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Foreword

The 16th annual School of Education Doctoral Research Conference was held on 25th November 2017. The conference was attended by over 80 delegates, both from our own School of Education and from Faculties, Schools and Departments of Education across the UK. At the conference, 50 papers and 10 posters explored key issues and developments in educational research, theory, policy and practice.

It is our great pleasure to publish some of these papers (prepared by their authors) in this Proceedings volume. The papers are a show-case for the variety of educational research conducted by doctoral researchers here at the University of Birmingham and in the broader field of education in the UK.

We would like to thank the conference organising committee (all themselves doctoral researchers in Education at the UoB) and all conference presenters, panellists and delegates.

Kristina Gruzdeva, Chair of the Organising Committee

Dr Ben Kotzee, Director of Postgraduate Research

Contents

1. Bridging the Gap: a question of breaking silence.....5
Ambreen Alam
2. Investigating teachers' perceptions and lived experiences through found poetry.....14
Fadel Alsawayfa
3. Exploring inclusive education in Kenya for learners with Special Needs: twenty years after the Salamanca Conference.....23
Violet W. Gachago
4. Hidden Views on Homework: do social networking sites offer mothers cyberagency?.....33
Rachel Leaner-Mear
5. The Value and Limitations of Using Metaphors in Research.....42
Jenny Lewin-Jones
6. Biology Classroom Interaction: a case study of secondary schools in Ojo areas of Lagos State, Nigeria.....50
Nnamdi Anthony Okonta
7. Perceptions and Reasons for Taking Graded Music Examinations in Hong Kong.....58
Yee Ni Tse
8. An Investigation of the Factors that Affect the Development and Application of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Mathematics PGCE Students.....68
Nikolaos Vlaseros, Dave Hewitt, Paul Hernandez-Martinez
9. Can the use of Socratic critical thinking in healthcare education influence the humanities across disciplines?.....76
Catherine Kelsey

Bridging the Gap: a question of breaking silence

Ambreen Alam

Abstract

The phenomenon of the academic achievement of pupils is interlocked with the socio-economic background of their household income. Statistics display the constant and consistent downwards sloping graphs when interpreting the data of pupils from deprived families. Armstrong et al. (2000, p.20) believe that the "social and cultural functions" of the schools in the UK are responsible for generating diverse "educational participation and attainment" that have widened the inequality gap in our society. These scholars press that offering varied educational framework is a "significant factor in the production and maintenance of inequality in society" and disregard schooling policy that deny ordinary treatment for children of different abilities, stamping their exclusion through ability grouping practice. Further, many researchers explain that public policies, such as stratifying pupils into groups, are not formulated and implemented in a vacuum and are underlined ideologies of policymakers. Similarly, Clarke (2014, p.188) describes ability grouping strategy as "the twin policy goals of equity and quality", and therefore considers ability grouping policy as unintentional, 'unsanctioned' or 'unconscious' practice.

It may be suggested that Policymakers have misconceived the concept of Intelligence quotients (IQs), and view 'the social and economic disparities and attempt to bridge achievement gap' from diverse angles impacting the policies in school as well. Literature, on the other hand, reflect on ability grouping practice as an effective tool. Numerous scholars have joined the choir of classifying pupils into various streams and sets to facilitate their academic needs. In this context, this paper will underline the critical issue of ability grouping (school inequalities) – to allocate sets to the pupils according to their academic capabilities- proposed by Hadow in 1931 even though questioned later and even today. In my rationale, this is the most prevailing inequality practice as it contradicts with equal opportunities mantra read nationally in the schools of the UK.

Introduction

The education system in the United Kingdom (UK) groups pupils chronologically. Further, these groups are stratified into ability grouping, known as "setting" and "streaming" respectively (Marks, 2011). Notably, in American literature, such ability

grouping is known as “tracking”, “academic path” and “vocational path” (Robinson, 2008). Ability grouping practice is embedded within the contemporary hyper-accountability culture in education (Mansell, 2007, originally cited in Boaler, 2015) that has shifted the focus of the teaching community from promoting academic attainment in pupils to being highly ranked in the market-based education system (Trigg-Smith, 2011). In order to maintain an ascending position and to avoid “punitive measures” (ibid, 81), schools stratify pupils in ability groups for the reason of producing effective academic outcomes from the high achievers, and to capture maximum school enrolment (Gray et al., 1999). Ability grouping strategy is commonplace in countries like the United States of America (USA), but the intensity of this practice in the UK is “harsh” (Boaler, 2015, p.101). Therefore, the development of educational values is determined on the criteria, such as allocating instructional groups to pupils that are aligned with their academic abilities (Neihart, 2007), and this has become a debatable issue (Vogl and Preckel, 2014).

This brief Literature Review intends to recapitulate the work of significant scholars who examined ability grouping in the USA, Australia, Holland and the UK. It aims to sketch different themes contextualised within ability grouping practice and give a broader perspective on clustering pupils practice. The proposed study will deepen the link of ability grouping with inequalities, which is investigated only briefly by few scholars, and the administering of self-esteem. Although there is voluminous literature interconnecting grouping by ability and inequalities in the discipline of economics, its scarcity in the education domain has been identified as a gap.

Marks (2014) emphasises the child’s welfare which is central for school teachers in the UK (Broadfoot et al., 1987). Yet implementing ability grouping practice has “fractured this role” (Marks, 2014, p.48). This variation requires an insight into the origins of ability grouping practice and therefrom, it is essential to critically review ability grouping strategy and cater pupils’ needs.

Administration of the School

It is at the head teacher’s discretion to determine whether to organise pupils into ability grouping or to endorse mixed ability practice in their schools. Headteachers propose an “inclusive environment and advocate for vulnerable pupils” that is diversified in terms of low socio-economic background; English as an additional language, special education needs and follow care plan, and the desire for a premium from government policies. Trigg-Smith explains that for the reason of matching with pupils’ assorted needs, head teachers have to comply with “government-created policies”, like clustering pupils into capabilities bands. Many head teachers regard the theory of ‘intelligence and abilities’ developed by policymakers as continuing “to elevate setting and streaming practice (2011, p.30). They also advocate that educators should use “standardised tests as measures” (Dweck, 2000, p.35) for allocating pupils to various ability groups. Scholars do not encourage the concept of scaling pupils’ academics on the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scale and Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), arguing that children develop at different rates (Boaler, 2015).

Teachers' perceptions, studied by LeTendre, Hofer and Shimizu (2003) indicate that generally the schooling system in the UK adopts streaming and setting, and consider that teaching becomes evident and potent when "students with more homogeneous abilities and interest" (ibid, p.684) are grouped together. In the same way, often research studies like that of Boaler (2015), explain that teachers advocate the ideology of stratifying pupils according to their ability, taking into account the prospect of fulfilling the academic needs of such groups. She further illustrates the irrelevancy of the notion that the findings of research studies endorse ability grouping practice. Boaler (2015) contends that teachers who classify pupils into ability grouping do not divide pupils purely on academic attainment, but also on other impulsive affairs. Aylett (2000, p.41) further sheds light on teachers' positive perceptions of academic stratification, emphasising "the undeniably high level of planning and differentiation" required in heterogeneous grouping practice. She further notes that teachers in her study have shown their preferences for set-based teaching, giving as their reasoning the uniformity of the task, level of expectations, and less time consumption in preparing materials.

Marks (2014, p.34) focalises the element of pastoral care and warns that schooling systems with an established setting practice "restrict pupils' pastoral care" due to the movements between classes. Events prior to the movement of pupils, if not conversed with the set-teacher, may impact on pupils' engagement, which Marks states may be counted as pupils' incapability to follow instructions. She also suggests that setting-based systems in schools display the "rigidity of following timetable" leading to a "stressful" climate in the classroom (2014, p.31). Such characteristics of teachers are not displayed by experienced and confident teachers.

In addition, Marks complains that set-teachers have limited accessibility to "pupils' wider-lives", therefore occurrences of breaching their pastoral care responsibilities may result in (2014, p.47-48).

Meanwhile, great rationality that affirms ability grouping practice is the effectiveness of teaching that delivers a positive academic outcome-oriented approach for all, which from the perspective of many scholars, has no authentication. For example, Zevenbergen (2005) discusses that high stream pupils attain enrichment reversed to low stream pupils when stratified into academic groups. Viewing teachers' perceptions with a critical lens, it is necessary to view the ability grouping practice alongside the teaching profession's standards, in which pupils' care and well-being are regarded as a mandatory strand (Clarke, 2014). Hence, cultivation of streaming and setting, when it diminishes the pedagogical opportunities among pupils, proposes conflict with the teachers' values. An example revealed in the reviewed literature is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD, 2012, p.58) comment that ability grouping "fuels a vicious cycle in the expectations of teachers and students." Low teachers' expectations deny pertinent educational opportunities (Lou et al., 1996), and lower abilities pupils fall further as the movement to and fro is detrimental (McCoach et al., 2006).

A study by Marks (2014, p.49) has introduced the term "Educational Triage", which is a 'medical emergency' term used to aid those patients who are more likely to have chances to survive. In the same context, Gillborn and Youdell (2000) have used

resource-based Educational Triage in their study through assigning the strongest teacher to their high ability group, with either supply teachers or assistant teachers and a bland curriculum being assigned to low ability groups. These authors found that such are the inequalities, including governing the authority to allocate groups, that schools suggest, whilst aiming at schools' survival in a market-based education climate (Trigg-Smith, 2011).

