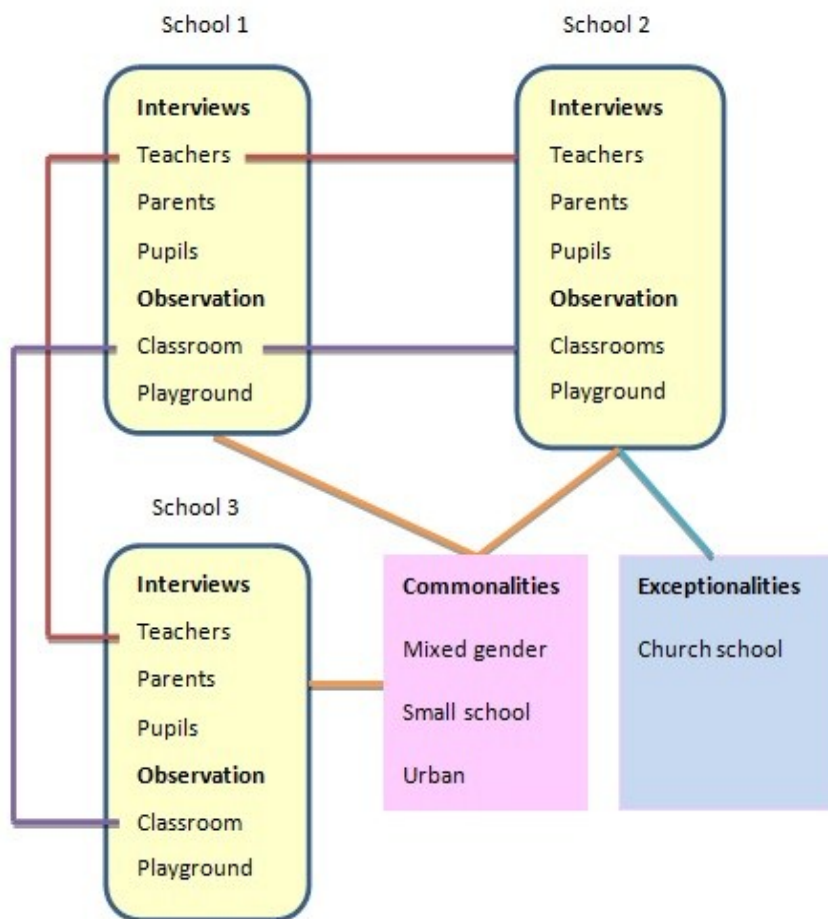
Ragin and his colleagues (Ragin & Byrne 2009; Ragin and Rihoux 2009) describe what they have defined as configurational research where the focus of the researcher goes beyond that of interpreting data from a specific case by comparing data from across cases in order to define commonalities and exceptionalities. They state that understanding the influences upon an individual case is a valid means of providing the basis for interpretation. However, they suggest that this can have only a limited impact. Configurational research they propose is a means of increasing our understanding of the detailed phenomena to be

observed within cases by comparing findings from a range of sources in different locations.

On the basis of Ragin's work the model (figure 1) presented shows how a process of data gathering can be established for each case, built upon data obtained from interviews, observations and document analysis and used to allow comparison across cases. In each case school data is collected using interviews and observations. The researchers match across the individual case studies to ensure that they interview teachers, pupils and parents of similar age, gender and experience in order that they can build a picture within each school but also make fair comparisons across schools.

Similarly the researchers will attempt to conduct observations in matched situations and may even compare similar documents across the schools. In addition to noting similarities of staff, pupils, parents and environment it is, of course important to record differences. A further consideration may be the timing of visits to schools. Events, both internal and external such as annual testing or preparation for Christmas often have a significant impact in schools and need to be taken into consideration for their potential influence when collecting data.

In the model presented here we can see that the researchers have noted commonalities across schools – they are all providing for both boys and girls, are in an urban setting and are small (less than 300 pupils). They have also noted an exceptionality in that one school is a church school. It will be important to consider how this difference may impact upon the data collected.



**Figure 1** - Model of comparative case study data collection

The process of verification is important if the criticisms aimed at case study research in relation to generalisation are to be avoided. The model presented here can assist the researcher in demonstrating how fair comparisons have been made. Additional safeguards may



also be needed if accusations of researcher bias are to be voided.

Here, Patton (2001) provides useful advice on how we may adopt varying types of triangulation. In particular he identifies four approaches to triangulation that can assist researchers with ensuring the trustworthiness of their findings. The first of these he describes as methods triangulation whereby the researcher verifies their findings through the use of several methods of data collection as in the model presented above. The second, which he describes as triangulation of sources, depends upon being able to examine the consistency of findings across a range of different settings and at different points of time. This may mean returning to the case study school to check that what was seen on one visit was typical and that data was not collected on a day that was exceptional for the school.

Analyst triangulation defined by Patton's third approach is based upon using multiple analysts of the data in order to share perspectives and reach agreement with regards to the meaning of data. This is not always possible in small scale studies, but finding a colleague to read transcripts or documents and compare interpretation of the data can be a useful approach to ensuring security of judgements. Finally Patton advocates theory or perspective triangulation which enables the researchers to examine data from differing theoretical standpoints. Again this last approach requires colleagues who may have differing perspectives or experiences coming together to discuss the data. At a simplified level this last approach might involve a teacher and a teaching assistant (or special needs assistant) examining a transcript or observation and giving their personal perspective on the data.

Case study data undoubtedly has an important place in educational

research. It has often been seen as a simple process and one that is easily managed by researchers. However, this is far from the case and if case studies are to be trustworthy and yield useful data they need to be managed systematically and with care. Case studies as part of a mixed methods approach can be particularly valuable and are seen by some researchers as a means of using an understandable situation to illustrate findings to a lay audience.

## References

- Bassey, M. (1999) *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*. Buckingham: Open University
- Bennett, A, & Elman, C. (2006) Qualitative research: Recent developments in case study methods. *Annual Review of Political Science*. 9 455 – 476
- Denzin, N, & Lincoln, Y (2003) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12 (2) 219 – 245
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Case Study Research Methods*. London: Continuum.
- Hartas, D. (2010) *Educational Research and Inquiry: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Continuum
- Hodkinson, P, & Hodkinson, H. (2001) The Strengths and Limitations of Case Study Research. Paper presented to the Learning and Skills Development Agency conference *Making an Impact on Policy and Practice* Cambridge, 5-7 December

- Merriam, S.B. (1998) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass
- Patton, M.Q. (2001). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (2nd Edition)*. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Ragin, C. & Rihoux, B. (2009) Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an approach. In B. Rihoux and C. Ragin (eds.), *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ragin, C, & Byrne, D. (2009) *The Sage Handbook of Case-Based Methods*. London: Sage
- Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. London: Sage
- Van Wynsberghe, R, & Khan, S. (2007) Redefining Case Study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 6 (2) 69 - 79
- Wellington, J. (2001) *Educational Research: Contemporary Issues and Practical Approaches*. London: Continuum
- Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. (4th edition) London: Sage

## Using 'voice' as a research approach

*John Kubiak & Miriam Twomey  
Trinity College Dublin*

There is a growing awareness of the value of listening to children's and adults' voices. Appropriate to this acknowledgement is a requirement to develop suitable methodological strategies that can effectively elicit these voices. The two projects presented here foreground the use of creative research methodologies.

The first author Kubiak (Project 1) built on current descriptions of inclusive and participatory research as well as phenomenographic approaches to educational research which places its focus on investigating learning from the perspectives of the learners themselves. Six intellectually disabled students were trained as co-researchers and used visual stimuli to elicit information from their peers; this data base formed the foundation for an understanding of how these students with intellectual disabilities experience learning. In the second project, Twomey explains how she enhanced rapport and developed insight into children's embodied experiences of voice through the use of puppetry and role play and used puppets to model facial expressions, emotions and social interaction skills.

The puppets (co-researchers respectively known as Pretty Girl and Pretty Boy) conducted inclusive children's focus groups initially through role-play about thematic topics relating to the research. The format of the group allowed children to extend other children's answers; their responses prompting each other, reaching deeper into peer and school culture. Success was evident when children asked "*Are the puppets coming?*"

## ***Using 'voice' as a research approach: Project 1 - college students with intellectual disabilities***

*John Kubiak*

### **Introduction**

Students with intellectual disabilities (ID) are very gradually becoming more recognised as part of a subgroup of diverse learners in higher education in Ireland and internationally. However, due to the paucity of evidence-based research in this area, assumptions are often made about how students with ID learn. This paper sets out to address this concern by reporting on the findings of an inclusive research project (Kubiak, 2013) conducted in one higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland - Trinity College Dublin - where a certificate programme entitled The Certificate in Contemporary Living (CCL) is offered to students with intellectual disabilities (O'Brien, O'Keeffe, Kenny, Fitzgerald & Curtis, 2008; Brien, O'Keeffe, Healy, Kubiak, Lally, & Hughes, 2009; O'Connor, Kubiak, Espiner, & O'Brien, 2012). This article presents a summary of the two stages of this research that addressed: 1) how can students with intellectual disabilities be meaningfully included in a research project on their own learning? and 2), what kind of variation exists in intellectually disabled people's ways of experiencing their learning while attending college?

### **Method**

#### ***Research Design***

This project built on current descriptions of inclusive research (e.g. Walmsley & Johnson, 2003) and participatory research (Turnbull, Friesen, & Ramirez, 1998), as well as phenomenographic approaches to educational research which places its focus on investigating learning from the perspectives of the learners themselves (e.g., Marton & Booth, 1997).

### ***Participants***

Three main groups of individuals participated in this study: 1) co-researchers (three males and three females, n=6), 2) CCL students (eight females and ten males, n=18), and 3), the current author.

### ***Ethical Approval***

Ethical approval for this research was gained from the School of Education ethics committee, Trinity College Dublin. Confidentiality and anonymity in reporting results were guaranteed to all participants.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Stage 1 involved 6 CCL students - three males and three females, and the current author. A purposeful sampling strategy was adopted in which six students who experienced the phenomenon of learning on the CCL programme, were invited to be part of the research. Step-by-step training sessions were delivered over a period of 11 weeks during the second semester of the second year of the CCL programme. The aim of these sessions was to build on co-researchers' understandings of research and to provide training for them in the skills needed (i.e. co-designing accessible materials, presentation skills, interviewing techniques, questioning) to co-research on this project.

For Stage 2 individual semi-structured interviews with CCL students were conducted by the 6 co-researchers to explore how their peers experience learning while on the CCL programme. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by the current author and respondents' names replaced by unique identifiers. Data were then analyzed using a phenomenographic approach; the outcomes consisted of "categories of description" (Marton and Booth, 1997, p. 126) and the "outcome space" (Åkerlind, 2005, p. 323).

## Results – Stage 1

Data for Stage 1 are presented using thematic analysis. The input and expertise of the voices of co-researchers were vital in providing guidance to the design and presentation of information to their intellectually disabled peers. The three themes that emerged for Stage 1 are: 1) Preconceptions of Research and Researchers; 2) Presentation and Accessibility, and 3) Interviewers and Interviewees.

**Table 1** - Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Preconceptions of Research and Researchers	
2. Presentation and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making decisions as a team</li> <li>• Providing accessible information on the research project</li> <li>• Designing information on the project accessibly using PowerPoint and handouts</li> <li>• Learning together in a supportive environment</li> <li>• Presenting the project to the CCL students</li> </ul>
3. Interviewers and Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewer’s abilities</li> <li>• Acquiring competence in facilitation</li> <li>• Peer interviewing and role play</li> <li>• Interviewing practice</li> <li>• Using a visual stimulus</li> <li>• The sequence of questioning – a phased approach</li> <li>• Reflection</li> </ul>

As a research method, interviewing had several benefits to offer the participants of this study. This interview has a proven track record in the field of inclusive research and has been shown to be an efficient instrument in giving ‘voice’ to people with intellectual disabilities who have historically been denied an opportunity to participate in a research project (Williams 2011). With some creativity, (i.e. using a visual stimulus to help elicit information from CCL students), co-researchers encouraged a free-flowing conversation and a worldview to unfold which was guided by the interviewee’s own vocabulary. This resulted in the production of focused, in-depth data that ultimately helped shape the project’s requirement of Stage 2 – a phenomenographic “outcome space” (Åkerlind, 2005, p.323).

### **Findings – Stage 2**

For Stage 2, 18 CCL students were interviewed by 6 co-researchers. Data for this stage were analysed using a phenomenographic approach. Four categories to describe learning were found: 1) the Cognitive Stages of Learning, 2) Self-Regulation of Learning, 3) Learning as Collective Meaning Making and 4) The Supportive Environment and Learning. A preference for action learning was identified with students valuing learning strategy instruction that encouraged an understanding of how to learn and how to apply what they have learned both inside and outside the classroom. The most important factor that facilitated learning identified however, was the central role the teacher had in shaping a supportive learning climate - one that encouraged a ‘safe space’ that supported constructive student-teacher relationships and active peer learning.



**Table 2** - Categories of description & Definition

1. The Cognitive Stages of Learning	Learning is seen as (a) increasing knowledge, (b) memorising and re-producing knowledge, and (c) applying one's knowledge.
2. Self-regulation of learning	Learning focuses on three phases: (1) The forethought phase, (2) The performance phase and (3) The self-reflection phase. This phase also outlines students' engagement with their emotions during the performance of learning, and how feelings of self-satisfaction and positive affect enhanced their motivation, self-beliefs, self-management and goals.
3. Learning as collective meaning making	Learning moves from individual meaning to collective or shared meaning. Students participate in a dialogue with others (for example, tutors, peers, mentors, parents, work colleagues) in order to create new understandings.
4. The supportive environment and learning	Environment as a 'safe-space' informed by students establishing a 'group culture', i.e. 'how we wish to behave together'. Facilitator of learning sensitive to promoting positive student-teacher relationships that empowers students to have increasing control over their learning.