Assigning the pupils to diverse ability groups requires teachers' decision making which should be judged on micro and macro scales, and this decision has a longterm impact on pupils' achievement (Boaler, 2015). Research analyses that teachers' proficiency is not evident in allocating pupils to ability groups, especially if it is based on a single test score. The irony of the situation is addressed by Boaler in detail. She explains that with the difference of one score point, pupils are not placed in top sets, restricting their achievements throughout the academic journey (2015). William and Bartholomew (2004) found in their study based in the UK and Israel, that the outcomes of borderline pupils who possess the same understanding as the top set are steady, but they display great variation in terms of their final achievement. Boaler (2015, p.107) addresses these people as "borderline casualties", who narrowly miss the high groups. Thus, ability grouping appears to not only produce borderline casualties, but also group pupils in the wrong static group (Boaler, 2015) that immobilises pupils' movement (Oakes, 2005). Nevertheless, within-class ability grouping offers fluidity and upgrades pupils according to their continuous achievement (Dreeben and Barr, 1983).

Research proves that low streams and sets are overrepresented with ethnic minorities, highlighting that non-academic components such as "race, gender and socioeconomic backgrounds", may be used as a device to segregate pupils into groups (Robinson, 2008, p.156). Further, Robinson enquires about the rationale of allocating lower groups to minority populations, which indicates biases. Gamoran (1992, p.45) has investigated this aspect and discovered that a minority group "is more likely to be settled in low levels despite the control over pupils' characteristics and dimensional effects of schools." Gamoran's findings are further endorsed by Rist (1970) and Haller (1985), who claim that assignment of pupils to low groups is not the result of teachers' biases towards opposing minority families. They contend that it is derived through the skills children obtain from their home environment and parents' literacy competencies. However, teachers' assessment to assign groups to pupils remains questionable. This was evidenced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DOSF) Survey of 404 schools that reported that "over half of the pupils were incorrectly placed in groups." This statistic flags up teachers' judgments on the decisions of allocating grouping, where factors like intelligence, grouping in early years, pupils' achievements, and failings are significant. These are briefly examined below.

Teachers' Judgments on Pupils' Group Allocation

Intelligence quotients (IQs) are misconceived by policymakers. Gardener (1987) presented the concept of IQ with new dimensions. They comply with the understanding that the general public view intelligence as an unalterable and fixed ability. Teachers perceiving this concept in this way are not an exception (Fontes and Kellaghan, 1983), and as a result, accredit pupils with high and low ability groups on this basis. Gardener

(1987,p.190) take issue with teachers who label pupils as “bright, dull, gifted, slow, weak”, regardless of their psychology development conceptualisation. These authors emphasise that intelligence caplets contain various abilities that have the ability to advance and widen, and they, therefore, reject a singular meaning of “intelligence as a fixed capability.”

Having the same practice in Sweden, Harnqvist (1968, p.77) studied the Swedish education system and has found that college-bound tracks (high ability grouping) gain “substantial intelligence” than vocational classes (low ability groups). This is further endorsed by various other Swedish scholars like Husen and Tuijnman (1991). Boaler (2015) makes reference to research conducted by Shavit and Featherman (1998) in Israel who studied the theme for Economic Intelligence in 1975 in the North East United States; they deduced that high ability learners consistently gain higher than lower ability learners’ tracks. This makes ability grouping practice a contentious matter.

Does ability grouping benefit pupils?

Kulik (1987, p.54) stated that ability grouping is beneficial “to meet the needs of talented students.” Conversely, Boaler (2015), points out that pupils in high sets feel pressurised when allocated to a fast pacing stream. Her analyses suggest that high set pupils complain about the pace of lessons and admit to their incapability to keep up, resulting in disliking mathematics. Therefore, many scholars stress that the impact of ability groupings are unnoticed and ill-considered, which substantially damages pupils of all sets and streams.

Critically, Aylett (2000) reviews a recent comprehensive contribution of Harlen and Malcome (1997,p.16) highlighting that ability grouping is not a reliable practice as it has “no positive effects in any subjects or for pupils of particular ability levels.” Boaler (2015, p.95), focusing on mathematics in her study, emphasises that pupils can do their best in mathematics in school with the “right teaching.” Blatchford and Hallam (2011, 56, cited originally cited in Boaler, 2015) state “the adoption of structured ability groupings has no positive effects on attainment but has detrimental effects on the social and personal outcomes for some children.”

In contrast, Hattie (2002, 462 originally cited in Becker et al., 2012) suggests that research on ability grouping has demonstrated “grouping alone does not necessarily lead to a pronounced difference in learning and achievement”. The acceptance of Hattie’s findings is illustrated by Lou, Abrami and Spence (2003) who signify that within class groupings positive attainment outcomes are produced subject to (a) welltrained teaching staff; (b) small homogeneous ability groups, and (c) effective learning strategy formulations. It proves that the prime issue is to practise withinclass grouping effectively, with the provision of trained and skilled teachers, who are knowledgeable enough to adjust their curriculum contents (McCoach, 2006).

Gamoran (1992), and Ireson and Hallam (2001) suggest that the inquiry regarding the negative effects of ability grouping is raised in the context of ‘pedagogical responses’, which direct the grouping practice into low teachers’ expectations, pace, the expertise of teachers, and instructional skills. In addition, Schofield (2006) stressed that the

provision of ability grouping complies with the various educational needs of learners by tailoring academic environments, but its impact on learners' self-esteem and grouping at early ages needs to be considered.

Aylett (2000, p.41) states that the "introduction of setting could lead to a lowering of self-esteem", and Boaler (1997) affirms that ability grouping is an intense practice because pupils display anger and disappointment when allocated to a low stream. She further reports the findings of the UNICEF study that examined 20 countries' finding that children in Britain have the lowest self-esteem. She conceives that ability grouping strategy has inculcated a negative self-image in children in the UK. Besides, pupils hold a negative attitude towards overall school life due to having low self-esteem which can be resolved through the transformation of peers' and teachers' behaviour including the ethos of the school (Ireson and Hallam, 1999).

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted that the emergence of "educational markets" and "league tables" has intensified schools to maintain or revise their educational status (Mahoney, 1998, originally cited in Trigg-Smith 2011). Schools are estimated on "quantifiable outcomes", that are in reality, academic excellence. This rationale has forced head teachers and teachers to affiliate high, low and medium achievers in diverse groups so as to engage "middle-class parents" in a particular school (Reay, 1998, p.90). Moreover, when discussing ability grouping, academic (high ability) and vocational (low ability) paths of education are presented, which focus on the functions of the "scholastic ability" of pupils. It is essential to comprehend that these pupils' "future or occupational status" that leads to "employment opportunities" are determined by the ability groups allocated in schools (Reed et al., 2015, p.55).

It may be interpreted that in many cases, pupils in lower ability groups cannot enter the doors of professional and higher qualifications (Reed et al. 2015), and therefore researchers like Gamoran (1992) warns educationalists to resolve this issue of inequitable ability grouping policy through reducing its rigidity and improving its use by devising some flexible mechanisms. Ability grouping practice requires scrutiny as this strategy is clearly inimical in promoting an educational system that facilitates all the learners.

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About Ambreen Alam

Ambreen Alam has been working in education for twenty one years in the UK and UAE. She is doing her research from the University of Wolverhampton. Her interest areas are children and childhood, inequality in education and school leadership. Ambreen's perception of education is to provide equal opportunities of learning to pupils because she firmly believes that every child is unique.

Investigating teachers' perceptions and lived experiences through found poetry

Fadel Alsawayfa

Abstract

This paper uses found poetry as a means of data analysis and presentation to investigate Palestinian and Arab teachers' perceptions of their participation in a drama in education intensive summer school. This arts-based research is grounded in narrative inquiry and interpretivist standpoint theories and presents teachers' lived experience in poems created collaboratively with research participants. In this artsbased research, I adopted qualitative case study design paired with poetic research methodology. Data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. Thirty-two found poems were created from participants' interview transcripts. The poems were also analysed to add an additional layer of meaning. The found poems I present in this paper reveal two of the research's key findings related to identity and co-existence.

Key words: Found poetry; perceptions, lived experience; drama; arts-based research; qualitative research

Introduction

In 2007, the Qattan Foundation, a Palestinian independent, non-profit organisation working in the fields of culture and education (Qattan Foundation Website), launched a drama in education summer school in Jerash, Jordan. Due to constraints and restrictions on movement within, from and to Palestine, it was and still is, impossible to organise such a programme in a conflict zone like Palestine.

In 2007, I participated in the Qattan drama in education summer school and my participation was a life-changing and professional changing experience. This year, the drama in education summer school celebrated its 11th anniversary. However, since its launching in 2007, no research has been done on the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants of the drama in education summer school. Therefore, this study is the first of its kind to investigate Palestinian and Arab teachers' perceptions of their participation in the Qattan Drama in Education Summer School using found poetry as a method of data analysis and presentation.

Methodology

It is the responsibility of the researcher to choose a flexible methodology that honours research participants' voice throughout data collection, analysis and findings presentation processes. I approached this research as an interpretivist arts-based researcher. An arts-based researcher looks at things from multiple perspectives which may lead to an in-depth understanding of experiences. To this, arts-based research

can be liberating, providing a voice for those without a voice, allows the diverse voice of approaching a topic or describing an experience. Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2008) contend that art should be part of methodology in arts-based research. In this qualitative arts-based research, I marry case study with poetic research methodology to investigate teachers' perceptions and gain deeper insight into their lived experiences keeping their voice throughout the research phases of data collection, analysis and representation.

According to Faulkner (2018), poetry itself is research. It is a way of seeing and knowing. Gouzouasis (2018) states that "It is impossible to know without expertise." (p.234). That is because this kind of knowing enables the arts-based researcher to understand and interpret. I use poetry to disrupt the usual ways of knowing. I want to show my artistic identity through engaging in the processes of data analysis, presentation and disseminating the findings of this research.

In this study, I use found poetry, also known as poetic transcription (Butler-Kisber, 2002) to investigate teachers' perceptions and lived experience through analysing interview transcripts and other primary texts to identify representative themes and create found data poems and represent research findings artistically and evocatively. Found poetry means to illuminate words and/or phrases from research participants' data and putting them into poems crafted by the researcher. Several arts-based researchers have used found poetry as a way of analysing and representing research data (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Stewart & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Richardson, 1992; Meyer, 2008; Pithouse-Morgan, 2016; Faulkner, 2016). These researchers suggest that presenting research findings in an artistic form such as poetry may also make them more compelling and accessible to a broader audience.

The poetic analysis was initially used by education qualitative researchers in the 1980s (Cahnmann, 2003). More recently, poetic analysis has been used in social sciences fields, such as health professions research (Furman et al. 2006; Kookken et al. 2007; Boydell et al. 2012), anthropology, and education (Prendergast, 2009; Faulkner, 2009; Butler-Kisber, 2002).

Butler-Kisber (2005) posits that using poetry in research is a creative method in that it creates space for meaning-making through interaction between the narrator and the reader and deepens their understanding of a certain phenomenon. Unlike conventional research methods of data analysis and re-presentation, poetry has the power to emotionally connect the reader and the audience with the participants' stories and lived experience (Hodges, Fenge & Cutts, 2014).

Methods

Participants

Participants in this research were chosen according to their willingness to share their perceptions and lived experiences. A summary of the research and its objectives was disseminated to all participants. Nine participants from five countries showed interest

and agreed to participate in this research study. The table below illustrates participants' demographics.

Table 1:
Participant Demographics

Coded Name	Gender	Citizenship	Teaching subject
BA	M	Palestinian	Arabic
RE	F	Egyptian	English
AZ	M	Moroccan	Philosophy
HE	F	Palestinian	Social Sciences
MO	M	Sudanese	Drama
MA	F	Lebanese	Theatre
GH	M	Palestinian	Arabic
EN	F	Palestinian	English
SA	F	Palestinian	English

Data collection

Data in this research were collected through semi-structured interviews. Multiple contacts were made with the nine consented participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their perceptions and lived experiences as a result of their participation in the drama in education summer school. To achieve this aim, pre-post semi-structured interviews were conducted. The first interview was conducted prior to teachers' participation in the drama in education summer school and it attempted to answer why teachers want to participate in a drama in education intensive summer school. The second interview sought to gain insight of how participants make sense of their experience.

Before embarking on the interviews, permission to audio-record the interviews was sought from the participants. Malpas (1992) points out that semi-structured interviews allow engagement in meaningful purposeful conversations with research participants. My aim was to capture participant's felt experience. Therefore, I invited participants to talk freely about their lived experiences. The interviews were conducted in Arabic (participants' and my native language). They took a dialogic form and participants were given reasonable time and attention to freely speak without interruption. 'Radical listening' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007) was used to give voice to participants and encourage them to share their stories.

Data analysis

Adopting a poetic research methodology, found poetry was used to analyse data in this research. As I interviewed the participants, I was struck with the poetic and figurative language they used. The interviews were also powerful and full of feelings and emotions. I used Butler-Kisber's (2005) method of data analysis to identify themes that capture participants' feelings and emotions and deepen my understanding of their

lived experience. First, I transcribed the interviews in their original language (Arabic). I followed word by word verbatim transcription then I emailed the transcribed texts to the participants. So, each participant received a copy of his or her interview transcript for validation (Guba and Lincoln, 1986; Creswell, 2013).

The process of my engagement with the research data and the creation of the found poems consider the internal validity and quality of the poems that I created. My engagement with texts took a 'form of conversation' (Morrissey, 2016, p.3). When validation was received from the participants, I closely read and reread the interviews transcripts and went back and forth to select illuminating words and extracts from the research data. I returned the interview transcripts several times to select those extracts and phrases, which I believe, capture participants' experience and portray the essence of their stories. As a result, chunks of data that explain teachers' reasons for participating in the drama summer school, their feeling and how they make sense of their lived experience were selected and composed in a new text.

Like other qualitative data analysis approaches, the poetic analysis is an effective means of data reduction without losing meaning, and at the same time, capturing the essence of participants' feelings and experiences (Furman & Dill, 2015; Furman, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Leavy, 2010). The process of data reduction not only helped me narrow down the data, but also encouraged me to go back to interview recordings, listen and listen, and read and read the texts until I identified representative themes. Then, I arranged the extracted words and phrases selected from the interviews transcripts into poetic form. I did not add any words of my own to participants' extracted words and phrases (Butler-Kisber, 2005).

Then, key themes from the compressed data started to emerge. These key themes that emerged from participants' data are *identity* and *co-existence*. The next step was to select words and phrases that represent the umbrella themes that emerged from the texts. I returned to the interview texts and reflective journals several times to select lines of poetry that come under the key themes. Analysing qualitative data through found poetry allows the researcher to closely engage with the data and gain deeper insight into participants' experience through careful reading; going back and forth and looking for meaning while selecting the words and extracts and crafting the found poems.

Poetic techniques such as rhythm, rhyme and punctuation, and word re-arrangement was used to create the found poems (Butler-Kisber, 2005). Although the objective of writing the poems was to distil what I understood to be the essence of the meaning the teachers conveyed, my decisions about which words, extracts or phrases to choose, and how to arrange them, reflect my own interpretations. Lines of poetry were created and punctuation marks were added to convey meaning and allow the reader journey participants' lived experience. Found data poems were created in Arabic. I read and reread the poems and rearranged words and lines in some poems to make salient participants' lived experiences.

Then, the data found poems were emailed to the participants to comment on them and give their feedback. This was a crucial step in the process and it opened spaces for

participants to engage with the crafted poems and give suggestions. This flexible approach offers participants the opportunity to practise their creativity through taking part in distilling the poems crafted from their interviews transcripts and gives the researcher space for reflexivity (Breckenridge & Clark, 2017). Valuable feedback was received from participants and some poems were edited. Found poetry is about the researcher and the research participants coming together with the interview data and finding layers of meaning. Further, it is possible to see poetic analysis, not only as means of data analysis and presentation but also as a means of coming to understand a phenomenon in a way that other research traditions cannot. Finally, the crafted poems are followed by interpretive analysis, they are not stand-alone.

Examples of crafted found data poems

Ultimately, I created thirty-two found data poems from participants' interview transcripts and reflective journals. Below, I present a sample of two found data poems followed by interpretative analysis.

Not ashamed anymore

*Before I had participated in the drama summer school,
I could not call myself a teacher by role,
I did have a vision about learning and teaching process,
Its requirement, and how it happens,
But I did not have the strategies to transfer what I imagine, Transfer
my ideas into action.
An action that I respect,
So I evaluate, write about and reflect,
I feared bearing responsibility and doing mistakes,
I had the feeling of being inadequate and useless,
When you fear the consequences of doing mistakes,
You do not learn from them and they become meaningless,
Now I am not ashamed to say that I have something,
Something that I can talk about and is worth sharing,
An experience that I deeply respect,
Something that I can seriously evaluate*

In the above poem, this participant talks about his identity as a teacher. He reflects on his teaching identity before and after participating in the drama summer school. It seems that he had low confidence in himself as a teacher although he is a qualified teacher. In the summer school, he learnt the teaching strategies he was looking for. This has helped him gain self-confidence, believe in himself and construct his identity as a teacher, a teacher that he is now proud of. At the time of the first interview, this participant was not sure about the outcome and the impact the drama summer school would have on him. This poem is an interesting example of how one's identity is negotiated and constructed in a unique environment.

Co-existing with Palestinians

For ten days, I heard morning greetings in Palestinian accent

*Tried to dance dabke but in that I was more like absent
I listened to Palestinians telling stories about prison and life in the camp
I tried to picture events in my mind as if I were spotting it on the map
My feelings mixed as I listened one guy telling his story with arrest
It was important for me to know how we think and, therefore, co-exist
I was moved when he talked about how an Israeli soldier broke his right arm
And how when he was aching the soldier broke the left one this time
I feel I belong to life and to the way of living in Falasteen
My journey actually started when I joined the summer school in 2017*

This poem indicates that the drama in education summer school is a meeting point, a place for connectedness and co-existence where participants learn about each other's cultures. At the time of the second interview, and when I asked this participant about the impact of the summer school on her, she spoke extensively about the Palestinian culture. She also wrote about this experience in her reflective journal. It seems that the summer school deepened this participants' understanding of the Palestinian culture and the way of life in the refugee camps. She considers her participation in the drama summer school the beginning of her learning journey about Palestine and Palestinians.

Data presentation

Unlike traditional research methods, found poetry has the capacity to communicate research participants' emotions and experiences and represent research data profoundly and artistically (Issac, 2011; Leggo, 2005; Hartnett, 2003). Leggo (2008) asserts that poetry is not a reporting of the experience, but it is the experience itself. The research findings were presented in an hour and a half poetry performance. Through this performance, I aimed to transpose the research through sharing participants' felt experiences as captured in the found poems. Sharing research findings artistically, is an opportunity to the engage audience in 'purposeful discussion' (Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2008) that leads to deeper and greater understanding of the teachers' stories and experience. In Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund's words "Sharing a poem may be a much more effective way to bring a discussion of research findings back to a group of teachers than sharing a lengthy research article or book-length manuscript." (p. 13).