## Conclusion

The experiences of learning of college students with ID has shown that the learning process for this group of students is as multifaceted as any college student: learning is cognitive (memorising, reproducing and applying knowledge), self-regulated (setting goals, monitoring and reflecting) and social (discussions and interaction with people). These stages of learning are underpinned and strengthened by an environment that promotes and supports positive student-teacher relationships. The complexity of this experience – informed by co-researchers' and students' voices – can provide a model of learning that could serve as a learning awareness tool for students with ID, as well as a way for teachers to improve their knowledge and awareness of how people with ID learn. Indeed, it is argued that the model of learning presented in this paper enhances the image of intellectually disabled students as valued and contributing students in the eyes of their educators.

Ultimately, the findings of this paper have demonstrated the importance of voice and the value of researching *with* rather than *on* people with ID. In this way these individuals can move from being passive in their approaches to learning and research to becoming more actively empowered as they continue the process of lifelong learning.

## References

- Turnbull, P., Friesen, B.J., & Ramirez, C. (1998). Participatory Action Research as a Model for Conducting Family Research. *RPSI, Research and Practice from Persons with Disabilities*, 23(3): 178-188.

- Kubiak, J. (2013). *Intellectually disabled students' experiences of learning in tertiary education : an inclusive phenomenography*. Unpublished D.Ed. thesis. Trinity College Dublin.
- Marton, F., & Booth, S. (1997). *Learning and awareness*. Mahwah, NJ; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- O'Brien, P., O'Keeffe, M., Kenny, M., Fitzgerald, S., & Curtis, S. (2008). *Inclusive education: A tertiary experience and transferable model? Lessons learned from the Certificate in Contemporary Living Programme: Dublin: National Institute for Intellectual Disability, TCD, No 3, Monograph series, pp. 1- 97.*
- O'Brien, P., O'Keeffe, M., Healy, U., Kubiak, J., Lally, N., & Hughes, Z. (2009). Inclusion of students with intellectual disability within a university setting. *The Frontline of Learning Disability, 74:* 6-7.
- O'Connor, B., Kubiak, J., Espiner, D., & O'Brien, P. (2012). Lecturer responses to the inclusion of students with intellectually disabilities auditing undergraduate classes, *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disability, 9(4):* 247-256.
- Walmsley, J, & Johnson, K. (2003). *Inclusive research with people with intellectual disabilities: past, present and futures*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Williams, V. (2011). *Disability and Discourse: Analysing Inclusive Conversation with People with Intellectual Disabilities*. Wiley-Blackwell: UK.
- Åkerlind, G.S. (2005). 'Variation and commonality in phenomenographic research methods'. *Higher Education research & Development, 24(4):* 321-334.

## ***Using 'voice' as a research approach: Project 2 - disabled children with and without the label of Autism***

*Miriam Twomey*

### Introduction

There is a growing awareness of the value of listening to children's voices. Appropriate to this acknowledgement is a requirement to develop suitable methodological strategies that can effectively elicit children's voice. MacNaughton, Hughes and Smith (2007) assert that children as young as two have a voice; while Kelly (2005) advocates that we encourage the voice of young disabled children. In the case of disabled childhood this research seeks to explore beyond essentialist, biological representations and reinforce it as a site of agency and identity emanating from wider social constructions. The use of creative methodologies is foregrounded.

This article will explore methodologies to include and bring to voice young children with Autism while acknowledging how creative methods may enhance the 'paradigm shift' encouraging agentic representations of children (Christensen & James, 2000; MacNaughton, Smith & Davis, 2007). This section of the article is based on doctoral research of one of the authors which explored the potential contribution of voice to children's self-knowledge influenced by 'space' (relationships) and 'place' (environments).

### **Rationale**

The concept of children's agency is based on a philosophy of early childhood and its ability to present alternative paradigms for us to see and interpret children's worlds (Borgnon, 2007; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Lenz-Taguchi, 2008). This is founded on the concept of children's

rights espoused by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). Fundamental to this research is an exploration of children's capacity to relate to self and others, where voice may be considered an expression of identity. Identification of the self's most basic foundations are represented by the body and manifested through the body (Damasio, 1994; 2000; Panksepp, 1998; Schore, 1994). Innovative research by Reddy (2012) advances this concept and emphasises the interpersonal nature of mind and language asserting that 'being moved' by others is an innate human capacity (Reddy, 2012).

Movement in this sense refers to physical movement but also to the subjectivity and connection between physical movement, and the ability to be moved emotionally or affectively by others. Reddy has built on Bråten (2007) and Hobson's (2007) work. Bråten (2007) describes this as the ability to be centred in another's body and refers to this as 'alter-centric'. Hobson (2007) refers to how we identify with the other. His thesis is that being moved by others in a subjective orientation is a central feature to understanding the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of others.

This research has also been shaped by a commitment to respecting students' rights to participate in matters relating to their lives. The need to conduct research 'with' rather than 'on' children has been emphasised in the literature. Beresford (1997) claims that prioritising the perspectives of disabled children "requires a 're-working' of the way we view children, and of the way we do research" (p. 69). In the design of the research methods the researcher was cognisant that exploring children's visual and image based voice is not unrelated to approaches facilitating their communication.

## Methods

This research sought to investigate if space and place can influence the identities of young children with Autism. In-depth qualitative case studies describing Callum, Jack, Adam, Charlie and Aaron's experiences were developed. Case study was considered an optimal research strategy that investigated a phenomenon within real-life contexts (Yin, 2002). Case studies must reflect multiple perspectives of participants and stakeholders. To authenticate this, the case studies in this research were contextualised in naturally occurring circumstances in Early Intervention and school settings (Simons, 2009). Case studies enhanced the constructivist nature of this research; they explored how participants construct their worlds as well as their understanding and interpreting of it.

This study examined ways of listening to and consulting children with Autism and their peers (Jones & Gillies, 2010; Kellet, 2006; Kelly, 2005 Lewis, 2002). Over 80 interviews were conducted with a variety of representative stakeholders including parents, Early Interventionists, teachers, school principals, SNAs and allied health professionals over a period of 18 months in different geographical regions. For the purposes of this article inclusive methodological approaches to interviewing and observing children will be described.

Methods included a portfolio of sensitive and creative approaches to eliciting children's voice.

1. Observations and interactive methods took place in a sample of Early Intervention and mainstream school settings;
2. Focus group interviews were conducted with children;

## **Creative Methods**

While this research has taken the form of small-scale qualitative embedded case studies, involving interviews and focus groups, it has also yielded valuable information relating to a range of creative, visual and augmentative methods which were designed to simultaneously engage children's interest and facilitate communication. Effective approaches accommodate children's propensity to understand and represent their world visually. Having noted the particular difficulties disabled children experience in articulating voice (Lewis & Porter, 2007) this research observed recommendations made by Lewis, Newton and Vials (2008), Jones and Gillies (2010) and Long, McPhillips, Shevlin and Smith (2012) and sought to develop more creative methods. Similar to these authors this research sought to investigate notions of rights and their limitations (Kilkelly, Kilpatrick, Lundy, Moore & Scraton, 2005; Lundy, 2007).

## **Eliciting Young Children's Voice**

A portfolio of methods was developed that was subtly and interchangeably discerning to the expressive language difficulties associated with Autism, but also considerate of the ages of the children and their ability to communicate (Lewis, Robertson & Parsons, 2005). Creative approaches in this research were also sensitively developed to facilitate the non-verbal child with Autism. This included the use of established methods, for example PECS, Objects of Reference, Social Stories, Visual Schedules and Sign Language but it also expanded to including puppets as well as adopting a 'least adult role' (Warming, 2012) conducting inclusive focus group interviews with children. Similar to Tozer (2003) children with Autism had a stop card and a change card symbol to signal their ability to allow them to discontinue.

For children who understood basic Sign Language, it was established that they understood the sign for stop during the research visits.

Finding ways to circumvent children's difficulties with communication and expression must be innovative. Integral to the Methods of this research, the creation and use of tools to elicit children's voice was an evolutionary process. Methods and approaches moved along a loosely aligned process (Kelly, 2005) attempting to invite children to contribute as researchers (Jones & Gillies, 2010; Kellett, 2006). Rapport was greatly enhanced with inclusive groups by the use of puppetry and role play in children's focus groups (Schrandt, Buffington-Townsend & Poulson, 2009; Salmon & Sainato, 2005; Epstein, Steven, McKeever, Baruchel & Jones 2008).

This research also paid homage to Trimmingham's (2010) notions of embodiment where children's neurological patterns are developed through physical interaction with the world. Her work addresses ways in which this patterning may be interrupted or disturbed, and how puppets, as innocuous but controllable physical objects, may have a therapeutic role in re-establishing disrupted patterns. She explores the use of puppets as Winnicott's (1971) 'transitional objects' operating in a 'transitional space'. Using Winnicott's notion of a bridge between the inner world that we control, and the external world, which we do not, these activities are linked to a creative 'space' of mind. Puppets operate in this space. The material reality of the puppet and its 'objectness' is emphasised and adds to its effectiveness (Trimingham, 2010).

Conducting research with younger children with Autism benefitted from observation. Observation accounted for the presence or emergence of pre-verbal ways of knowing the world (Bogdashina, 2011)



and un-knowing the world. Children's world views were not yet formed. For young children with Autism, sensory knowing may have had disrupted patterns. Typically infants learn to focus their attention selectively (Stern, 1985). Bogdashina (2011) associates these as yet insufficiently understood phenomena as a precursor of Winnicott's (1960) 'true self' experience.

Combining aspects of drama and puppetry during focus groups ensured that children were less intimidated by the researcher. The puppets allowed children freedom to talk when they were not sure about things. While some children were aware of my presence, they were more absorbed in the puppet's animated gestures. They responded to the puppet 'like a new friend' or another pupil in the class. My large child-sized puppet had movable hands to add to the expressive features of the face. I made the puppet more demonstrable and interactive using hand signals and body movements to emphasise non-verbal, interpersonal behaviour. A further argument for using puppets was their related use in teaching mirror behaviours and as a possible stimulus to the mirror neuron system in children with Autism. This strategy endeavoured to prompt children with Autism to respond to imitative efforts (Caldwell, 2006; Ingersoll, 2008; Rogers, 2000). I used puppets to model facial expressions, emotions and social interaction skills. The frequency with which I used the puppet ensured success.

The puppets (co-researchers respectively known as Pretty Girl and Pretty Boy) conducted inclusive children's focus groups; initially through role-play about thematic topics relating to the research: *What is a friend? Who are my friends? How can we join in? What happens when someone is left out? Who am I?* The format of the group allowed children to extend other children's answers; their responses prompting each other, reaching deeper into peer and school culture (Lewis, 2002). Success was

evident when children asked “*Are the puppets coming?*” My role resorted to that of untrained ventriloquist; I had replaced myself as researcher.

### **Ethical Issues**

Similar to Smith, Taylor and Gollop (2000) listening to children’s voices and encouraging them to actively participate was integral to the research design. Efforts to elicit children’s voice were cognisant of the complex power imbalances that shape ideological contexts relating to voice. To address these difficulties an ‘intersubjective, situated and negotiated’ approach to ethics advocated by Renold, Holland, Ross and Hillman, (2008, p. 428) was implemented. Similar to the authors, an-always-in-process awareness of the complexities of research ethics was experienced during the participatory aspects of the research. Even when the child was unable to give informed consent, there were opportunities for assent and dissent to ensure that their inclusion in the study was voluntary and that they were not being coerced (Lewis & Porter, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion to this article challenges us with the following dilemma; how can non-verbal or pre-verbal children with Autism express voice? Can creative research methods encourage these children to embody verbal and non-verbal dimensions of communication? This research suggests that attention to children’s embodied experiences tells us about their feelings and needs. Children communicate and learn through their bodies. Their ways of knowing are inextricably linked to their ways of telling. Children speak through movement and behavioural expressions. As researchers we must be aware of the pedagogical implications regarding creative or kinaesthetic media in terms of understanding and teaching young children with Autism. Acknowledging Komulainen’s (2007) and Spryou’s (2011) caution in how we represent children’s

voices, this research sought not only to listen to children but to provide detailed portrayals 'embodied in the words they speak' (James, 2007, p. 269) and add to the refinement of research methodologies to advance these concepts.

## References

- Beresford, B. (1997) *Personal Accounts: Involving Disabled Children in Research*. University of York. Social Policy Research Unit: H.M. Stationery Office.
- Bogdashina, O. (2011) *Autism and the Edges of the Known World: Sensitivities, Language and Constructed Reality*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Borgnon, L. (2007) 'Conceptions of the Self in Early Childhood: Territorializing identities'. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 39:3, 264-274.
- Bråten, S. (2007) *On Being Moved: From Mirror Neurons to Empathy*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Caldwell, P. (2006) *Finding You Finding Me: Using Intensive Interaction to Get in Touch with People Whose Severe Learning Disabilities Are Combined with Autistic Spectrum Disorder*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.
- Christensen, P. and James, A. (eds.) (2000) *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*, London: Falmer Press.
- Dahlberg, G. and Moss, P. (2005) *Ethics and politics in early childhood education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Damasio, A.R. (1994) *Descartes' error: emotion, reason, and the human brain*. New York: G.P. Putnam.