Conclusion

This paper has considered found poetry as a nonconventional method of data analysis and representation in arts-based research. In this research, found poetry has been used to investigate teachers' perceptions of their participation in a drama in education intensive summer school. The data were collected through semistructured interviews and participants' reflections. The data were then analysed and presented through found poetry.

The sample found data poems presented in this paper indicated that found poetry provides a creative technique for investigating participants' perceptions and lived experiences. It can be said that found poetry offers a unique way of analysing and representing qualitative data. I hope that the found data poems presented in this paper

encourage other doctoral students and researchers to use found poetry as an alternative means of data analysis and representation in qualitative research. Furthermore, this study helps fill the gap in research about teachers perceptions and lived experiences about learning drama in the Palestinian and Arab context.

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Biographical note

Fadel Alsawayfa is a doctoral student at the University of Chester's Faculty of Education and Children's Services. His research is primarily concerned with found poetry, drama in education, teacher education, education and conflict, and cultural education. Email: 1521786@chester.ac.uk

Exploring inclusive education in Kenya for learners with Special Needs Twenty Years after Salamanca Conference.

Violet W Gachago

Abstract

This study involves investigating efforts being made to address the challenges of creating inclusive mainstream schools in Kenya since the UNESCO 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action call on governments to provide inclusive education for all children without discrimination. Kenya is a signatory to the framework and has a vision for quality education by 2030. The inclusion aspects were explored using a qualitative case design of a Kenyan rural Education Zone. Primary and secondary school teachers and ten parents in a focus group were interviewed to understand the trends and challenges of the current inclusion. This study aims to contribute to the strategies of improvement within Kenya to ensure learners with special needs are included in mainstream schools. This study affirms policy shifts possible to create child-friendly inclusive schools to promote inclusive education as the most operational means of combating discriminatory cultural ideologies and stereotypes. Findings show inclusive approach adopted in the form of special units annexed to mainstream schools. Professional development of teachers through in-service courses, seminars and e-learning was found to predict inclusive outcomes to meet megatrends of current educational times. This research will provide insight to teachers, parents, children, communities, policy formulation and ignite an inclusion debate in Kenya and developing nations in a similar position.

1.0 Background

In the 1990s, UNESCO held conferences around the world to identify standards of universal Education for All Children (EFA) without exception. In 1990, the World Education Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand reaffirmed the notion of education as a fundamental human right and demanded all education systems in the world to achieve EFA (Mbibeh 2013).

Nonetheless, the 1994 Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice concerning Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) is understood to be the most important conference in addressing education for learners with Special Education Needs (UNESCO, 1994). Nations were urged to make concrete steps in including learners with special needs (henceforth learners) into mainstream classrooms

irrespective of the degree or severity of the child's disability (Miles and Singal, 2010). The researcher is aware of different terms used in reference to disabled students such as exceptional students, students with Special educational needs/disabilities, or students with additional support needs (Hodkinson 2016). However, the term Special Needs will be adopted since it is the legal definition in Kenya (RoK, 2009). The main objective of the study is to explore the progress made in Kenya to improve the education for learners in mainstream schools twenty years after the Salamanca call. The study was guided by the following aims:

1. To explore the inclusion approaches developed in Kenya post-1994 Salamanca agreement;
2. To investigate the current barriers to inclusion at the school level; and 3. To identify inclusion strategies not yet been implemented.

2.0 Pre-Salamanca experience

In understanding the impact of inclusive education in Kenya, there is a need to analyse and investigate the country pre-Salamanca statement. This period highlights the inevitable isolation of learners from communities as well as the denial of services influenced by social, and cultural beliefs (Adoyo and Odeny, 2015). Traditional society sought causes of disability, a procedure that contributed to the denial of services including social inclusion (KISE, 2002). In the 1940s, the population became more tolerant towards these individuals and appreciated the need for their education. The new development leading to children placement in designated accommodations (Ndurumo, 1993). From 1947-1948, three schools for blind learners and two for mentally impaired were established. By 1986, there were a total of ten individual schools for physically disabled due to difficulties in gaining admission to mainstream schools (Kiarie, 2014). The pioneers of the first special school were missionaries who lacked teaching skills except for abilities of care and support (Ndurumo, 1993). A significant aspect of the '80s is learners trained on outdated technical skills in vocational institutions (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

3.0 Methodology

Qualitative data from six schools were obtained. In total, seventeen teachers and ten parents were recruited. Considering schools are complex organisations which comprise a broader context of highly contextual and interrelated data, the exploratory approach produced wide-ranging evidence through semi-structured interviews, observations, focus group. Moreover, interviews offered adaptability and flexibility (Byrne, 2004), allowing wide-ranging ideas and probe responses (Yin, 2014). In ensuring validity, a variety of data including an expert opinion and focus group discussion for triangulation purposes were used (Cohen et al., 2013).

This study is about society and social meanings. The exploration was conducted to understand a social problem in Kenya and to show the thinking and direction taken by the current inclusive provision. A generalisation of the results is not the purpose.

However, generalisation is also possible with findings considered from intuitive, empirical grounding rather than statistical generalisation (Stake, 2005) or with the goal of understanding people's motivation (Yin, 2014).

4.0 Ethical Considerations

In keeping with ethical guidelines, approvals were sought from the following;

- (1) National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) in Kenya; And
- (2) The Nottingham Trent University Ethics Committee in line with guidelines set out by British Education Research Association (BERA, 2011).

Participants contributed to this study voluntarily based on informed consent and sufficient information of the research aims and objectives (Denscombe, 2014). Participants were assured results would remain confidential. Approval was gained from school managers, parents, and education officials. Letters were sent to the head teachers of the selected schools requesting their permission to conduct the study at the schools. Briefing forms and declaration forms were sent to the participating teachers and parents.

5.0 Findings

These findings emerged from the second research questions relating to teachers view of inclusive education and the third research questions which sought to give an understanding of barriers to inclusion. Findings should be interpreted in the light that they are based on semi-structured interviews with mainstream teachers in individual government-aided schools.

5.1 Teachers understanding and views on inclusion

Teachers emphasis on student's condition and disability categories was an imprecise affair supported with different terms such as *“normal”*, *“crippled”*, *“cerebral palsied”*, *“mentally retarded”*, *“epilepsy attacks”* or *“sick children”* to describe disabilities. The evidence suggests that teachers consider disability as a problem within an individual (Kauffman, 2007; Westbrook and Croft, 2015). Regarding inclusion, participants were of the opinion that the presence of a special unit in a mainstream school denotes being inclusive. The implication of this understanding is evident in the separation of learners from the rest of the children to learn in a separated school annexed to the mainstream school. Considering inclusion is learning with nondisabled peers, one can argue that schools in Kenya contradict the Salamanca call by excluding some learners from mainstream classrooms.

5.2 Barriers to inclusion

Although there are innumerable known benefits for presence in an inclusive school (UNESCO, 1994), there are also several barriers to the implementation of inclusive education as identified in this study. This study established four critical obstacles to education inclusion for learners. They are: (a) Organisational factors, (b) Teacher-related factors, (c) School environments, and (d) Learner related factors. These barriers present a formidable challenge to actualising inclusive classrooms in Kenya as demonstrated below:

Table 6.1: Barriers to Inclusion

Systemic related factors	Attitudinal	Teacher-related factors	School environments	Learner related factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of clear, coherent policy - Withholding funds - a rigid curriculum - failure to create awareness - lukewarm attention to inclusive matters - an absence of enabling legislation - a shortage of teachers. - lack of guiding materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -negative attitude - stereotypes -fear of disabled people - cultural prejudices -lack of awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - negative attitudes and stereotyping - limited inclusive awareness -lack of training and professional development - shortage of teachers - lack of teaching skills to teach learners - work overload - lack of inclusive support materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lack of resources and teaching materials -large class size -poor sanitation - unkempt playfields - lack of water in schools -overcrowding in classrooms - the scarcity of ramps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lateness to class due to disability - missing lessons due to hospital appointments

Table 6.1 represents many barriers that learners face in education.

6.0 Discussion

Data collected from this research highlights a critical issue of government failure to create inclusive schools. Participants questioned government's commitment to building inclusive schools when there is no budgetary allocation. As mentioned, delay or denial of funds results in non-functional schools. Accordingly, unless school level funding is secured, inclusive schools remain a select option due to additional expenses

while implementation of inclusive schools is rendered practically impossible. Regarding policy, credible evidence suggests barriers such as screening for enrolment, exclusion due to low achievement and delaying the transition of learners from primary to secondary schools due to performance. Success calls for good strategies, however, change does not take place in a policy vacuum instead it begins by discussing the whole educational and schooling culture through the context of policy guidance (UNESCO, 1994).

Although teachers may not be aware of their negative attitude, exploring barriers caused by teacher-related factors produced attitudinal issues. In other words, although it was not explicitly articulated in the interviews, analysis and data coding highlighted language and stereotypes are used in reference to learners. The outcome of negative terminology is a barrier to inclusion and contributing factor to exclusion from mainstream schools. Typical stereotyping among teachers was the use of terms “normal” and “abnormal”. According to Elder and Kuja (2018), negative attitudes and stereotyping learners with SEN results in pity and sympathy towards disability which is a charity-model approach to disability. Teachers prefer learners who require minimal support, suggestive of selective inclusion and double standards as evident in other statements such as “*mild as opposed to severe disabilities*”, “*full mental capacity as opposed to retarded*” and “*slow learners*”.

Negative attitude was also flagged on participant’s view of inclusion as a foreign idea imposed on them suggesting they should make schools inclusive when fully prepared. Others went further to suggest inclusive schools are impractical since the government appears to be struggling to provide basic education. The comment that resonates most closely and will exert a significant influence on this research was made a head teacher who suggested that inclusion cannot be implemented in Kenya the same it happens in global north countries. Kisanji (1993) supports the idea by suggesting that Africans should shape inclusive education based on their understanding of inclusion, national needs, and culture while using the available resources.

Teacher-related factors indicate that despite the expectation of playing a central role in creating inclusive schools, teachers lack professional development and appropriate training. A significant aspect is the misunderstanding of the terms disability and inclusion probably owing to teacher’s lack of SEN related training to support understanding. Forlin and Chambers (2011) suggest that those not sufficiently trained can find working with a diversity of needs very challenging. Contrary to expectations only one participant of the seventeen interviewed had received special education training. Therefore, collaboration and a systematic approach are needed in ensuring teachers’ competency. Additionally, Peters (2004) discusses on vital aspects of the development of any country as not just the provision of UPE for the simple purpose of meeting the international obligations, but, practically improving the school physical environment by removing barriers that hinder access. Teachers conceptualised obstacles to inclusive schooling as the physical condition of buildings and lacking facilities for all the children. Nevertheless, schools also need to be comfortable, safe, and secure. This distinction further exemplifies indirect evidence of a government facing an uphill task to provide for essential resources. Participating stated that, without funding, it would be impossible to restructure schools to a disability-friendly level because funds designated for other activities cannot be diverted to support learners.

Despite lack of funding, parents in this study were more explicit on their choice of schools possibly because their own is involved. They suggested an ideal school should provide equal opportunity to all by treating all children fairly and working towards eliminating bullying, have appropriate facilities, and adequate risk assessments carried out regularly. Although, there is a potential for bias in the participant responses and observational evidence, equipment and facilities in schools in Kenya are designed with non-disabled people in mind. As mentioned above, a child can only comfortably access facilities using appropriate infrastructure.

In contrast, learner-related factors are linked to a range of environmental needs rather than to specific learning needs. The only concern raised was about lateness to class and lack of participation in games and sports.

However, from a social model view of disability based on a philosophy of inclusion society is responsible for causing disability (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009).

Schools should adopt a paradigm shift from perceiving learners' limitations, nonetheless, focus on the role communities and systemic organisation can play to remove barriers that limit access to schools. Although collaboration with communities can improve the infrastructure without necessarily waiting on the government interference, most teachers viewed the government as solely responsible for any development to occur. Salamanca framework states that schools are a community collectively accountable for the success or failure of every student, hence parents and volunteers should be involved in restructuring the school instead of dependency on the government to remove perceived barriers.

6.6 Kenya Post Salamanca

Although Kenya post-Salamanca 1994 has not been successful in making a fundamental change towards the inclusion of all learners, this study found educational modifications made from 1994-2015 have acted as a foundation for inclusive education. Creating whole schools has faced a lot of external and internal barriers most of which are related to policy. Participants in this study did not directly address policy but addressed attempts to be inclusive. However, the research identifies a meaningful policy being the most salient barrier to the creation of comprehensive schools Adoyo and Odeny (2015). This study established that in compliance with the global agenda of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015, free primary education policy was launched in 2003 which sought to increase school enrolment rates. According to Adoyo and Odeny (2015), UPE/FPE was opportune time since 1994 Salamanca to translate the Salamanca call into practice by implementing inclusive classrooms, but the target was missed. Evidently, twenty years after Kenya committed to the Salamanca agreement, significant absence of learners was noted in this study. However, post-Salamanca, Kenya has taken a cautious step by introducing special schools annexed to the mainstream school. The approach cannot be emphasised in this study since any integration and not the inclusion of learner with special need falls under the medical model focussed on how a student might fit into the education system (Ainscow and César, 2006). However, despite being cautious schools will take longer to be inclusive if a person-centred approach on essential aspects such as modified toilets is disregarded.

6.7 Cautious step

This study found Kenya's option of creating inclusive schools is taking a cautious step toward building integrated schools. Findings outlined the government as preventing inclusive errors made by some developed countries by adopting full inclusion. Developing countries as advised "to avoid making the same mistakes and, from the start, to be aware of the need to create a realistic vision for inclusive education, which is likely to be a more moderate one (Hornby, 2012:59). In Kenya's case, special units could be viewed as a broader form of inclusion that creates opportunities for access to education for learners. Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge special units as social inclusion because they are a starting point for social and academic inclusion. Equally, providing a balanced education (Muuya, 2002), with wide-ranging aims that will promote a transition to mainstream classrooms so that all children can learn together (Kiarie, 2014; Adoyo and Odeny, 2015).

6.8 Strategies for improvements

The fourth research question addressed holistic strategies for improvement that have not been implemented. As previously mentioned parents desire to see a change from the current form of "broader inclusion" in Kenya to a more specific and individualised one where learners can access mainstream classrooms. The following key actions are recommended for the government of Kenya to strengthen the focus of Salamanca framework in achieving inclusive education:

1. Facilitate the restructuring of policy on inclusive education and harmonise education provision for learners in mainstream schools;
2. Developing a supportive Child-friendly school (CFS Model) aimed at encouraging schools to consider total needs of a child (UNESCO, 2008; 2010);
3. Develop a criterion of inclusion that can guide the implementation process to build an accurate understanding of "what is" ... in preparing for "what can be" on a much broader scale" (Berlach and Chambers, 2011: 52);
4. Develop and fund training opportunities designed to last for a shorter period than the regular teacher training. Training sessions should be near workstations or school-based to motivate attendance.
5. Cascading training piloted with special needs trained teachers sharing information with other teachers in order to reach a relatively large number within a short duration; And
6. Collaboration with all education stakeholders including NGOs experienced in inclusive education.

7.0 Conclusion

While teachers appear positive to inclusive education, their understanding of the diversity of needs or how to support learners in their classroom appears limited.

Professional development of teachers through in-service courses, seminars and elearning should be considered paramount, SNE draft policy supported the same recommendations and acknowledged the need for additional support and training for all teachers (RoK. 2009). To meet the trends of current educational times schools should work with policy-makers, educators, community leaders, parents, and children (Valli, Stefanski and Jacobson, 2018). The outcomes of this study should be interpreted in the light that interviews were conducted with mainstream teachers in a small geographical region in Kenya.

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Bibliography

Violet Gachago is a PhD candidate at Institute of Education, Nottingham Trent University. She received MEd-ISEN at the University of Birmingham in 2008. Violets'

research explores inclusion progress made in Kenya twenty years post-Salamanca 1994. Interests include education of children with special needs and teacher training on inclusive education.

Hidden Views on Homework: Do social networking sites offer mothers cyberagency?

Rachel Lehner-Mear

Abstract

During the twenty-first century, government policy and dominant discourses have led to formalised primary homework flourishing in UK schools. However, its impact on the family is rarely considered. The task of supporting primary homework both traditionally and currently falls to the mother (Reay, 2005), yet previous research has largely de-gendered the topic. This project re-genders the field of primary homework support to explore mothers' views on homework by locating them on social networking sites (SNSs) and asking whether these spaces give mothers cyberagency in the homework discourse. The study uncovered opposing maternal narratives on homework: rather than being released from dominant discourses in anonymous online spaces, many mothers remained influenced by prevailing ideologies of good mothering and core school values, whilst an emerging alternative narrative was identified, which was redefining the role of 'the good mother'. The findings suggested that mothers use the cyber-agency afforded by social networking sites to position themselves as good mothers.

Introduction: key discourses

Primary homework is ubiquitous in the UK (Medwell and Wray, 2018) and appears to have a direct impact on the parents of pupils who receive it. Research for the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2008 found that 84% of infant parents (5-7 year olds) and 73% of junior parents (7-11 year olds) reported having a regular homework support role (Peters et al., 2008). The perspectives of those parents, however, are little heard in the debates around homework's effectiveness and suitability at primary level, since the dominant discourses are led by government and professional 'experts'.

Successive UK governments have emphasised homework's importance and produced guidance claiming it develops independent learning skills, encourages parental involvement and reinforces learning (DCSF website, 2008; Directgov website, 2012).

However, government insistence that homework produces long-term educational gains (DCSF, 2008) lacks support from existing research. Older, secondary pupils may reap academic benefit (Cooper, 2007), whilst home learning environment and literacy practices have repeatedly been shown to contribute to pre-school children's learning (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003), although debate exists over whether education systems simply prejudice middle-class family behaviours. However, metaanalyses suggest primary homework has limited impact (Cooper, 1989; Cooper, Civey-Robinson and Patall, 2006). Despite this, governments continue to recommend that primary schools use homework, whilst Ofsted states that 'outstanding' schools 'set challenging homework' (2016, p.48), as though this is a causal relationship. Homework is thus presented as a core approach or substantive teaching and learning tool. It is a

'core value' in education (after Kralovec and Buell, 2000, who described *school* work as a core value in Western societies).

In contrast to the official discourse, media narratives suggest that homework's prevalence has a negative, even harmful, outcome. Regular newspaper headlines appear, including: 'The secret of happy children? ... ban homework' (The Guardian, 17th March, 2017); 'Homework 'damages' primary age pupils' (The Telegraph, 5th October, 2014); and 'End the battle of primary school homework and we'll all be better off' (The Mirror, 31st March, 2014).