- Damasio, A.R. (2000) *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. Florida: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Epstein, I., Stevens, B., McKeever, P., Baruchel, S. and Jones, H. (2008) 'Using puppetry to elicit children's talk for research'. *Nursing Inquiry*, 15:1, 49-56.
- Hobson, R.P. (2007) 'On Being Moved in Thought and Feeling: An Approach to Autism'. In: P.M.G. Juan Martos Pérez, María Llorente Comí, Carmen Nieto (ed.) *New Developments in Autism: The Future Is Today*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Ingersoll, B. (2008) 'The effect of context on imitation skills in children with autism'. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 2:2, 332–340.
- James, A. (2007). Giving voice to children's voices: Practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials. *American Anthropologist*, 109, 261-272.
- Jones, P. and Gillies, A. (2010) 'Engaging young children in research about an inclusion project'. In: R. Rose (ed.) *Confronting obstacles for inclusion -international responses to developing education*. London: Routledge, 123-136.
- Kellett, M. (2006). *Children as active researchers: a new research paradigm for the 21st century?* ESRC: National Centre for Research Methods.
- Kelly, B. (2005) 'Chocolate... makes you autism: impairment, disability and childhood identities'. *Disability & Society*, 20:3,261-275.
- Kilkelly, U., Kilpatrick, R., Lundy, L., Moore, L. and Scraton, P. (2005) *Children's Rights in Northern Ireland*, Northern Ireland

Commissioner for Children and Young People.

- Komulainen, S. (2007) 'The Ambiguity of the Child's 'Voice' in Social Research'. *Childhood*, 14:1, 11-28.
- Lenz Taguchi, H. (2008) 'An 'Ethics of resistance' challenges taken-for-granted ideas in Swedish early childhood education'. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47:5, 270-282.
- Lewis, A. (2002) 'Accessing through research interviews the views of children'. *Support for Learning*, 17:3, 110-116.
- Lewis, A., Newton, H. and Vials, S. (2008) 'Realising child voice: the development of Cue Cards'. *Support for Learning*, 23:1, 26-31.
- Lewis, A. and Porter, J. (2007) 'Research and Pupil Voice'. In: L. Florian (ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of Special Education*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lewis, A., Robertson, C. and Parsons, S. (2005). *DRC Research Report - Experiences of disabled students and their families: Phase 1*. University of Birmingham: Disability Rights Commission.
- Long, L., McPhillips, T., Shevlin, M. and Smith, R. (2012) 'Utilising creative methodologies to elicit the views of young learners with additional needs in literacy'. *Support for Learning*, 27:1, 20-28.
- Lundy, L. (2007) "'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child". *British Educational Research Journal*, 33:6, 927-942.
- MacNaughton, G., Hughes, P. and Smith, K. (2007) 'Young children's rights and public policy: Practices and possibilities for citizenship in the early years'. *Children & Society*, 21:6, 458-469.

- Panksepp, J. (1998) *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reddy, V. (2012) 'Moving others matters'. In: A. Foolen, U.M. Lüdtke, T.P. Racine & J. Zlatev (eds.) *Moving Ourselves, Moving Others*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 139–164.
- Renold, E., Holland, S., Ross, N.J. and Hillman, A. (2008) 'Becoming Participant': Problematizing 'Informed Consent' in Participatory Research with Young People in Care'. *Qualitative Social Work*, 7:4, 427-447.
- Rogers, S.J. (2000) 'Interventions that facilitate the socialisation of children with autism'. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 30:399-408.
- Salmon, M.D. and Sainato, D.M. (2005) 'Beyond Pinocchio: Puppets as Teaching Tools in Inclusive Early Childhood Classrooms'. *Young Exceptional Children*, 8:3, 12-19.
- Schrandt, J.A., Buffington Townsend, D.B. and Poulson, C.L. (2009) 'Teaching empathy skills to children with autism'. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 42:1, 17-32.
- Schore, A.N. (1994) *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self: The Neurobiology of Emotional Development*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Simons, H. (2009) *Case Study Research in Practice*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Smith, A.B., Taylor, N.J. and Gollop, M.M. (2000a) *Children's Voices: Research, Policy and Practice*. New Zealand: Pearson Education.

- Spyrou, S. (2011) 'The limits of children's voices: From authenticity to critical, reflexive representation'. *Childhood*, 18:2,151-165.
- Stern, D.N. (1985) *The interpersonal world of the infant: a view from psychoanalysis and developmental psychology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Tozer, R. (2003) 'Involving children with ASD in research about their lives' *Methodological issues in interviewing children and young people with learning difficulties*, University of Birmingham: ESRC 2001–3.
- Trimingham, M. (2010) 'Objects in transition: The puppet and the autistic child'. *Journal of Applied Arts & Health*, 1:3, 251-265.
- United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (1989) *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC/SP/SR*. Geneva: United Nations.
- Warming, H. (2012) 'Theorizing (Adults' facilitation of) Children's Participation and Citizenship'. In: C.I. Baraldi, V. (ed.) *Participation, Facilitation, and Mediation: Children and Young People in Their Social Contexts*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- D. W. Winnicott, "Ego distortion in terms of true and false self," in *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development*. New York: International UP Inc., 1965, pp. 140-152.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1971) *Playing and reality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Yin, R.K. (2002) *Applications of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

## Working hard to try to include the hard to include

*Meanu Bajwa-Patel & Phil Ellender  
University of Northampton*

Despite the desire of researchers and policy makers to hear and include the views of all strata of society, there is an acknowledged, though not often written or talked about, awareness of the problems of reaching some groups. As Kennan *et al.*, (2012) write

*It might understandably be thought that those with the greatest needs or exposed to the greatest risk are the most important group to involve in research, which is to inform policy and service development. However, these groups can often be the most difficult to access (2012 p.276).*

Hidden populations such as NEETs, students excluded from schools and those in local authority care or missing can be difficult to locate or access. They may have very good reasons for not wanting to be 'found'. Then there are the groups on the margins of society: criminals, drug users, gang members, teenage parents who again may have very good reasons to avoid being involved; they may feel stigmatised or disassociated from society or just not interested. However if research is to have "any effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life beyond academia" (REF 2014, p.3) then there is no doubt that it needs to be based on the groups which represent society. So who are these groups and why are they so hard to reach/engage? It is noteworthy that using the term hard to reach/hidden implies a certain homogeneity within these groups (Shaghghi *et al.*, 2011) which does not necessarily exist.

### **Who are they? Examples include:**

- Young carers in Ireland (Kennan *et al.*, 2012)



- Those living in vulnerable social and economic situation (Shaghaghi *et al.*, 2011) / socially deprived communities (Sixsmith *et al.*, 2003)
- Emotionally vulnerable and ‘missing’ (Macnab *et al.*, 2007)
- Those being under social pressure of the broader community whether immigrants, newly arrived residents, living in faith based communities or from indigenous cultures (Kawulich, 2010)
- The homeless (Shpungin and Lyubansky, 2006); homeless people, prostitutes and drug addicts (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997) sex industry workers (Benoit *et al.*, 2005)
- Those giving their baby up for adoption (Mander and Scm, 1992)
- Those receiving palliative care (Ewing *et al.*, 2004)
- Those who have no interest in being found or contacted, including those who fear confrontation with legal authorities and those with very low literacy skills
- Those living in remote physical and geographical location or at the other extreme those who have been over-researched.

### **Why are they so hard to access/engage? Sometimes because of gatekeepers whose motivation might be:**

**Altruistic:** They may have reasons to refuse access because of the intrusion on private family life, and in some cases the fear of a child protection intervention, particularly in light of the limitations on confidentiality. (Kennan *et al.*, 2012)

**Ethically cautious:** Ewing *et al.* found that “gatekeeping by ethics committees and practitioner control over sample selection were significant hurdles in accessing patients for the study” (Ewing *et al.*, 2004).

***Professionally sensitive or even selfish:*** Gatekeepers may feel the research will reflect badly on them. “Gatekeepers grant formal access but withhold co-operation if they think studies threaten them or their schools”(Macnab *et al.*, 2007).

Lee and Renzetti (1990) believe that research seen as threatening or involving potential costs to those participating in the research should be regarded as ‘sensitive research’.

Wanat (2008) considered that, “Gatekeepers’ cooperation was influenced by what they perceived were benefits and threats to participation. If gatekeepers thought a project would benefit them, they would more likely cooperate. They were less likely to participate if they felt threatened personally or thought their jobs were threatened.” It is not clear how the author detected the extent to which gatekeepers’ motives were ethical or selfish. It would be interesting to compare the interpretations of researchers with different levels of professional experience in the field.

***Sometimes communities may be reluctant to participate if they feel that they have been misunderstood or misrepresented in the past:***

The needs of some groups are not understood and taken into account and this may be why they do not participate “the schools for many of the parents in our study represent places which are insecure, are potentially hostile and are places where they are rendered vulnerable. In these ways, therefore, many of the schools in our study represent spaces of exclusion; unwelcome spaces” (Crozier and Davies, 2007, p. 311).

## Presenters' experiences of recruiting participants:

### Investigating the transition of children with SEN statements from mainstream primary to secondary school.

#### Phil

**Why is this area important?** Because of the additional challenges which pupils with SEN face at secondary school.

#### **What sample was sought, and why and how?**

Pupils with SEN statements were selected as they were easily identifiable and finite in number. However:

- Some children with statements no longer have complex needs;
- Some with complex needs do not have statements;
- The schools involved were identified by a SENCo trainer as amenable to involvement so likely to be confident in the provision being made;

#### **Rates of success / impact on my research?**

Of the 20 families contacted, 8 volunteered; one dropped out when the placement failed, leaving 7 participants. In the opinion of all involved when questioned half way through year 7, transition had been successful for these 7. Families expressed great satisfaction with the outcome but sympathised that this might be inconvenient for the researcher! Participants identified many factors which they felt contributed to successful transition, and offered some improvement suggestions, but it was not possible to learn from examples of transition 'failure'.

#### Meanu

**Why is this area important?** Because the extra needs of the children (with SEN statements) puts more pressures on families to choose the right school. Also some evidence that emphasis on inclusion over the

last 15 years has increased pressure on LAs to place children in mainstream wherever possible.

***What sample was sought, why and how?***

Wanted families from a range of backgrounds (gender, ethnic, socio-economic, age), geographical areas and different SEN statements, used statements as was easier to identify children, although as PE mentions, statements brings their own difficulties. I felt that interviewing a range of families would give a more representative picture of the reality around school placement decisions for children with statements. I wanted to know if families with different backgrounds, in different locations, whose children had different needs - would have similar or different concerns. Initial participants were volunteers from survey, then snowballing and various canvassing options were explored – presenting at meetings of head teachers, SENCos, parent support groups meetings, leaflets drops in: doctors'/dentists' surgeries, clinics, supermarkets, schools, gurudwaras, indoor play centres, children's centres, friends/colleagues were given them to pass on, an advert was placed in a community magazine, LAs were contacted.....etc.

***Rates of success / impact on my research?***

Of the many different methods used, only a few actually produced any participants. Half of all interview participants were volunteers from the LA survey across one county, so you might imagine they were a fairly mixed sample, however, not necessarily so, I visited most of their houses and would guess that over half of them were middle class. The other participants came via snowballing and networking at various events and through every friendship I ever had. In total I interviewed families about 20 children, aged 4-15, across 3 LAs, with a range of SEN, a range of different schools both primary, secondary, residential, special, main-

stream with a specialist units – this suggests that perhaps the sample was quite broad, however we also need to note that all the parents were white, many were middle class, all of the interviewees were women, although male partners were present on some occasions they said little. Difficult to say yet what the impact on the research has been, I know what I know from these interviews but of course I don't know what I have missed through a lack of diversity in my sample. Any recommendations I make to schools or LAs regarding children with SEN statements and school placement may not actually represent the views of many of the families that didn't speak to me, the ones that were too busy, or not interested or oblivious.....

### **How can we be more successful in engaging with these groups?**

Many researchers struggle to engage with or access the participants they need for their research, whether they are researching in post-conflict Rwanda or inner city London, we looked at a range of studies to try and glean some of the methods used by other researchers to access the participants they required to make sure that their qualitative findings produced reliable data. It can take a great deal of time, effort and expenditure to recruit participants Ewing *at al.* in their 2004 work into palliative care, reported that they made 1871 individual contacts, in 12 recruitment rounds across 22 months, to recruit 78 potential participants, they commented that “efforts made with recruitment were disproportionate to the outcome we received” (p. 456). We think that is difficult to argue with. In this paper we have suggested some of the reasons that may make access of engagement difficult and we both experienced some of these with our own work. We will now outline some of the methods that have helped previous researchers in the hope that they may inspire us and make us realise that there are methods

that can work and also help us to appreciate that we are not alone. So how do they do it?

Groger (Groger *et al.*, 1999) researched African American elders and their long term care choices. They had problems with access and found that gatekeepers refused access for a range of reasons from shyness to illness. Owing to the requirements of the institutional review boards in the US, which was the route to gaining their funding, they found that they were very restricted in terms of being able to make changes to their research design and could not ‘play it by ear’ as even every change of wording in a letter had to be approved. They ended up using what they call ‘**scrounging sampling**’ – “desperate & continuing efforts, against mounting odds, to round out the collection of individuals with relevant types of experience we know to exist but have not been able to capture” (p.830) to complete their sample of 60 interviews. However they were unable to achieve maximum variation sampling and argue that as qualitative researchers we need to be clear that, if our findings are not based on access to the whole population, although our results might (not??) be generalisable we need to ask ourselves ‘what if?’ So scrounging sampling is our first method, one which I know will be familiar to many researchers.

Another familiar method is **snowball sampling** – this is a method where we identify respondents who then refer us to other respondents, in their paper *Sampling hard to reach populations*, Faugier and Sargeant, (1997), suggest that “in attempting to study hidden populations for whom adequate lists and consequently sampling frames are not readily available, snowball sampling methodologies may be the only feasible methods available” (p. 792) However despite its name the method does not work as simply as a snowball, with a researcher

starting the ball rolling and then it getting bigger and bigger as the participants simply gather. It is often a slow and careful process in which the researcher has to avoid many pitfalls and often results in a sample which is strongly biased towards the inclusion of participants who have many interrelationships; this may in turn distort the findings. However there is little doubt that this is the only way of accessing some vulnerable and more impenetrable social groupings. Provided that we report on any likely sources of bias and the constraints on our findings, we might improve our understanding of the needs of these groups even if we cannot generalise from our findings.