Homework in the primary school is subject to strong opinions and debates and I argue this may deny voice to the parents who undertake the daily task of homework support. What is unclear from the hegemonic discourses is what the view of parents is.

The parent view

Parent perspectives on primary homework, where they have been considered, have traditionally been researched using interview. The limited data available suggests that, despite the noisy media angst around homework, parents generally support its use. They see it as an indicator of a school's quality and a method for measuring their child's progress (Xu and Corno, 1998). However, other research has hinted that although parents largely agree with homework itself, tensions may exist in the homework support role. These studies describe parents doubting their skills, struggling with time limitations and highlighting homework as a cause of family conflict (Levin et al., 1997; Kralovec and Buell, 2000; Hutchison, 2012).

Homework support as a gendered activity

While most previous research has investigated a neutral 'parent' perspective, this study considered gender a significant factor. The common research language in this field is of 'parental involvement,' 'parental engagement' and 'home-school partnerships'. However, homework support *is* a gendered activity. Studies suggest that mothers are almost exclusively involved in all school-related tasks; Reay called this a 'division of labour' in educative duties (2005, p.27). Therefore, the identified dominant ideology of *homework as a core value*, by implying that homework is a normative parental behaviour, will impact on mothers more than on fathers. As a result, an ideology of the *good mother* develops in which mothers are expected to adopt this homework support role. This potentially limits mothers' opportunities to discuss their views on homework openly, or even to resist its practice. This project explored whether, how and where mothers might resist these dominant discourses and what they might say in the contemporary, anonymous space of a social networking site.

Methodology and method: A feminist netnography

A feminist standpoint was adopted because "giving voice to the experiences of motherhood and recognizing the subjectivity and agency of mothers [are] clearly crucial feminist aims" (Kawash, 2011, cited in Valtchanov et al., p.89). In regendering the research language, my goal was to overcome possible "partial and distorted understanding" (Harding and Hintikka, 2003, p.xxix) found in much previous, de-gendered research into homework. In order to capture natural mother-to-mother

discussion, taking place away from the dominant discourses of homework, I identified a mother community as my field: the social networking site (SNS). This allowed observation of gendered experiences and the discussions they promote. It required a non-traditional research method.

Netnography (Kozinets, 2010) is a form of ethnography applied to the study of online discourse in a manner which is naturalistic and discreet. Adaptations to traditional ethnography make this appropriate to the online field. This method raised particular ethical issues in the planning of this research which, due to limited space, cannot be discussed here. However, the ethical strategy applied to the project is explained in full in Lehner-Mear (in preparation).

It is acknowledged that a focus on SNSs could exclude those without digital social capital. Office for National Statistics (2017) data reveal social networking varies in the target parent demographic between 68% (of older parents) and 88% (of younger parents). As this data is not gathered by gender, the extent of mothers' digital disadvantage, specifically, is unknown.

The research questions and research design

The study aimed to identify, firstly, what mothers said about homework and, secondly, whether this new field, positioned away from expert, government and media discourses, gave mothers some agency in the homework debate. The research addressed two questions:-

1. What views about primary school homework are expressed by mothers on parent-focussed social networking sites?
2. Does this online talk-space provide them with cyber-agency?

The term cyber-agency (Madge and O'Connor, 2006) suggests that the anonymity of online interactions allows freedom to the internet user to develop their identities, not in a deceitful way, but to release them from prescribed roles. This concept sits within an interpretive perspective which assumes that humans create and recreate aspects of the self in different contexts. Acknowledging that dominant discourses offline may prevent mother discussion of perspectives on homework, this project sought a platform where this aspect of the maternal self might be revealed. Exploring whether the web context allows different aspects of a mothers' perspective to be displayed through her anonymised online identity is therefore valid and meets the over-arching research aims and approach.

The project identified two open-access, mother-focused parenting forums. Homework-centred discussion threads were sampled, from which two focus threads were analysed in detail, using both themes from the literature and a one-week immersion in the forums themselves. The identified threads included 369 separate posts, made by 156 individual forum users. The combined deductive and inductive approach enabled patterns to be identified within the data.

Findings: The 'pro' homework perspective

The data exposed a discourse of belief in the benefits of homework, which can be separated into four categories:-

- i. Homework as essential
- ii. Perceived purposes to homework (and disadvantages of *not* doing homework)
- iii. Maternal gain
- iv. Homework support as a parental (maternal) responsibility (with non-compliance linked to parenting failure)

Some mothers wrote of homework being important, essential or non-negotiable (i). Homework was presented as an inflexible behavioural norm for both mother and child. This connected with a line of discussion in the threads about the perceived purposes of homework (ii). Various functions of primary homework were described, which included its use as a preparation for secondary school, as an opportunity for 1:1 support, as a method for keeping pace with one's peers and as a way to practice or improve on classroom learning. However, some mothers went beyond the view of homework as having a purpose and identified the *absence* of homework, or of not doing the homework that was set, as detrimental to the child in various ways. The predicted long-term benefits of doing homework and long-term disadvantages of not doing homework which were discussed by the mothers are presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1 – Mothers' identified benefits of doing homework and disadvantages of not doing homework

Predicted long-term benefits: what doing primary homework might result in	Predicted long-term disadvantages: what <i>not</i> doing primary homework might result in
A good work ethic or conscientious attitude	Will be actively disadvantaged
Skills of independence and organisation	Will be over-taken academically
Self-motivation and self-discipline	Secondary school will be a 'shock' (with an implied inability to cope with homework)
A successful secondary school career, with good exam results	Secondary school will be a struggle
Success in the workplace	A habit of non-compliance with rules
A fundamental ethic for adult life	Potential for serious rule-breaking in adult life

The long-term nature of many of these outcomes suggests these mothers viewed primary homework as a foundation for their child's future more than as a specific benefit to their current learning. This group of mothers had accepted the position described earlier that homework is a core value or fundamental aspect of education.

Some mothers made reference to personal gains from primary homework (iii). They described their enjoyment of the teaching role associated with supporting it. Others liked homework because they felt it enabled them to stay connected to school. Still, others said they approved because it allowed them to track their child's progress. There was even reference to homework as an opportunity to show a caring side towards their child. This suggests that homework might be accepted by mothers because of perceived maternal advantages arising from its construction.

A significant point of discussion in the threads was the parental responsibility which some mothers associated with homework (iv). Whilst contributors wrote of 'parental responsibility', re-gendering the topic to understand homework as specifically a mothers' task enabled appreciation of this discussion as a de-gendered reference to *maternal* responsibility. This idea initiated heated discussion and, from those who believed in mothers' responsibility for homework support, strong criticism of those who professed a different view. In fact, non-compliance with homework (seeing it as non-essential, or disagreeing with its use) was described by many as a parenting failure. One of the analysed threads was begun by a mother with a relaxed approach to her children's homework, in which she described sometimes encouraging them to complete it and sometimes electing not to. This poster was effectively shamed by other contributors and the condemnation of her was harsh. She was blamed for being 'naturally antagonistic' to the teacher and setting her children a bad example; she was accused of bringing negative attention on her children, repercussions and reproach from the teacher and of doing them a 'disservice'. Ultimately, she was described as inadequate in 'basic parenting'. The strength of feeling around homework as a fundamental maternal task was strong. Since, noticeably, her voice disappeared from the thread, the impact of this onslaught of criticism on the mother concerned is unclear. This would be interesting to discover, as it might shed light on the effect of mother-to-mother criticism on the critiqued mother's agency, sense of self, or long-term opinions and actions.

Findings: The 'anti' homework perspective

The pro-homework narrative was mirrored by an anti-homework perspective. Four types of disagreement with homework were identified within the threads:-

- i. Practical objections
- ii. General or philosophical stance against homework
- iii. Research-based disagreement
- iv. Perceived negative impacts

Some mothers wrote that homework was a problem for practical reasons (i). One example of this was time constraints. Sometimes the problems associated with time were alleged to be caused by structural issues with homework (the quantity of work set was too great, or the timetable for completion was too short). However, these structural difficulties were often compounded by lifestyle issues: contributors wrote of maternal work schedules, attendance at before and after school childcare, children's hobbies, clubs and activities, and young children's fatigue associated with long school days or wraparound care. These added an additional layer of difficulty to the structural time constraints.

There were also forum users who disagreed with homework on a more general level, or because they had a philosophical view of childhood which conflicted with the demands of homework (ii). These contributors wrote of wanting children to 'be children', to run around and climb trees or to spend time with their families; the implication was that homework prevented this kind of activity and consequently was disliked by these mothers.

A third group, found on one SNS in particular, raised objections to homework because of their awareness of research in this area (iii). These mothers quoted practices from countries which do not promote primary level homework, or provided links to articles citing academic studies where homework's effectiveness is questioned.

The final anti-homework category contained mothers who were concerned about perceived negative impacts homework has on primary pupils (iv). These mothers believed that homework causes children stress. A range of criticisms was expressed, which related either to their individual child's experiences or to children more widely. A common concern was that homework was 'counterproductive' or put children off learning. Some described how homework made children feel like failures. It was the cause of 'huge struggles[s]', tears, stress and child 'meltdowns' and these negative outcomes were discussed by some as 'inevitable' to the process of conducting homework with young children.

Somewhat surprisingly, given the strength of feeling sometimes described, those who disliked primary homework generally exhibited a very passive level of resistance. They wrote in the forum of their aversion towards homework and the stress it brings, but often combined this with an implied compliance. *Despite* acknowledging its negative outcomes and deep unpleasantness, these mothers appeared to accept homework as necessary: it might bring skills of independence, for example, was thought to be useful for the teacher, and was completed, *de facto*, because it was expected.