Shaghghi *et al.* (2011) in their literature review on hard to reach populations have identified a range of techniques to recruit hard-to-reach populations, including a number of methods, among which snowball sampling and a variation on it called **respondent-driven sampling** (RDS), developed by Heckathorn in 1997. RDS is a form of chain-referral sampling that was designed to eliminate some of the problems with snowball sampling. It uses recruitment incentives (e.g. payment for participation and also for recruiting peers); it limits the number of recruits permitted per participant and it protects participants' confidentiality by letting them decide whether or not to become known to the researcher. However, despite the intentions, there are still problems associated with the RDS method, namely the variable recruitment rate by different types of people in the study. Another method they identify is **indigenous field worker sampling** (IFWS), where investigators, who have privileged access to the study target population, are selected from the local community, given relevant training and then carry out the data collection. It is thought that this reduces volunteer bias and under-reporting of socially

undesirable behaviours, in some cases it can also allow research into areas that would likely be impossible to access otherwise, for example highly marginalised and stigmatised communities such as sex workers. Benoit *et al.* (2005) recruited former sex workers as their indigenous research assistants (IRAs) in their study of sex workers in a metropolitan Canadian city. They managed to interview a sample of over 200 which gave them really useful data on the needs of these workers.

Shaghghi *et al.* (2011) also found several other methods: **Facility-based sampling (FBS)**; **Targeted sampling (TS)**; **Conventional cluster sampling (CCS)** and finally **capture re-capture sampling (CR)** all of which are designed to overcome some of the problems of trying to access hard to reach groups in our society. However they conclude that, regardless of the advantages and disadvantages of each method, their success is ultimately based upon our knowledge about specific characteristics of the sub group we are attempting to study.

Now this knowledge or lack of, is what Thomas *et al.* (2003) found in their study on young Welsh carers. They contacted every school, doctor's surgery, Education Welfare officer, Primary health trust and social services department across Wales in an attempt to recruit young carers for their study commissioned by the Welsh National Assembly. Eventually they recruited 18 young carers through 'informal contacts', not via any of the above, they put this down to the fact that the group, which they had identified as 'young carers,' were largely unidentified by the very institutions which should have been supporting them. So one thing we must be aware of when attempting to recruit is how we define our population and what labels we use. For example just because I call a group 'families of children with a SEN statement' does



not mean that they identify themselves as such.

Also speaking of identity, another lesson worth remembering, albeit not a method as such, is reported on by Maginn (2007) in his work in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in London. He spent nearly 15 months intensively networking, using formal and informal methods, to gain access to his participants. In previous work in Northern Ireland and with Travellers he had asserted different aspects of his identity and highlighted common ground to overcome suspicions and build rapport with potential informants. For example he highlighted his experiences of segregation and discrimination in Northern Ireland as a way of connecting himself, a white middle class researcher, with ethnic minorities in London. He also carried out what he called commitment acts; to build rapport, he would turn up early at meetings and help set up, and also worked hard to “induce a sense of familiarity, similarity and sympathy among gatekeepers and informants towards my research” (Maginn, 2007, p. 431). In my research I had tried to do some similar rapport building and tried a few commitment acts of my own, however I found myself uncomfortable with the ethics of the process and am still questioning whether it was right for me to emphasise my identity as a mother when talking to participants about their children or to turn up to a parents’ support meeting in the hope of recruiting more participants.

The moral dilemmas and time intensiveness of research in sensitive areas or within close-knit communities has been noted by other researchers. Kaluwich (2010), in her research on Muscogee women, spent over two years building relationships, presenting herself appropriately and understanding the social mores of the community before she was granted access by the gatekeepers. She then used snowball

sampling to carry out her ethnographic studies. Chakravarty (2012) in her work in post-conflict Rwanda talks about 'partial trust'; as an outsider to the community she was limited to peripheral member status and enjoyed interactions with limited trust, she had to make the most of every opportunity. Sixsmith *et al*, (2003) in their work in looking at social capital, health and gender in a deprived community in the Northwest of England, write that:

*As the research process unfolded, it became evident that obtaining a sample was not simply a matter of recruiting people into the research but, rather, a complex social process of gaining access into the community itself. As 'outsiders' to a community, researchers need to address the psychosocial distance between themselves and the researched to gain valuable insights into the everyday lives of community residents' (Sixsmith et al., 2003, p. 579).*

They are very clear that to achieve a diverse sample it is important to use a variety of techniques and to be sensitive to the community, their needs and the impact the research may have on them. It is also paramount that relationships and trust are carefully maintained throughout. This will be familiar to many researchers and illustrates the need to attend carefully to research relationships and to take sufficient time to build upon them.

However it is not just researchers who suffer from these dilemmas; gatekeepers too have to make difficult ethical decisions and manage the dual responsibilities of supporting research and someone acting on behalf of the people they are employed to care for. Groger *et al*. 1999, found this in their work with African American carers and caregivers – where in some cases gatekeepers were the caregivers and refused access to the people they cared for on a range of grounds. In some cases there may even be two gatekeepers, a 'direct' gatekeeper

such as a parent or carer (Lewis, 2005), followed by an 'indirect' gatekeeper such as an educational service. Macnab *et al.* (2007) in their work on young people 'missing' from education, found themselves at the mercy of gatekeepers within the educational systems, who did not allow them access to the young people as it was felt that any questioning by the research team might place undue stress on the young people, some of whom may have had mental health difficulties. From this perspective it seems only right that the educational systems should protect young people. However it is also important to note that Macnab's (2007) research could also have involved potential costs to the education authorities themselves, as it may have uncovered a lack of efficient provision for meeting the statutory needs of the young people. In my own research perhaps the LAs that turned down my request to allow me access to parents of children with SEN statements were protecting the families from yet more paperwork and questions - or perhaps they were ensuring my research could not uncover any shortcomings in their provision for these families? Sixsmith *et al.* (2003) found that there are benefits and disadvantages with using gatekeepers to access participants. However, as long as caution is used there is no doubt that gatekeepers and how well you manage them is another important method/consideration when it comes to accessing the hard to reach.

## Conclusion

This paper is intended to provide a brief overview of the plethora of methods and techniques that can be helpful when trying to access research participants who are less forthcoming; also to give an indication of the difficulties that researchers may face when researching the hard to reach. Many studies say little or nothing of the difficulties of obtaining their sample. In order to ensure that research of the hard to

reach continues, it is important that researchers are open about such difficulties and share their experiences to improve practice. Or as Lewis puts it;

*Marginalized groups are, by definition, often excluded from mainstream studies. The greater the difficulties in reflecting the views of those marginalized groups, the greater the concomitant danger (particularly in a policy context which is increasingly recognizing children's right to be heard (Lewis, 2004) that the loudest voices obliterate those of the unheard. This places a responsibility on researchers to develop methodologies and methods which recurrently open the research process (Lewis in eds. Clough et al, 2005, p. 396).*

## References

- Benoit, C., Jansson, M., Millar, A., Phillips, R. (2005) Community-academic research on hard-to-reach populations: benefits and challenges. *Qualitative health research*. **15**(2), 263–82.
- Chakravarty, A. (2012) 'Partially Trusting' Field Relationships, Opportunities and Constraints of Fieldwork in Rwanda's Post conflict Setting. *Field Methods*. **24**(3), 251–271.
- Clough, P; Garner, P. (eds) (2005) *Handbook of emotional and behavioural difficulties*. Sage: London
- Crozier, G., Davies, J. (2007) Hard to reach parents or hard to reach schools? A discussion of home–school relations, with particular reference to Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents. *British Educational Research Journal*. **33**(3), 295–313.
- Ewing, G., Rogers, M., Barclay, S., McCabe, J., Martin, A., Todd, C. (2004) Recruiting patients into a primary care based study of palliative care: why is it so difficult? *Palliative Medicine*. **18**(5), 452–459.
- Faugier, J., Sargeant, M. (1997) Sampling hard to reach populations. *Journal of advanced nursing*. **26**(4), 790–7.

- Groger, L., Mayberry, P.S., Straker, J.K. (1999) What We Didn't Learn Because of Who Would Not Talk to Us. *Qualitative Health Research* . **9** (6 ), 829–835.
- Heckathorn, D. D. (1997). Respondent-driven sampling: A new approach to the study of hidden populations. *Social Problems*, **44**, 174-199.
- Kawulich, B.B. (2010) Gatekeeping: An Ongoing Adventure in Research. *Field Methods*. **23**(1), 57–76.
- Kennan, D., Fives, A., Canavan, J. (2012) Accessing a hard to reach population: reflections on research with young carers in Ireland. *Child & Family Social Work*. **17**(3), 275–283.
- Lee, R. M. and Renzetti, C. M. (1990) The Problems of Researching Sensitive Topics: An Overview and Introduction. *American Behavioral Scientist*, **33** (5), 510-28
- Macnab, N., Visser, J., Daniels, H. (2007) Desperately seeking data: methodological complications in researching 'hard to find' young people. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. **7**(3), 142–148.
- Maginn, P.J. (2007) Negotiating and Securing Access: Reflections from a Study into Urban Regeneration and Community Participation in Ethnically Diverse Neighborhoods in London, England. *Field Methods*. **19**(4), 425–440.
- Mander, R., Scm, R.G.N. (1992) Seeking approval for research access: the gatekeeper's role in facilitating a study of the care of the relinquishing mother (1984), 1460–1464.
- Shaghghi, A., Bhopal, R.S., Sheikh, A. (2011) Approaches to Recruiting 'Hard-To-Reach' Populations into Research: A Review of the Literature **1**(2), 86–94.

- Shpungin, E., Lyubansky, M. (2006) Navigating social class roles in community research. *American journal of community psychology*. **37**(3-4), 227–35.
- Sixsmith, J., Boneham, M., Goldring, J.E. (2003) Accessing the Community: Gaining Insider Perspectives From the Outside. *Qualitative Health Research*. **13**(4), 578–589.
- Thomas, N., Stainton, T., Jackson, S., Cheung, W.Y., Doubtfire, S., Webb, A. (2003) Your friends don't understand: Invisibility and unmet need in the lives of 'young carers'  
Correspondence:(1995), 35–46.
- Wanat, C.L. (2008) Getting Past the Gatekeepers: Differences Between Access and Cooperation in Public School Research. *Field Methods*. **20**(2), 191–208.

## ABSTRACTS

### Group One

*Dandy George Dampson*  
*University of Northampton*

Teacher participation in decision-making remains a persistent theme in Ghana's educational reforms (GES, 2008). In 2002 the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) and the National Association of Teachers (GNAT) called for teachers to be involved integrally in making school decisions. These actions by teachers' unions indicate teachers' readiness to fully participate in decision-making that concern them and the schools they teach. Yet, teacher participation in school decision-making has remained a persistent concern in Ghana's education reform movement since the introduction of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1996 (GES, 2004).

This study aims to find out the extent to which teachers participate in decisions, specifically in relation to the four dimensions of school governance: goals, management, curriculum and instruction and staff development. The study adopted a triangulation approach where data is being collected in three phases through closed-ended questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview and observation. The closed-ended questionnaire survey is designed to collect data from respondents through the use of closed-ended questionnaire. Phase two will employ a semi-structured interview schedule to elicit responses from participants, whilst in phase three an ethnographic case study approach involving participants and non-participants observation, documents scrutiny and interview schedules will be employed. This model enables the researcher to develop qualitative instruments (interview, observation, case study) to support quantitative findings. It is hoped that a framework for

decision-making in schools will evolve from the findings of this study which will be adopted on pilot bases in some Ghanaian basic schools.

---

*Stella Long*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

The current trend towards inclusion has resulted in an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools in Ireland. Their inclusion has implications for special education teacher education given that teachers possessing the necessary knowledge and skills base are central to successful inclusion. However, research on continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers in SEN is scant. International assessments of mathematics standards in Ireland indicate that 20% of pupils leave school without acquiring basic mathematics. This research focuses on factors impacting on the teaching of mathematics to pupils with SEN attending mainstream schools in Ireland. It specifically focusses on the impact of CPD in mathematics on a Graduate Diploma in SEN (GDSEN) on the participants, their pupils and wider school communities. Other factors such as for example national policy initiatives, whole school approaches to SEN and teacher attitudes to inclusion will be investigated. The research will take the form of a number of case studies namely the GDSEN participants and secondly, individual teachers and their school communities. This research will be based on the *constructivist paradigm* whereby the participants' views will be sought. A *mixed-methods research* design including quantitative and qualitative data will be used, incorporating questionnaires, test instruments, observations and interviews. The methodological approach will enable the researcher to obtain insights into contexts impacting on the teaching of mathematics to pupils with SEN. Key challenges to



date include access to appropriate instruments, access to participants and the response rate of participants.

---

*Genevieve Murray*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

The ESRI report (2007) in Ireland identified the education sector as having the highest incidence rate (14%), of workplace bullying. Consequently, this study investigated the prevalence of workplace bullying within the teaching profession in post-primary schools in Ireland. Until recently, the majority of studies undertaken in the area of workplace bullying have used quantitative methods that rely chiefly on survey data. Thus, this research study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. Moreover, this methodological approach extended the method used in the ESRI (2007) survey on workplace bullying.

The mixed methods approach, included questionnaires and in-depth unstructured interviews. The aim of the questionnaire was to make initial contact with teaching staff, requesting participants to partake in this study. Previous research studies have revealed that workplace bullying is an extremely sensitive issue and can cause immense psychological distress for the victim/participants. Therefore, due to the delicate nature of this study, it was crucial that the interviews took place in a relaxed atmosphere. This allowed the interviewee the opportunity to relate their experiences at their own pace in a secure and safe environment.

The unstructured interviews proved challenging for the researcher, since the researcher had never previously met the participants. Moreover, the participants in the study, whether they were still being

bullied, had been accused of bullying or the bullying had ceased were still 'raw' from the effects of the circumstances that had transformed their lives. However, in order to gain rich data this approach was necessary in this study.