Discussion of main themes

The data from these SNSs suggested that many mothers shared the hegemonic view of homework as a core value or respected practice within their children's schooling. This was evident both in those who voiced strong agreement with homework, seeing its functions as wide-ranging and effects as long-lasting, and also in those who disliked the childhood stress associated with homework but still aimed to comply with it. In some way, the practice of setting primary homework and the expectations which come with this, had entered these mothers' psyches in a way which contained a moral facet (David et al, 1997, p.402). This was evidenced most strongly by those who described the maternal obligations around homework and its role in good parenting. Homework was, in effect, part of an ideology of *good mothering*. This theme of *good mothering* and the normative behaviours associated with primary homework allowed non-conforming mothers to be publicly reprimanded in the SNSs for contravening assumed fundamental practices. This also helps to explain why even those who disliked homework, those who disagreed in some way with it, those who found it problematic practically or intensely unpleasant for their children, often resorted to a general acquiescence with it.

However, despite the power of the dominant discourses around homework as a core value and *good mothering* expectations, a developing alternative narrative was emerging. Some mothers who opposed homework were beginning to redefine the role of the *good mother*. This version of the *good mother* protects her children from the encroachment of homework and its potentially negative outcomes.

Conclusion

This project suggested that SNSs offer a platform for mothers to discuss school practices and, where required, to critique or complain about homework. In this sense, cyber-agency was provided by the mother-focused forums selected for the study. However, levels of cyber-agency cannot be known due to the chosen method for this research. The number of 'lurkers' (those who engage through reading threads only and choose not to post their own views) is unknown, nor their reasons for not taking an active part in the discussion. This could be salient to a broader understanding of who does and does not gain cyber-agency in homework-focused forum discussions.

It is clear that homework and the associated ideology of *good mothering* are contested. Whilst some users were disrupting dominant ideologies to develop new narratives, many mothers maintained adherence to the prevailing discourses, advocating and reproducing in strong terms the hegemonic ideology within which current homework policy is sited.

The anonymity inherent in the online context, in which forum users create screennames rather than providing their personal details or image, whilst potentially problematic for the way data is understood (discussed elsewhere in Lehner-Mear), did enable mother empowerment. Mothers used this anonymity to define their personal identities as *good mothers*, with homework used as a measure of this.

In conclusion, mothers who took part in these SNS communities were agents in the presentation of views on homework, whether they were influenced by prevailing ideologies or constructing new perspectives on mothering and the homework support role.

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Biography

Rachel is a doctoral researcher at the University of Nottingham, with an MA in Educational Research Methods. She has over twenty years' experience in education, as a primary teacher and then lecturer at a Further Education college, where she developed a programme for effective parental support of child/ren's home learning.

The value and limitations of using metaphors in research

Jenny Lewin-Jones

Abstract

This paper shows how useful metaphors can be in thinking about research, considering a research approach, and writing about research. Everyday language is rich in metaphor so it can also help the researcher to spot what metaphors are prevalent in the field they are investigating. The paper analyses the metaphors used in a dozen books on research methodology and so explores how metaphors can reveal perceptions of research and the role of the researcher. Because they are so frequent, such metaphors often go unchallenged and may contribute to taken-for-granted assumptions which should be questioned. Nonetheless, some metaphors are a valuable tool for reflection on experiences of postgraduate study and the research process [With thanks to Professor Gary Thomas for sparking the idea for this paper via the 2017 edition of his book “How to do your research project” and its mountaineering cover illustration].

1. Introduction

In everyday life, we are used to talking and writing using metaphor. The broad definition of metaphor used in this paper is “seeing, experiencing, or talking about something in terms of something else” (Ritchie, 2013, p. 9). A metaphor is pervasive, ubiquitous and hard to avoid. A metaphor is so useful because it “allows us to think and talk about one domain of experience in terms of another” (Semino, 2008, p. 148). For example, it is common for the workplace to be referred to as a “battleground”, with colleagues “taking sides” or “fighting” over an issue. It is even difficult to talk or write about metaphor without resorting to metaphor, and some specialist terms are themselves metaphors. For example, metaphorical words are sometimes called “vehicles”, as they “carry” the meaning, and the topic of the metaphor is sometimes called the “target”, implying that this is what the meaning is aimed at (Ritchie, 2013, pp. 10–11).

This paper considers the metaphors which are used in research methodology to describe the role of the researcher and the nature of education research. The stimulus for the paper was the cover of Professor Gary Thomas’ book “How to do your research project”, which features an illustration of a trio of mountaineers reaching the summit of a mountain (Thomas, 2017). Indeed, reflecting on the metaphors has been helpful to me so far in my own research on the discourse of internationalisation in Higher

Education, but I feel that considering metaphors would also be useful for researchers who are not explicitly studying a language.

This paper begins by outlining some of the uses of metaphors in education research. It then analyses the metaphors which are used in a dozen contemporary research methodology books aimed at postgraduate researchers and explores how an understanding of these metaphors can help the researcher. This leads to a discussion of some of the wider value and limitations of metaphors. The paper's conclusion is that analysis of metaphors can be very useful, including as part of a researcher's personal reflection, though there is a need for caution since metaphor can also be restricting.

2. Metaphors in theory and research

The abstract conceptualisations which are a feature of academic work can be difficult to grasp, and metaphors can help by impacting on our imagination, enriching our understanding (Guilherme and Souza de Freitas, 2016, p. 2). Key sociological theorists have seen this, some of them becoming associated with a particular metaphor they exploit, for example, identity as a dramaturgical performance on "stage" (Goffman, 1969), and contemporary uncertainties of life as "liquidity" (Bauman, 2000). Philosophers of education have turned to metaphor too. For example, Martin Buber in 'On national education' (1963) uses metaphors of educators as sculptor and gardener to compare teacher-centred and student-centred education (cited in Guilherme and Souza de Freitas, 2016, p. 2). For another example, Paulo Freire in 'Pedagogy of the oppressed' (1996) coined the concept of 'banking education', critiquing practices in which the teacher deposits and retrieves information banked in the students (cited in Guilherme and Souza de Freitas, 2016, p. 3).

In research, metaphors have been used to explain particular methodological approaches. They are, for example, used to describe mixed methods research, from the very familiar "triangulation" metaphor taken from the field of surveying to newer metaphors of "*crystallisation, choreography* and the *archipelago* of mixed methods" (Cameron, 2013, p. 54).

Metaphor can also be employed as part of a research technique by harnessing "its capacity to render and connect knowledge and life experiences in relevant and meaningful ways" (Black, 2013, p. 26). For example, Black (2013) encouraged early childhood teachers to use metaphor to draw and talk about their work and reflect on their experiences. Their metaphors included training as an Olympic gymnast, completing a never-ending jigsaw puzzle, and mending a patchwork blanket, which all convey ideas about their everyday work involving continuous and repeated effort and struggle (Black, 2013, p. 43).

The metaphors, however, have to be carefully chosen. Whilst metaphors can be very useful in creating a cohesive narrative, overused or inappropriate metaphors can “get in the way” (Simons, 2009, p. 153). This applies to metaphors used to describe ways of teaching and learning. Anna Sfard (1998) points out the dangers of adhering too closely to one particular metaphor for learning, stating that “...Educational practices have an overpowering propensity for extreme, one-for-all practical recipes” (Sfard, 1998). She, therefore, argues for a plurality of complementary metaphors, and concludes that researchers should accept that “our work is bound to produce a patchwork of metaphors” (Sfard, 1998).

It is not surprising that research methodology books make use of metaphors. At earlier stages in the education system, metaphors are frequently used in educational materials, helping students to make connections between phenomena they are familiar with and new topics (Semino, 2008, p. 148). An example is the use of transport system metaphors to teach school students about the workings of the human body (Semino, 2008, p. 149). For postgraduate students too, metaphors are used to present new and unfamiliar ideas, and research methodology books make use of metaphors to convey concepts about the nature of research and the role of the researcher. The aim of this small study is to investigate what metaphors are used, how they are used, and to suggest some ways in which they can be helpful yet also potentially limiting or even misleading to the postgraduate researcher.

3. Identification and analysis of the metaphors in research methodology books

In order to explore the use of metaphors in research methodology books, a dozen books from the reading list of a postgraduate Research Design module were selected. A search of the books’ indexes was first conducted to see if “metaphor” was used explicitly as a key term. Then, a close reading of the books took place, with a focus on chapters and sections on the role of the researcher and the research process. This close reading enabled identification of specific metaphors used to describe the researcher (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Metaphors for the researcher in research methodology books

Metaphors for the researcher	Author, date
Novel-writer	Clough (2002)
Artist or photographer	Thomas (2013)
Architect designing a building	Blaikie (2009)
Architect and builder	Robson & McCartan (2016)
Constructor	Kvale & Brinkman (2009)
Detective	Yin (2003)
Miner versus traveller	Kvale & Brinkman (2009)
Tourer & camper	Gray (2009)
Swimmer	Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2010)

Marathon runner	Thomas (2013)
Mountaineer	Thomas (2013)
Explorer	Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014)

Source: analysis by the author of this paper

Once the metaphors had been identified, they were analysed according to their level of explicitness. Three categories were identified. The first of these (the most explicit) is where the author directly uses the word 'metaphor', for example:

“There are many metaphors for the research project – a journey, a voyage, or, as the cover of this book suggests, a mountaineering trek. All imply that there is effort involved, that there is a beginning and an end, that you may meet unexpected problems and delights on the way” (Thomas, 2013, p. xvi)

In the second category, the actual word 'metaphor' is not used, but words indicating metaphor are employed, such as 'like', 'analogous' or 'similar'. It is clear here that a comparison is being made between the role of a researcher and that of another kind of professional. An example of this is describing the research process as “analogous to the activities of an architect in designing a building” (Blaikie, 2009, p. 16).