---

*Remi Odunsi*  
*University of Northampton*

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in children are being diagnosed early and interventions started to enable them to develop necessary social and communications skills. Most of the research and assessment tools developed for screening and identification have been developed in the Western world with very little done in Sub-Saharan Africa. The research into autism in Africa -Nigeria in particular - has been done mainly by medical professionals because children and adults with autism are treated as mental health patients in psychiatric hospitals. The education of children with autism has been found to be an important and effective intervention. The two areas that are important for education are the understanding of autism by teachers and effective inclusion of children with ASD in schools. Nigeria has an inclusive educational policy however it is very rarely implemented in schools. This among other factors is due to there being little understanding of special educational needs, including autism, among educational practitioners. The aim of this research is to identify levels of understanding of autism among teachers in mainstream primary schools in Nigeria and find ways of improving identification of children with autism by developing culturally sensitive tools for assessment. This should enhance the inclusion of children with ASD in mainstream schools. To investigate these issues a case study of teachers in a local government will be carried out using mixed methods -

questionnaires and semi-structured interviews - based on questions elicited from focus groups.

---

*Saneeya Qureshi*  
*University of Northampton*

The role of the SENCO was established in the 1994 SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 1994) which stated that all mainstream schools in England must have someone responsible for coordinating and implementing appropriate services and provisions for children with SEN. This interpretivist study investigates the impact that SENCOs have on teachers' capacity to address SEN in their classrooms. A mixed-method approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) is applied, consisting of three phases: self-administered questionnaires, face-to-face semi-structured interviews and case-study vignettes of SENCOs, teachers and head teachers, along with document scrutiny of school SEN-related material. I will discuss challenges pertaining to my methodological examination of the SENCO-teacher dynamic. These include sampling issues, cohort access, professional experience and identity, and the validity of research instruments. Implications are then considered with regard to emergent themes, and the construction of a meaningful image of how SENCOs affect the inclusive practices of their teaching colleagues. A key challenge that I currently face pertains to the dynamic and fluid school environments and their impact on the quality of my data, and thus how SENCOs and teachers respectively construct their 'realities.'

## Group Two

*Meanu Bajwa-Patel*  
*University of Northampton*

This project gathered data from a sample of relevant parents to elicit the reasons behind the school choices they made and to establish how well their choices were working out for their children. The study investigated the following questions:

1. How do parents of children who have a SEN Statement make decisions to send their children either to mainstream or special schools?
2. What are the aspirations of parents of children who have a SEN Statement?
3. In choosing either mainstream or a special school, what in-school factors do parents of children who have a SEN Statement perceive as being important for the support of their children in schools?

The methodology had at its centre the idea “that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p5). The phase 1 sample comprised parents, whose children had a wide range of SEN, across two school year groups, who were surveyed using a postal questionnaire, designed with a series of closed questions. The majority of survey respondents were female, graduates aged 40+ who lived in villages. In phase 2 parents were recruited through a range of methods and there was a deliberate effort to try and recruit a more diverse group across a range of variables, including area, socio-economic backgrounds and age.

However this proved to be more of a challenge than anticipated.

*Emma Farrell*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

Mental health problems are the number one health problem for young people worldwide (Gore, 2011; WHO, 2004). Almost 75% of all mental health problems first emerge between the ages of 15 and 25, a time when many young people are engaging in higher education (Hickie, 2004; Kessler et al, 2005). Current estimates suggest that one third of students experience a mental health problem at some stage in their academic career and for one sixth of these students their mental health problem is severe and persistent (Zivin et al., 2009). According to Gibson (2012) in order to effectively address the needs of students with mental health problems in higher education, it is important to “fully understand the overall educational experience of these students” (2012, p. 354).

My Ph.D. study aims to explore the experience of students with persistent mental health problems in higher education with a particular focus on the impact of a mental health problem on a student’s identity or ‘reflexive project of the self’ (Giddens, 1991, p.32). This study will adopt a qualitative life history approach to data collection with approximately 20 students who have experience of navigating higher education with a mental health problem.

Key challenges associated with this study/methodology: participant recruitment; gaining ethical approval; working with vulnerable populations; anonymity; consent; distributions of power within the researcher-participant relationship; the role of the researcher (keeping ‘one foot in and one foot out’); researcher disclosure and self-care; notions of trust within researcher-participant relationship; researcher reflexivity (‘how to’).

*Paula Flynn*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

Young people who are struggling or unhappy in school either because of negative perceptions of their abilities or because they have special educational needs which are not supported, represent a marginalised group within our system of education. Students who present with behaviours associated with the categorisation of ‘Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties’ (SEBD) have been identified as the least popular amongst their peers and teachers (Cefai and Cooper 2010; Shevlin, Winter and Flynn 2012). My research set out to determine the impact on a sample group of young people with SEBD when they engaged in a student voice process using an ethnographic approach which involved intensive data collection through regular individual and group interviews. It was integral to the process to determine if the experience of being listened to for the student participants was one of empowerment and if that subsequently encouraged them to make changes that would benefit their educational environment. Challenges associated with this research approach include the danger of ‘over interpretation’ or ‘**adulteration**’ of the data, the vulnerability of students who are not familiar with being listened to and afforded the respect that such listening presents, the ethical ‘ownership’ of the process, and the intensive and emotional nature of the activity.

Key questions raised from an engagement with this approach relate to the nature and understanding of ‘empowerment’ and cognisance of power relations within the research relationship; the credibility of research interpretation of ‘voice’ and the balance between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives within ethnographic study.

---

*Benny Kuruvilla*  
*University of Northampton*

The objective of the research is to evaluate the role and impact of learning mentors, a strand of workforce introduced into the English primary school sector in 1999 as part of the Excellence in Cities (EIC) initiative. Their mandate was to remove barriers to learning experienced by a considerable number of children, preventing them from participating effectively in learning, which in turn prevented the complete realisation of their full potential.

In qualitative research, efficient management of data collection method plays an important role in determining validity and reliability. Data collection often encounters several methodological issues including access and the current research was no exception. Although it remains a fact that access is vital for data collection, access in itself can be a major factor which can affect gathering of information from the whole population. To begin with, gaining access can be a slow process. Another important question is whether access merely represents admittance to premises or permission from participants? Experience revealed that the personal disposition/background of the researcher is an important aspect which affects access in a significant manner. Although bias in researcher or researched is unethical, the personal, cultural, linguistic and educational predispositions of the researcher in comparison to that of the participant are often unavoidable. In the conference, I would like to draw attention to this aspect of access within research as a whole and my own experience.

---

*Vivian Rath*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

Over the past ten years the number of students with varying disabilities attending Higher Education in Ireland has increased from 990 to 4,392, (HEA, 2008). Student engagement is at the heart of the National Strategy to Higher Education 2030 and yet, there have been few studies into the student experiences of students with disabilities over the life time of their journey through Higher Education.

This research aims to investigate the student experience of students with disabilities from their transition from second level until their completion of higher education using qualitative data. The researcher will use a Life Course Trajectory to gain an insight into the lived experiences of students at different stages. Narratives, oral and autobiography will be used to determine how their lives are affected by social change and the transition to third level.

For the purpose of this research a systematic literature review will also be conducted, to examine the literature relating to the access and participation of students with disabilities in Ireland and the EU to examine its effects on the student experience.

This research should result in some interesting discussion surrounding the approach that should be taken, in order to fully capture all the information relating to the journey of students within the lifetime of the PhD process.

---



## Group Three

*Carmel Capewell*  
*University of Northampton*

My research is a qualitative investigation into the lived experience of Glue Ear, a continuum condition and common cause of intermittent hearing loss in children. I wanted participants to explain their experiences to identify their key issues/themes.

I have combined two methodologies: Photo Voice and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In a phenomenological approach, participants are regarded as the experts. Interviews are the main method used, but that means that the researcher sets the interview schedule and particularly with young people there is a potential power imbalance. Photo Voice encourages participants to reflect on their condition and identify issues which are of importance to them to produce photos. The transcripts of the participant-led discussions about the photos are analysed using the techniques of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), with participants checking the summary and having editorial rights.

Using an inclusive research methodology is more time consuming for participants so it is important to identify the benefits for them of participation. I want participants to lead the data production and not be influenced by my agenda. The researcher needs to constantly engage in reflective practice to identify how to minimise influencing the agenda, knowledge and interests. Researchers have to be flexible in accepting how participants interpret the task. Treating participants as experts gives greater insight into their experience.

Issues for discussion are:

- Actively engaging participants in producing photos highlighting their issues, minimising researcher influence
- Ethical issues of ownership of images and ensuring participant anonymity and safety
- Promoting participant ownership of the data.

---

*Kate Carr-Fanning*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

Despite being the most common (Polancsyk et al., 2007) and well researched condition, knowledge of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is predominantly bio-medical (Taylor, 2009), stigmatizing (Hinshaw et al, 2011), and based on behavioral descriptions (e.g., hyperactive), which lack ecological validity (Armstrong, Galloway, & Tomlinson, 1993). Symptoms also vary across students (Taylor, 2009), and are impacted by socio-cultural contexts (Singh, 2012). Thus, ADHD is a bio-medical label for a bio-psychosocial condition (Cooper, 1997). Psychosocial research considers transactions between the perceived and actual environment (Jessor, 1991). However, there is a dearth of qualitative research, especially outside clinical settings (National Institute for Clinical Excellence, 2009).

This student-voice research project explores the perceptions and experiences of students with ADHD in an Irish context. A constructionist's approach to stress and coping, studies 'needs' rather than 'labels', using a solution-focused perspective (Aldwin, 2009), to contribute to an understanding of 'what works' in practice. Multiple

qualitative case-studies placed the student's voice at the analytic-center, triangulated with other stakeholders (parent and teacher) and evidence-based data, and were facilitated by visual methodologies. Thereby, enabling the construction of a highly contextualized account of their lives within their ecological niche (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). As an 'insider' study with a 'psychological' focus accessing and engaging with different stakeholders presented unique challenges. Using visual methods to study stress was found to be beneficial, and students participated in their construction across two pilot studies. They enabled a non-distressing, student-centered, and de-victimizing approach to studying barriers (problems) and facilitators (solutions) to inclusion from the student's perspective.

---

*John Kubiak*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

This research explored the learning experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities who attend a two year education programme called the Certificate in Contemporary Living (CCL) in the National Institute for Intellectual Disability (NIID) at Trinity College Dublin. As there has been little or no research done on how this group of students learn while they are on campus, it is argued that educators working with people with intellectual disabilities do not possess adequate knowledge of how this group of adult learners experience learning while in college. For this reason, the views of learners with intellectual disabilities in tertiary education deserve to be closely examined.

One of the objectives of this study was to display a complex, holistic

picture of CCL students' experiences of their learning that allowed their individual and collective voices to be heard. Employing a qualitative research methodology enabled this author to engage with the research requirements of:

1. Enabling CCL students to relate the lived experiences of their learning at the NIID; and
2. Describing the multiple dimensions of students' learning using a phenomenographic approach.

Researching inclusively offers the opportunity for a more balanced partnership between professional researchers and people with intellectual disabilities. Some challenges that were encountered in this study were: 1) time restraints for training co-researchers and making materials accessible, and 2), interviewing, particularly the questioning process. Further research to explore ways of inclusively analysing data and dissemination is suggested.

---

*Patricia McCarthy*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

Until recently in Ireland the educational provision for blind/vision impaired people occurred primarily within the special educational system. The restructuring of the education system began in the 1990s and led to many changes in special education including a language of inclusive education within policy initiatives. This research seeks to explore the educational experiences and transition choices/opportunities of blind/vision impaired people within this context. The research questions examined in this research pertained to the educational experiences of blind/vision impaired people, the factors

that impacted on their educational experiences and, the issues that impact on their transition choices/opportunities.

All methodologies have both advantages and limitations in their implementation. For the purposes of this research study a life history approach was utilized. A life history approach recognises the integrity of the individual and acknowledges their experiences as valid. This approach allows the participant to be visible in the research process and as there has been a dearth of participation among disabled people either as researchers or as participants in their own right this was identified as an appropriate methodology to use. This methodology enabled the researcher to place the accounts of those who participated in this research within the broader contexts of social, institutional, and political settings. My ontological position as a disabled researcher has been central to the development of this research. Some of the methodological issues that were pertinent to this study concerned researcher as insider, confidentiality and anonymity and the utilization of gatekeepers.

---

*Abide Zenenga*  
*University of Northampton*

There is growing interest in fatherhood in twenty first century Britain. This study aims to investigate the patterns of engagement by fathers in the education of their sons, and is built around a qualitative case study carried out in a specialist secondary school in England. A triangular approach is employed in which the views of fathers, boys, teachers and other relevant professionals are considered through interviews, document analysis and observations. A participa-

tory action research (PAR) approach is used, which involves participants in the identification of the problem, implementation of an action and reflection.

PAR is a type of professional development. The involvement of teachers and other professionals in school enables issues to be highlighted regarding the engagement of fathers in the education of their sons. All participants (fathers, boys and teachers) in the school help to find a solution to engaging more fathers by taking part in a cycle of meetings to make suggestions and reflect on their impact. This way of gathering data is recognized as democratic and empowering to participants. Fathers and boys have an opportunity to advise the school on how best they can be involved. It is hoped the study will help the school to formulate policy that will improve relations with fathers and raise the achievement of the boys.

The personalized nature of PAR means that findings cannot be generalized to larger populations, but since one of its key aims is to share knowledge, I will share my findings and relate them to similar situations.

---

## Group Four

*Phil Ellender*

*University of Northampton*

There is much research indicating that successful transition from primary to secondary education is important for later well-being and attainment, and that transition may be more difficult for children with SEN.

Having been involved professionally with such transitions over the years, I was keen to research into factors affecting transition for children with SEN Statements. Additionally, I wished to compare pupils' prior expectations with their lived experience, i.e. how far reality matched participants' expectations of secondary school. Although both of these are important to the pupils and their families, evidence that reality might be less troublesome than anticipated might help reassure others who are anxiously anticipating transition.

This mixed method, longitudinal study involved questionnaires with SENCoS and semi-structured interviews with a purposive, opportunity sample of pupils, parents and school staff (usually the SENCo) before and after transition. School SEN policies and OFSTED reports were reviewed, to determine how far these addressed transition, and how far policy was reflected in practice. Vignettes were produced on each of the seven pupils involved to highlight their individual experiences, and subsequently distilled to enable the research questions to be answered.

I would like to discuss the difficulties in obtaining a suitable sample - given that those who anticipate successful transition are more likely to agree to being involved - and the implications that this lack of

diversity may present for research findings. I hope to discuss the extent to which research from such a restricted sample can be relied upon to inform transition processes.

---

*Colin McElroy*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

Recent studies have highlighted confusion and misunderstandings amongst researchers regarding research terminology and philosophical assumptions that define the major paradigms of research. The research paradigm represents a researcher's worldview and their interpretation of knowledge. The choice of paradigm guides the overall research process and influences methodological approaches, data collection methods and strategies for analysis undertaken in research.

The policy of inclusion has led to increased numbers of students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) attending mainstream schools in recent years. Despite many publications and passed legislation on inclusive education, Ireland has been slow to translate inclusive policies into inclusive practices. There has been a dearth of empirical evidence in an Irish context that examines stakeholders' viewpoints on the process of inclusion for students with ASD.

The challenge for inclusive research in education is developing a conceptual framework that adopts acceptable research terminology that is applied in a consistent manner. Research terminology- the building blocks of research- is the starting point for the design and development of a conceptual framework. The four major paradigms employed in social research will be discussed along with key concepts



involved in the research process. The discussion will engage researchers in a reflective process relating to their own worldviews and philosophical perspectives that guides their choice of methodological approaches and methods of data collection. The rationale for the paradigmatic choices adopted by the author, in research that describes the experiences of students with ASD and key stakeholders in mainstream primary schools will be reviewed.

---

*Aoife O'Brien*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

For the purpose of this research, a Systematic Literature Review is being employed to retrieve, appraise, and analyse all available literature relating to bereavement among students, so as to provide a meta-narrative approach. The Systematic Literature Review follows approaches used by, for example, the Cochrane Collaborative Reviews and the Campbell Collaboration.

The researcher also deployed a Bereavement Audit Survey (based on Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2008) in primary and post-primary schools (N= 1500) across the Republic of Ireland. Interviews with key stakeholders, organisations, policy makers, and practitioners with a remit in the area of bereavement and grief support are currently being conducted in order to consolidate and confirm the Systematic Literature Review.

In terms of what can be learned from the chosen methodology, the Systematic Literature Review is an underused tool amongst students; the systematic approach that was undertaken would be of use to

those considering a similar method. The strategy used for the Bereavement Audit study would be useful to those exploring an area with an obvious dearth of robust empirical research. The interview methodology will aid those developing semi-structured interviews resulting in thematic analysis.

Interesting discussions that could arise from this research would include: different strategies and approaches others have taken to the interview process; whether other researchers have conducted a Systematic Literature Review; developing and incorporating quantitative and qualitative results in a meaningful way.

---

*Miriam Twomey*  
*Trinity College Dublin*

This research noted that the voice of the child with a disability has traditionally occupied an ephemeral position. It also noted that those with the most direct experience of inclusion do not identify what it is to include and be included. To address these anomalies, this research examined ways of listening to and consulting children with and without the label of Autism.

This research took the form of small-scale qualitative case studies, involving interviews and focus groups with a number of participant groups including inclusive groups of children. It sought to explore the methodological difficulties when children were non-verbal and raised the question what happens in the absence of voice?

The research yielded valuable information relating to a range of creative, visual and augmentative methods which were designed to

simultaneously engage children's interest and facilitate communication. Exploring children's visual and image based voice is not unrelated to approaches facilitating their communication. Effective approaches accommodate children's propensity to embody and represent their world visually. Pretty Boy and Pretty Girl (large life size puppets) were enlisted as co-researchers. Through inclusive focus group interviewing they elicited children's voice. Focus group interviewing with children became increasingly conducted by puppets.

Puppet role play initiated group talk avoiding children's reticence or withdrawal from answering. Puppet role play stimulated their interest in contributing. This research succeeded in eliciting children's voice; children expressed who they wanted to be, and who they want to be with. It affirmed the need for authentic views on Inclusion.

---

*Yu Zhao*

*University of Northampton*

In recent decades, a considerable increase in the number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been reported. Also, the changing of learning environment from primary to post-primary education is a significant turning point for children, especially for those with autism. Thus, the current project investigates the challenges faced by students as they make the transition from primary to post-primary school, especially those with ASD.

The research will explore the experiences of young people with ASD and their parents during transition from primary to post-primary education; examine those processes put in place in schools to

facilitate their transition; and identify elements (school management, curriculum, teaching etc.) that correlate with successful transition.

Sampling will involve a purposive selection of two post-primary schools in Ireland - one in an urban area and the other in a rural area - and another five primary schools feeding each of these post-primary schools. The main research methods will be semi-structured interviews with school staff, parents and pupils, also a scrutiny of school documents including: SEN Policies, Admissions / Enrolment Policies, Transition Policies, and Parental Involvement Policies. Transition Plans and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) will also be reviewed at both primary and post-primary level; and finally illustrative case studies will be developed.

I hope to discuss the difficulties of interview arrangement (questions design, piloting etc.) and transcription (accuracy and validity of the data), also different types of data analysis.

---

# Approaches to Inclusive Research in Education: Opportunities and Challenges

## Round Table Discussion Feedback

### Group One

*Dandy George Dampson, Stella Long, Genevieve Murray,  
Remi Odunsi & Saneeya Quereshi.  
Rapporteur: Genevieve Murray*

The following is a summary of the discussion among the group in relation to the following:

#### Issues of Commonality

The group found that we had the following research issues in common:

- The Voice – all members of the group were aiming to obtain the individual's personal view within our research topics.
- Sensitive nature - All the research topics were of a sensitive nature which left a lot of responsibility on the researcher in relation to the ethics of the study.

#### Challenges

All members of the group found it difficult to gain access to our samples due the sensitivity of the topic. The group agreed it was important to obtain the 'goodwill' of the gatekeepers in the areas of research we were examining. Moreover, we discussed the difficulties that we encountered in compiling questionnaires and the various formats that were available to us. Some members pointed out, that piloting their questionnaire initially, gave them an insight into some of the problems they needed to address in relation to their type of questions. Following on

from this debate we referred to the type of questionnaire we, as individuals adapted to our different research studies.

### **Researcher as insider/outsider**

Some members of the group found it easier to gain access to their sample by being the outsider. For others it was the opposite. Thus, this issue can vary with researchers depending on their topic and their approach. This aspect of research was prevalent in relation to individuals undertaking qualitative research methods. Members, for example whose research involved interviews related to the problem of being the insider/outsider.

### **Summary**

In summarising the group discussion, all members agreed that it was good to listen to how other researchers approached their studies. Some of us, despite the different topics had/were encountering the same problems. We all agreed that this was a worthwhile exercise.

---

## **Group Two**

### **Researcher as an Insider or Outsider – To be or not to be?**

*Benny Kuruvilla, Meanu Bajwa-Patel, Michael Shevlin & Vivian Rath.*

*Rapporteur: Benny Kuruvilla*

This group focussed its discussion on the position of the researcher in relation to the researched. Several questions emerged including the different perspectives and challenges in relation to being an insider or outsider with respect to the research participants or to be both and if

so, at what stage does one end and the other begin.

The methodological and ethical dilemma associated with the question whether social science researchers are insiders or outsiders in relation to the researched is a persistent one (Mullings, 1999). It is further compounded by the concern whether being an insider guarantees that research outcomes would be more authentic, trustworthy (Denzin, 1992; Griffith, 1998) or being an outsider guarantees irrefutable neutrality. According to Dwyer and Buckle (2009), despite being explored within qualitative research, the discussion on insider/outsider has tended to remain focused around observation, field research and ethnography. The direct and intimate role played by the researcher in data collection and analysis is not only undeniable, but also calls for expanding the insider/outsider discussion beyond observation, ethnography and field study.

Although Brannick and Coghlan (2007) claimed that social sciences employed the concept of reflexivity to explain the relationship between the researcher and the researched, Allen (2003) concurred with Atkinson & Coffey's (2002) view that despite being used widely, reflexivity was often used imprecisely or with virtually no meaning at all. Johnson and Duberley (2000) outlined two forms of reflexivity, epistemic and methodological where the former focused on the researcher's belief systems and the latter focused on the behavioural impact on the research settings as a result of the research. The second view echoes Evered and Louise's (1981) distinctive concept of 'inquiry from outside' identified with the positivist view where the researcher is neutral and detached from the researched and the 'inquiry from inside' where the researcher immerses him/herself in the context and generates knowledge from that experience.

However, the question that prevails in social science is, can the researcher be completely and absolutely detached from the topic of research? (Corbin & Buckle, 2009). Can being an insider or outsider be the basis for claiming epistemological privileges? (Bartunek, & Louis, 1996)

The group discussed various aspects associated with the researcher being an insider or outsider and several fascinating features emerged as a result. The purpose and goal of the research and the researcher's position as insider / outsider was considered. It was concluded that as a researcher aspiring to obtain an academic qualification, namely a PhD, there would be occasions when the researcher is required to make a conscious decision to be an outsider or insider in order to do justice to the goal of obtaining the degree.

Secondly, the group's attention was drawn to the perception of the researcher himself/herself at the commencement of the research in relation to the researched. The group compared the experiences of two members. While one researcher, encouraged by past association, approached the participants as an insider but was met with an apathetic attitude, the other researcher approached the project with the conscious awareness that the target population was likely to view the researcher as an outsider in the majority of aspects. The impact of the encounter, particularly on the researchers, was significant. While the former experienced significant emotional impact, the latter was practically unscathed in this regard. However, the impact on research outcomes deserves further investigation and analysis.

### **Perceived Benefits and drawbacks**

Another important subject the group discussed was the benefits and drawbacks of being an insider or outsider. There was one view that



being an insider would be an advantage in finding out how the system operates. This concurred with Griffith's (1998) argument that being an insider informs research, producing knowledge that is not available to the outsider. Irvine *et al* (2008) claim that common language can transform the researcher into an insider, thereby enhancing the rigour of the research. It has also been advocated by some who argue that in research involving cross cultural or linguistic aspects, the researcher should be an insider (Culley *et al*, 2007).

However, there was also the opinion that this might adversely affect the data because the participant is likely to assume that the researcher already has the information and therefore does not volunteer it. This might not always be the case and the information omitted could be vital to the research. On the other hand, it was also pointed out that there is the danger that the researcher being an insider might assume that his / her personal experience is the same as the participants. This might cause vital data to be overlooked or ignored.

The group also considered the ethical aspects of being an insider; the insider could be construed as being manipulative, particularly when selecting participants. Further, as Brannick and Coghlan (2007) argued, being an insider puts the researcher in a position of compromising the validity of the research by failing to maintain the distance and objectivity which is necessary for validity.

## **Conclusion**

The view of the group was that the researcher cannot be either a total insider or a complete outsider. In Griffith's (1998) opinion, the two are complementary positions where the researcher begins the research process as an insider, based on the existing knowledge which is not available to an outsider who has limited or no association

with the field of research. However, this leads to the question that was raised during the initial stages of the discussion, i.e. when does the researcher shift from the position of being an insider to an outsider or vice versa? The final result of the discussion was a strong perception that it is essential for the researcher to negotiate the balancing act between the two positions, ultimately enriching the findings of the research. The group preferred to call it the 'bubble' or a 'no man's land'. However, the group agreed that it was not possible to identify a particular stage of the research process as the most suitable time for the researcher to choose to be an insider or outsider. Rather the group was of the view that it was a 'process' occurring throughout the research.

## References

- Allen, D. (2004). Ethnomethodological insights into insider-outsider relationships in nursing ethnographies of healthcare settings. *Nursing Inquiry*, 11 (1). Pp.14-24.
- Atkinson, P. & Coffey, A. (2002). Revisiting the relationship between participant observation and interviewing in Gabrium, JF & Holstein, J.A. (eds.) *Handbook of interview research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Bartunek, J. M., & Louis, M. R. (1996). *Insider/outsider team research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brannick, T & Coghlan, D. (2007). In Defence of Being "Native": The Case for Insider Academic Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, Volume 10, Number 1. pp.59-74.
- Corbin Dwyer, S., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International*

*Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54-63.

- Culley, L., Hudson, N., & Rapport, F. (2007). Using focus groups with minority ethnic communities: Researching infertility in British South Asian communities. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(1), 102-112.
- Denzin, M. (1992). Whose Street Corner Is This Anyway? *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 21. Pp.120-132.
- Dwyer, S.C & Buckle, J.L. (2009). The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in qualitative Research. *International Journal of qualitative Methods*, 8 (1) pp.54-63.
- Evered, R., & Louis, M. R. (1981). Alternative perspectives in the organizational sciences: "inquiry from the inside" and "inquiry from the outside". *Academy of Management Review*, 6(3), 385-395.
- Griffith, A.I. (1998). Insider / Outsider: Epistemological Privilege and Mothering Work. *Human Studies*, 21. Pp-361-376.
- Irvine, F., Roberts, G., & Bradbury-Jones, C. (2008). 'The researcher as insider versus the researcher as outsider: Enhancing rigour through language and cultural sensitivity' in Liamputtong, P. (Ed.) *Doing cross-cultural research* (pp. 35-48). Netherlands: Springer.
- Johnson, P. & Duberley, J. (2000). *Understanding management research*. London: Sage.
- Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum*, 30(4), 337-350.

## Group Three

*Carmel Capewell, Kate Carr-Fanning, John Kubiak, Patricia McCarthy, Abide Zenenga*

*Rapporteurs: Carmel Capewell & Patricia McCarthy*

### **Focus of discussion**

The prime focus of the group was the ‘insider’ perspective to our research. We are all concerned with ensuring that participant voice remained central within our research.

### **Worthwhile aspects of qualitative research**

Qualitative research offers researchers the opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of perceptions and explanations from a participant perspective (Kocklemans 1967). All of the projects had a meaningful engagement and increased participation for participants. Qualitative research offers a depth to understanding the participants involved in the research and what is important to them, rather than a focus on numerical data and statistical significance. For Kate (ADHD) and Carmel’s (Glue Ear) projects, the majority of previous research was quantitative focusing on the bio-medical aspects (Taylor and Robinson 2009, Feldman and Paradise 2009) of the condition rather than trying to gain insight into the lived experience and what would be helpful from the perspective of those with the condition. For Patricia (transitions and the vision impaired) and John’s (the learning experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities) this was an opportunity to encourage active involvement by participants in exploring and explaining their personal situations and responses. Abide (engaging fathers in the education of their sons) provided participants with the opportunity to explore their role in more detail with a view to formulating action strategies.

## Methodologies

All the researchers adapted their methodology in the light of experience and response from participants. This occurred through reflecting what worked well for participants and the desire to adapt to gather more authentic data. The modification of the methodology added an extra dimension to the research projects. There is an element of responding to issues raised by participants to enable them to fully engage with the research process.

John and Carmel both applied a phenomenological approach. At the centre of a phenomenological approach is the participant's experience (Marton 1986), with recognition given that people will experience similar situations in different ways (Becker 1992). John was particularly interested in the experience within the context of education (Akerlind 2008). Carmel combined Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009) with an adaptation of Photovoice (Wang and Burris 1997) to use visual methods as the means of encouraging participant reflection, generating discussion to develop an understanding of the issues, concerns and experiences of participants in the context of research findings. Patricia utilized a life history approach as it places participants' accounts within the broader contexts of social, institutional and political settings (Goodson and Sikes 2001, Hatch and Wisniewski 1995) and, as Shah and Priestley 2011 acknowledge biographical accounts can "...provide a useful empirical lens through which to observe change in disabling societies" (Shah and Priestley, 2011, p.16). Kate used multiple qualitative case studies of students with ADHD, student voice was placed at the analytic-centre, facilitated by visual methodologies, and triangulated with other stakeholders' (parent and teacher) and evidence-based data. Interviews were

coded using principles of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Following resistance during piloting, Kate adjusted all her visual methodologies, including having participants draw and using pre-prepared emoticon-labels as a way of supporting participants to provide them with an indirect starting point to express their emotions. Abide applied a triangulation approach to develop a picture of the views of fathers, boys, teachers and other relevant professionals. He used a participatory action research (PAR) (Burton and Bartlett, 2005) approach to involve participants in the identification of the problem, implementation of an action and reflection.

### **Participant centred**

We all acknowledged that involving participants within our research was important and, although this was taking a risk, their involvement facilitated the generation of in-depth, rich, experiential and contextualised data. However, as researchers we set the research question(s) and recognised that ensuring we meet the criteria for passing a PhD is/was a key goal for all of us.

There was an awareness that 'equal partnership' is more of an aspiration rather than an objective (Fielding 2004), with the researchers taking risks by attempting to disempower themselves, in order to provide participants with space and opportunities to influence the development of the methodologies. John was led by participants in terms of achieving informed consent, with participant-interviewers developing a method of assessing understanding of what was involved in the research and those participants not meeting the criteria excluded from participation. Although loosely based on the interview method, each researcher was concerned to have participants lead the content of the issues discussed within a framework of

their research questions. All researchers are concerned with researching 'with' rather than 'on' the participants.

### **Ethical issues of researcher as insider**

All the researchers are 'insiders' to varying degrees and, as it has been recognized, the closer our research area of interest is to our own life the more we can anticipate that our own life experiences will "enter into and shape our work, to influence the questions we pose and the interpretations we generate from our findings" (Shah, 2006, p. 211). Consequently, as Berger (2013) asserted, researchers "must continually ask themselves where they are at any given moment in relation to what they study and what are the potential ramifications of this position on their research" (p. 13). An 'insider' in the context of this group of researchers was someone with personal experience of the focus of the research (eg: vision impairment) or working with the participants as part of a job role, rather than only knowing them as a researcher. It is important for all of us that participants feel that they can raise issues which are important to them, in a way which is accessible to them. The position of researcher as 'insider' can facilitate the accumulation of rich quality data. However, the researcher must remain constantly vigilant to avoid projecting their "own experience and using it as the lens to view and understand participants' experience" (Berger, 2013, p. 12). Researchers did not want to push their own 'agenda' but rather to accept the 'expert knowledge' of participants in providing insight into their lived experiences. Researchers are aware that they need to demonstrate by their words and actions that they do believe this, rather than paying lip service to it. The idea of co-construction of knowledge in the research context is exacerbated when research is

insider-research (Beresford 2003). Smith (2012) acknowledged that the shared experience with participants can be “conducive to fostering an empathetic relationship” (2012, p. 4), which was what the researchers endeavoured to do with participants.

### **Ethical issues around disclosure**

For Kate, Patricia and Carmel, who all have personal experience of what they were researching, there was the dilemma as to whether to disclose their own situation prior to meeting participants. These researchers had to think through the level of disclosure about their shared experience of the situation with participants. The issue of acknowledging participants’ concerns and researcher detachment has been discussed by many, including Watts (2006). For those of us with personal experience of the focus of the research, there was awareness that we are put in a situation whereby participants may relate instances which echo our own memories. As such, researchers were potentially vulnerable to psychological distress, possibly having to renegotiate their own self role or deal with upsetting memories.

There was an awareness of what we individually disclosed to participants about our personal circumstances so that we are behaving ethically, yet keeping our work research rather than ‘therapy’. Individually, we needed to negotiate our position with ourselves. Kate and Patricia have personal experience of the topics in the same way as their participants. Carmel shares her ‘mother’ role with her participants. Abide is both a ‘father’ and also the Deputy Head of the School where the research took place. John is a lecturer and has a pastoral role for the students in his project. This raised ethical issues around whether participants would potentially disclose more than they normally would (Kate, Patricia, Carmel) and whether



there would be a conflict of role for John and Abide.

### **Negotiating**

There were variations of this among the group. This ranged from ensuring 'informed' consent, to responding to participants' discomfort with the proposed research method therefore adapting and changing to better meet the needs of participants and giving greater involvement in the interpretation of outcomes.

Researchers acknowledged that for 'voice' to be effective it needs to be done in partnership (Rose and Shevlin 2004) but in most of the situations discussed here there are power differentials. The issue is about remaining aware of these and trying to 'disempower' the researcher and identify ways in which the participants feel that they can express or 'control' the situation through modifications to methodology or choosing the time and place of meetings at the participant's convenience rather than those of the researchers.

### **Issues around access to participants**

John and Abide recruited participants from their own work place. For both of them this raised issues around whether participants 'chose' to become involved or whether they felt pressured to do so. Kate accessed participants through the parent, and had difficulty negotiating gatekeepers, particularly teachers, in seeking to ensure all key stakeholders (i.e., students, parents and teachers) were meaningfully engaged. Patricia had to find ways of accessing a range of participants with different backgrounds and to get people actively involved with the research. Carmel chose not to access participants through medical clinics as she did not want to have a contextual background, but recruited through on-line chat forums about glue ear and personal

contacts. Parents were the key decision-makers as to whether or not to become involved so gaining the active participation of young people was problematic. The involvement of 'gatekeepers' can be essential when undertaking research, but they can either facilitate or impede access to possible research participants. The issue of access and gatekeepers needs to be negotiated with a focus on assent rather than consent.

### **Personal Journeys**

A PhD is often described as a 'personal journey' and reflecting on how our research journeys are impacting on us as researchers of the future and how our experiences could contribute to future approaches to inclusive research in education remains at the forefront of our minds.

John found that using a phenomenological approach was exciting and has opened up a new arena for research, particularly understanding the variations in participants' experiences and the discovery element of the approach. For him the process has been highly enlightening as a researcher in involving his participants as co-researchers, particularly in ensuring informed consent on the part of participants and developing their skills as interviewers.

Kate has found it difficult negotiating her professional role as a therapist and patient advocate, in addition to some of her own personal experience. The level of insight which young people provided into their experience of ADHD and their learning and coping strategies has been 'mind blowing'. It has highlighted the value of putting participant voice and overcoming difficulties in the research process to better facilitate those voices. Being actively reflective and adapting the methodology to better access participants' experiences

has been valuable learning.

Patricia has also been aware of disclosing information about herself and having to negotiate her position within the vision impaired community. She is committed to encouraging participants to express their own experiences and for participants to raise issues that direct further research.

Abide has found working within the context of one school has given the participants an opportunity to be involved in and make changes, particularly in the context of disengaged and excluded pupils. The fathers involved in his project have become more engaged with their sons' education and a model has been developed for working with parents. His main concern is how to develop the findings so that they will be applicable to other schools.

Carmel has found a personal big change in her ontological position from post-positivist to a more social constructionist perspective, and understanding the value of phenomenological methodology combined with the power of visual images. Interacting with parents and young people in situations similar to her own has been emotionally draining at times. This has been outweighed by the opportunity for participants to contribute their voice to the research arena.

## References

- Åkerlind, G.S. (2008) 'A phenomenographic approach to developing academics' understanding of the nature of teaching and learning', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13(6) 633-644
- Becker, C.S. (1992) *Living and relating*. Newbury: Park Sage.
- Beresford, P. (2003) *It's our lives* London: Citizen Press.

- Berger, R. (2013) 'Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*  
Published online 3 January.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology' *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-100.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005) *Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development*. California: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. and Morris, P. A. (2006) 'The Bioecological Model of Human Development', in W. Damon and R. M. Lerner's (eds), *Handbook of Child Psychology, Vol. 1 Theoretical Model of Human Development*, (6<sup>th</sup> eds., pp793-828). USA: Wiley.
- Burton, D. and Bartlett, S. (2005) *Practitioner research for teachers*  
London: Paul Chapman.
- Feldman, H.M. and Paradise, J.L. (2009) 'OME and child development rethinking management of otitis media with effusion', *Contemporary Pediatrics* 26(5) 40-47
- Fielding, M. (2004) 'Transformative approaches to student voice. 'Student Voices' in educational research and reform', *Curriculum Inquiry* 36(4) 359-390
- Goodson, I. F. ad Sikes, P. J. (2001) *Life history research in educational settings: learning from lives* Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hatch, J. A. and Wisniewski, R. (Eds) 1995 *Life history and narrative*  
London: Washington, D.C. Falmer Press.
- Kockelmans, J.J. (1967) Husserl's Original view on Phenomenological Psychology Kockelmans, J.J. (Ed) *Phenomenology*:

*The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and its interpretation* New York Doubleday 418-449.

- Marton, F. (1986) 'Phenomenography – a research approach to investigating different understandings of reality', *Journal of Thought* 21(3) 28-49.
- Rose, R. and Shevlin, M. (2004) 'Encouraging voices: listening to young people who have been marginalised', *Support for Learning* 19(4) 155-161
- Shah, S. (2006) 'Sharing the world: the researcher and the researched' *Qualitative Research* 6 207-220.
- Shah, S. and Priestley, M. (2011) *Disability and social change: private lives and public policies* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Theory, method and research* London: Sage.
- Smith, J.M. (2012) 'Reflections on using life history to investigate women teachers' aspirations and career decisions' *Qualitative Research* published online 27 March.
- Taylor, C and Robinson, C. (2009) 'Student voice: theorising power and participation', *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 17(2) 161-175.
- Wang, C. and Burris, M.A. (1997) 'Photovoice: Concept, Methodology and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment', *Health Education & Behaviour* 24(3) 369-387.
- Watts, J. (2006) 'The outsider within: dilemmas of qualitative feminist research within a culture of resistance', *Qualitative Research* 6(3) 385-402.

## Group Four

*Yu Zhao, Colin McElroy, Miriam Twomey, Aoife O'Brien,  
Phil Ellender*

*Rapporteurs: Yu Zhao & Colin McElroy*

### **Research Commonalities**

Our research emphasises the importance of eliciting the opinions and viewpoints of stakeholders across a variety of subject areas including autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), inclusion, bereavement studies, transfer and transition. Within these subject areas, key themes consistently emerged relating to policy, access to support services, stakeholder experiences, and educational and social outcomes. Our focus was on methodologies that generated both qualitative and quantitative data.

### **The Building Blocks of Research**

It is important to acknowledge that "different academics in different disciplines attach a wide range of meanings and interpretations to the terminology of research" (Grix, 2002, p.175). Within this context, it is no surprise "that students rarely have a firm grasp of the tools of their trade" (Grix, 2002, p.175) and this is problematic in research specifically on disability (MacGiolla Phádraig, 2007). At the outset of any research project, Grix (2002) highlights the importance of researchers understanding and learning the 'language of research', referring to it as the "building blocks of generic social research" (Grix, 2002, p.175). Without knowing how to use the tools of research, when to use them and knowing what they are for, the inconsistency of language and usage will ultimately lead to "a minefield of misused, abused and misunderstood terms and phrases which students must

contend" (Grix, 2002, p.176). According to Slee (2011), the challenge for researchers is "to find and use a common language capable of communicating complex ideas and changing social relations" (Slee, 2011, p.2).

Samuelowicz (1987) and Burns (1991) indicated that operating in a second language can be very difficult for overseas students. It is very difficult for overseas students to cope with the four elements of learning a new language - listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is difficult enough in daily life; it is even more difficult for students undertaking PhD research. The high level academic language used in research is mainly met through reading and writing, which are most difficult for some overseas students.

When people come to the interview transcript stage, many colleagues find it very difficult to do the interview transcripts, because of the variety of English accents or the speed at which the interviewees speak. Also, this activity can be particularly time-consuming, particularly in qualitative research involving many interviews.

The research process is underpinned by philosophical assumptions which guides the methodological tools chosen in a particular study in order to achieve desired outcomes (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998). Guba and Lincoln agree (1994) that "questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm" which they define as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.105). By choosing an appropriate research paradigm, the researcher must address these issues throughout their investigations as they strive "to say some-

thing sensible about a complex, relatively poorly controlled and generally 'messy' situation" (Robson, 2002, p.4).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) provide a succinct explanatory framework of four alternative paradigms and these include positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and constructivism. This framework was later updated to include the participatory inquiry paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997). Within these paradigms there are still variations of terms used to represent these different views of the world we live in today. Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify three basic beliefs and questions which help to define a paradigm. They are called ontology, epistemology and methodology. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) introduced a fourth belief called axiology which they define as "the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics, aesthetics and religion" (p.116). The main beliefs underpinning a research paradigm are summarised in the following questions:

- The ontological question asks, "What is the form and nature of reality?"
- The epistemological question asks, "What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower or would be knower and what can be known?"
- The axiological question asks, "What is the nature of ethics? What is the role of values"
- The methodological question asks, "How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?"

(Adapted from Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 1997; Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011)



## Conceptual Framework

Our research has been widely influenced by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Models of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). Within this model, the comprehension of human development is achieved by "incorporating an evolving body of theory and research concerned with the processes and conditions that govern the lifelong course of human development in the actual environments in which human beings live" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.37). Bronfenbrenner posits a "conceptualisation of the child's ecology as a multi-layered set of nested and interconnecting environmental systems all of which influence the developing child but with varying degrees of directness" (Greene & Moane, 2000, p.123). This model has been revised and extended to recognise biology's role in the development of the individual and has since been renamed the Bioecological Model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The interaction and processes unveiled between each nested layer is a key component in ecological research (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The model explains the different relationships and influences that can impact on the child's development through their interactions with their immediate and wider environments. By placing the child at the centre of the analysis (Odom et al., 2004) a greater understanding of their life experiences can be understood through analysing their relationships and processes within the family, school, community and national environs.

The challenge for inclusive research on education is to develop a conceptual framework that adopts the language of research and applies it in a consistent manner. Pearl and Knight (2010) suggest there is "nothing more undemocratic than a language that excludes" highlighting the fact "that an inaccessible language masks a paucity of

thought" (p.244). The use of clear and consistent language in research on inclusive practices will add to the accessibility and credibility of its findings. The building blocks of research- the language of research is the starting point for the design and development of any research project. By carrying out research in a systematic fashion, this will add to the robustness of the overall research project and in turn increase the credibility, transferability and dependability of its findings.

Florian (1998) identified many problem areas with inclusion including "a gap between policy and implementation which must be acknowledged and addressed" (p.29). The rhetoric of inclusion has been highlighted as there is now a plethora of definitions and interpretations of inclusive education (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006; Florian, 1998). Unclear and inconsistent definitions of inclusion may pose potential problems for researchers and relevant stakeholders. Winter and O'Raw (2010) explain that "researching inclusive practice is fraught with problems due to the lack of an operational definition of inclusion and methodological difficulties concerning non-comparability of samples receiving different types of education and in different types of inclusive contexts" (p.22).

## Research Design

There was general consensus that case studies provide a suitable approach to undertaking inclusive research in education. According to Yin (2009), a case study can be defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009, p.18). A case study "typically involves multiple methods of data collection" that can "include quantitative data, though qualitative data are al-

most invariably collected" (Robson, 2002, p.179). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state that irrespective of the adopted research approach, choosing and obtaining the sample are common issues and very important steps, which impact directly on the quality and outcome of the research.

Stake (2008) suggests that five key elements must be addressed within every case study and these are "issue choice, triangulation, experiential knowledge, contexts and activities" (p.120). Triangulation involves the use of multiple sources of evidence that allows the researcher to analyse the consistency of findings (Yin, 1994). Case study research can provide many opportunities to access the stakeholders' opinions and viewpoints regarding inclusion, with many examples provided in the literature (Dyson et al., 2004; Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse 2007; Rose et al., 2012).

## Voice

Recent research has shown that "since the 1980s there has been an increasing interest in listening to children's experiences and viewpoints, as separate to, and different from adults" (O'Kane, 2008, p.125). In the UK, the publication of Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004) presented a shared national vision for change in terms of children's rights. This report highlighted the importance of listening to the voice of the child, as young people declared that "five key outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and later life – being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being" (DfES, 2004, p.4). These developments acknowledge the significance of research projects to incorporate methods that enable the voice of stakeholders to be heard (Shevlin & Rose, 2003). Beresford et al. (2007) acknowledged the

importance of researching the opinions of young people with ASD to identify their desired outcomes. In the Republic of Ireland, the significance of listening to the voice of young children was highlighted in light of the recent passing of the Children's Referendum in 2012. The principle of listening to the voice of the child was henceforth enshrined into law in Ireland. Where possible, research on inclusive education should outline the experiences of stakeholders, especially young people and individuals with disabilities who have historically been on the margins of Irish society (Griffin & Shevlin, 2007). The challenge is to incorporate methods that enable researchers to produce scholarly research that provides an accurate portrayal of stakeholders' experiences. In addition, Alderson (2008) posits the greater involvement of "all children more directly in research can therefore rescue them from silence and exclusion" (p.278).

### **Fieldwork**

Many issues and challenges are faced by researchers even prior to entering the field to commence their fieldwork. Despite the best intentions regarding your research, Lofland and Lofland (1995) state that "it is one thing to decide for yourself about interest, appropriateness, accessibility and ethics; it is quite another to get all the interested parties to go along with your plan" (p.31). Much preliminary work must be undertaken in order to gain access to the particular sample or setting required to carry out the research project (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Robson (2002) establishes that "much real world research takes place in settings where you require formal agreement from someone to gain access" (p.378). Known as gatekeepers, these are "individuals at the research site that provide access to the site and allow or permit the research to be done" (Creswell, 2009, p.178).

These issues can be addressed through consent forms, and by offering the participants the option to withdraw at any stage of the research. The consent form will outline the purposes of the research, its aims and objectives and its proposed methodologies (Robson, 2002). Additional assurances should be given to securing the safe storage of all data collected and to protect the identity of all individuals participating in research.

### **Research Ethics**

As James and Busher (2007) argued, educational researchers are responsible for making sure that research is conducted within an 'ethic of respect' to all participants, indicating that trust, dignity, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are the very basic components when people are doing research.

However, the criteria and requirements of doing research are different between countries. For instance, one colleague made a comparison of people's perspectives on inclusion in England and in China. This did not require anything like a criminal records bureau (CRB) check before going into schools; she interviewed head teachers, classroom teachers and parents, and asked children to answer the questionnaires, without showing them any consent forms. It was sufficient that she had known the head teachers of both schools for many years, they knew her very well, knew she was of good character and presented no risk to students. That was it. No teachers or parents asked her how she was going to deal with the data, or whether the names or peoples' identities would remain anonymous. However, all these issues were asked by teachers involved in research in England.

Ethical issues are very important and invariably discussed by researchers. Sikes (2004) mentioned that the 'valid data' which

constitutes the research must be based on respect for all the participants and must follow the general rules of research, so as to produce a better response and successful research outcomes. Robinson-Pant (2005) suggests that in the context of educational research, it is necessary to explore the answers to your research questions and reveal the truth of the research themes, which can easily be affected by the attitude and perspectives of participants. Thus, a stable frame of mind is very important when doing research, so that participants act naturally and respond more appropriately to the researcher. This will be much more likely to achieve reliable and valid research results.

With the development of international politics, economy and culture, the amount of research undertaken abroad has dramatically increased in recent decades. Research perspectives differ between countries (Crossley and Broadfoot, 2013) relating perhaps to the differing culture, background and environment of the different countries in which research is performed.

## **Communication**

Communication is again another important skill for researchers, not only for overseas students, but also for home students. People will have many opportunities to make new friends and to know new people during the various conferences and meetings. Those whose communication skills are limited or language is restricted because of their different background and culture etc., will experience barriers to communicating. They may also miss opportunities to extend their networks which can be the key to developing research skills.

Language difficulties can also create problems for researchers when communicating with the research participants (Monge and Contractor, 2003). McNamara and Harris (1997) suggest that the local

culture is the most difficult aspect of foreign countries for overseas students to learn, despite the huge efforts of universities to perfect their courses, and of students try their best to adapt to an unfamiliar culture. It is thus crucial for overseas students to develop their communication skills, and to seek an understanding of the culture where they come to study, so that they are well equipped to conduct their research.

## References

- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*. UK: Routledge.
- Alderson, P. (2008). Children as Researchers: Participation Rights and Research Methods. In: P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.). *Research With Children: Perspectives and Practices (Second Edition)*. (pp.276-290). New York: Routledge.
- Beresford, B., Tozer, R., Rabiee, P., & Sloper, P. (2007). Desired Outcomes for Children and Adolescents with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. *Children & Society*, 21, 4-16.
- Black-Hawkins, K., Florian, L., & Rouse, M. (2007). *Achievement and Inclusion in Schools*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris P., (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. V. Lerner, W. Damon & R. M. S. Lerner (Eds.). *Handbook of Child Psychology volume 1: Theoretical Models of Human Development*, 793-828. Hoboken, NJ, Wiley.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977, July). Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development. *American Psychologist*, 513-531.  
Retrieved from <http://maft.dept.uncg.edu/hdf/facultystaff/Tudge/Bronfenbrenner%201977.pdf>
- Burns, R.B., (1991), 'Study and Stress among First Year Overseas Students in an Australian University', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 10(1)61-77
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (1997). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing Among Five Traditions (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Crossley, M. and Broadfoot, P., (2013), 'Comparative and International Research in Education: scope, problems and potential', *British Educational Research Journal*, 18(2)99-112
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research. Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: Sage Publications.
- DfES (Department for Education and Skills), (2004). *Every Child Matters. Change for Children*. Nottingham: DfES Publications.
- Dyson, A., Farrell, P., Polat, F., Hutcheson, G., & Gallannaugh, F. (2004). *Inclusion and Pupil Achievement. DfES Research Report 578*. Nottingham: DfES Publications.
- Florian, L. (1998). Inclusive Practice. What, why and how? In K. Topping & S. Maloney (Eds.). *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader*



*in Inclusive Education* (pp. 29-40). Oxon: RoutledgeFalmer.

- Greene, S. & Moane, G. (2000). Growing up Irish. Changing children in a changing society. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 21(3-4), 122-137.
- Griffin, S. & Shevlin, M. (2007). *Responding to Special Educational Needs: An Irish Perspective*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Grix, J. (2002). Introducing Students to the Generic Terminology of Social Research. *Politics*, 22(3), 175-186.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* ( pp.105-117). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Heron, J. & Reason, P. (1997). A Participatory Inquiry Paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 274-294.
- James, N. and Busher, H., (2007), 'Ethical issues in online educational research: protecting privacy, establishing authenticity in email interviewing', *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 30(1), 101-113.
- Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A., & Guba, E.G. (2011). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (4th ed.)* (pp.97-127). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L.H. (1995). *Analyzing Social Settings. A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis (3rd ed.)*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

- MacGiolla Phádraig, B. (2007). Towards Inclusion: the development of provision for children with special educational needs in Ireland from 1991 to 2004. *Irish Educational Studies*, 26(3), 289-300.
- McNamara, D., and Harris, R., (1997), *Overseas Students in Higher Education – Issues in Teaching and Learning*, London: Routledge.
- Monge, P.R. and Contractor, N.S., (2003), *Theories of Communication Networks*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Odom, S.L., Vitztum, J., Wolery, R., Lieber, J., Sandall, S., Hanson, M.J., Horn, E. (2004). Preschool inclusion in the United States: a review of research from an ecological systems perspective. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 4(1), 17-49.
- O'Kane, C. (2008) The development of Participatory Techniques: Facilitating Children's Views about Decisions Which Affect Them. In: P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.). *Research With Children: Perspectives and Practices (Second Edition)* (pp.125-155). New York: Routledge.
- Pearl, A., & Knight, T. (2010). Rejoinder to D. Brent Edwards Jr. and His Interpretation of Our Position on Democratic Education and Social Justice. *Urban Review*, 42, 243-248.  
[doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0160-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0160-z)
- Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J., (2003), *Qualitative Research Practice – A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, London: SAGE.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research (2nd ed.)*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

- Rose, R., Shevlin, M., Winter, E., & O'Raw, P. (2012). *ProjectIris (Inclusive Research in Irish Schools) Interim Findings from a Longitudinal Study*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncse.ie/uploads/1/2012NCSEConferenceIrisPresentation.pdf>
- Samuelowicz, K., (1987), 'Learning Problems of Overseas Students: Two Sides of a Story', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 2(2)121-133.
- Shevlin, M. and Rose, R. (2003) Recognising Voices. In: M. Shevlin & R. Rose (Eds.). *Encouraging Voices: Respecting the Insights of Young People who have been Marginalised* (pp.292-302). Dublin: National Disability Authority.
- Sikes, P., (2004), 'Chapter Two - Methodology, Procedures and Ethical Concerns', in Opie, C., (2004), *Doing Educational Research – A Guide to First Time Researchers*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Slee, R. (2011). *The Irregular School. Exclusion, Schooling and Inclusive Education*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Stake, R. (2008). Qualitative Case Studies. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, (Eds.). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (pp.119-150). London: Sage.
- Winter, E., & O'Raw, P. (2010). *Literature Review of the Principles and Practices relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs*. Trim: National Council for Special Education.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research. Design and Methods (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case Study Research. Design and Methods (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.