Metaphors in the third category are less obvious, as they involve hidden or dead metaphors, such as “lay a solid foundation” (Yin, 2003, p. 26) and “move in the right direction” (Yin, 2003, p. 22). The reader might not think of these as metaphors at all, as they are common idioms. However, there are implications with these that the research process has similarities to constructing a building or going on a journey.

The next stage of analysing the metaphors focussed on the sentence structures and textual context. Here, three patterns were identified. The first type were metaphors used singly, for example: “The interviewer is a traveller on a journey to a distant country that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 48). The structure here (X is X) is an example of a metaphor without a comparative term such as “like” (Ritchie, 2013, p. 5). The second type used a dual metaphor, where there is a similarity between two metaphors, for example: “Like an artist or a photographer, you will also be exposed to the risk of things going wrong” (Thomas, 2013, pp. 10–11). This example could be termed a “simile”, as there is a comparative word “like”. Finally, some authors use a contrast between two different metaphors to elaborate on different aspects of the research process, for example:

“... the research process is about touring (looking around) and camping (stopping to explore in more depth)...the travelling process involves an enticing

journey around the literature. But camping involves a more discriminatory approach, selecting, synthesizing and analysing in more detail.” (Gray, 2009, p. 101).

The final stage of the analysis focussed on the key concepts conveyed by the different metaphors. A crucial distinction is whether the metaphor implies that the researcher is finding evidence or knowledge that already exists “out there” or whether they themselves are creating or constructing new knowledge. Two metaphors exemplifying these opposing concepts are the researcher as a miner (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 48) and the researcher as novel-writer (Clough, 2002, p. 98). In these, there is a fundamental epistemological difference, concerning how the researcher’s role is perceived and their relationship with knowledge.

Many of the metaphors emphasise the view that the process of research is as important as the end goal. One such metaphor likens the researcher to a marathon runner (Thomas, 2013, p. xvi); and suggests that the duration of the marathon is important, not just the moment of completion. Similarly, for the explorer, the focus is not just on the discovery of some endpoint, but on getting to know the landscape around them so that “the map becomes correspondingly more differentiated and integrated” (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014, p. 20). The complexity of the role of the researcher sometimes leads to a combination of metaphors. For example, although sometimes research can be divided into a design (architect) and implementation (builder), the researcher as an architect and the researcher as a builder may be “one and the same person” (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p. 72).

In the majority of the metaphors, there were elements of physical effort, mental pressure and even dangers. This shows that although a range of metaphors is used to describe the research process, there are some common themes. An extended metaphor can show different aspects of one physical activity, such as the swimmer who may be floating calmly and then experiences a drowning sensation (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010, pp. 1–2). This highlighting of different aspects of one profession or activity can help to show that there can be different interpretations of a metaphor, and judgement is needed on how to use them.

4. Reflection on the value and dangers of metaphor

The choice of metaphor does, therefore, present some problems. Although it was suggested above that metaphors enrich our understanding and help us to relate abstract concepts to reality, our choice is itself restricted by what we already understand (Guilherme and Souza de Freitas, 2016, p. 2). Metaphors can contribute to the perpetuation of taken-for-granted assumptions which should be questioned. To my mind, when I looked at the metaphors used to describe the role of researcher, it was striking how many of the source domains are associated with traditional male pursuits or professions. The image of the researcher is often an individual able to

devote themselves entirely and single-mindedly to their research (such as an explorer in new territory), which does not match my experience as part-time postgraduate and professional practitioner.

Such metaphors could, therefore, have a harmful emotional impact. They might be unsettling to a researcher whose experiences do not reflect a prevalent metaphor, and it can be worth searching to find a more appropriate metaphor. For example, the research process is often likened to a “path”, “road” or “journey”, which can make it appear straightforward and clearly signposted. A “journey” is, in fact, a generic metaphor used as a description applied to many topics, such as love or grief (Ritchie, 2013, p. 36), which perhaps indicates why it is so commonly applied to the research process. A different, perhaps better, metaphor to describe the doctoral journey is the “spiralling vortex” (Carter, 2013, p. 104), which could be used to reassure researchers that they “are not alone with insecurity, stress and obsession and that they can learn to manage these potentially damaging emotions”(Carter, 2013, p. 105). The emphasis is on the student’s wellbeing and understanding of the need to take care of themselves.

Research has also been likened to walking the labyrinth (Midgley and Trimmer, 2013). Although this metaphor may have negative associations, with getting lost and frustrated by dead-ends, a ‘unicursal’ labyrinth is a more optimistic model, as it has a single path that winds around but does lead to the centre. People enter this labyrinth “knowing that it will lead them on a winding path that takes them at times very near to, and at times very far from, the centre they seek” (Midgley and Trimmer, 2013, p. 1), but nonetheless eventually reaching that centre.

5. Conclusions

In summary, metaphors are everywhere and although they are often used without much reflecting, identifying and analysing metaphors can be useful for the postgraduate researcher. Even if metaphors are not being used directly in the research, they can be a tool for reflection on experiences of postgraduate study and the research process. However, caution is needed, as metaphors such as “mining” and “exploring” may only be a partial fit and can be limiting. Such metaphors can mislead the researcher if they do not match the nature of the research being conducted, and can close down possible interpretations. Metaphors of the role of the researcher can be unhelpful if they project an image that the researcher cannot identify with or which does not validate the emotions the researcher is experiencing. By contrast, metaphors such as the “spiralling vortex” or “mountaineering” can be reassuring and give researchers confidence that it is normal for the research process at times to be confusing, arduous and not always clearly signposted. Above all, metaphors can be useful in stimulating this kind of acknowledgement of the emotionality of the research process, and the wide range of metaphors shows that there is not only one way to be a researcher.

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Biography

I have been a lecturer at the University of Worcester since 1997, and currently teach English Language and Sociology. I am also a part-time professional doctorate student at the University of Birmingham. I tweet on language, linguistics, and education @JennyLewinJones

Biology Classroom Interaction: A Case Study of Secondary schools in Ojo areas of Lagos State, Nigeria Nnamdi Anthony Okonta

Abstract

This paper is about Biology learning environment and pedagogical activities in the Ojo areas of Lagos State Nigeria. Biology is a science subject classified amongst science, technology and mathematics subjects (STM) such as chemistry and physics in Nigeria. The classification aims to promote science to enable the Nigerian students embrace the culture and to acquire the knowledge to move the country forward. Educational policies and reforms were enacted in the favour of science subjects but these policies were poorly implemented. Biology students can achieve good grades when the resources that are needed to tutor Biology are readily available for Biology classroom interaction in a conducive learning environment for Biology teachers and students. This paper presents the researcher's research questions, conceptual framework and access to the study. The paper also outlines the research design, selection techniques, data collection methods/analysis and conclusion.

Key Words: Education, policies, Science, technology and mathematics subjects (STM), research questions and conceptual frame work.

Introduction

The Nigerian educational policies were enacted in 1969 and 1971 to promote science education at all levels so that more students can embrace science subjects (Oludipe, Daniel and Idowu, 2011). This was a good decision because when pupils develop science knowledge, they will be enthused to study sciences to advance the knowledge. It was because of this reason that the Nigerian government made Basic Elementary Science compulsory to be studied for six years at the primary school levels with the slogan to 'catch them young' (Abah, 2013, Uwaifo et al, 2009, Babafemi). The Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) was inaugurated in 1957 by the Nigerian Government to carefully look into the Nigerian secondary school science curriculum to restructure it (Oludipe, Daniel and Idowu, 2011). Then the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) combined Chemistry, Biology and Physics at the junior secondary school levels to form a single subject called 'Integrated Science' and made it compulsory for the junior secondary school students at all levels to study for three years (Oludipe, Daniel and Idowu, 2011). These subjects (Chemistry, Biology and Physics) exist as core subjects at the senior secondary levels for students to study (Uwaifo et al, 2009). The senior secondary school students study these subjects (Chemistry, Biology and Physics) for three years and then proceed to study for four years in any tertiary institution of their choice as outlined in the 6-3-3-4 policy paper (Uwaifo et al, 2009). The university authorities in Nigeria were empowered based on 60% to 40% admission policy ratio to reserve 60% of the admission space for science related courses and the remaining 40% for art and commercial courses with the intention to promote science courses because Nigeria cannot advance without science and technology education (Oludipe, Daniel and Idowu, 2011).

Importance of Science Education in Nigeria

The reality that science and technology represent namely: conversion of natural resources into simple and helpful tools for human needs such as carving, sun baking, the use wood and charcoal as fuel, fire and clay pots are as old as humanity itself (Sebestik, 2008), so science and technology is as old as man itself in society. Science is an organised body of knowledge conducted on objective principles involving the systematised observation of experiment with phenomena, whereas, technology deals with the practical application of these scientific knowledges to solving problems (Brown, 2015). Biology knowledge for instance has been applied in the areas of Agriculture to improve crops and in Medicine to improve life because Biology is the study of life (Agboghoroma, 2015, Tomasovic, 2014). Nigerian medical schools will not give admission to students who do not achieve a credit pass in Biology because, Biology is at the center of medicine (JAMB, 2016). Biology is linked to courses like Biochemistry Biophysics and Microbiology which are science related courses (JAMB, 2016). More students study Biology at the secondary school levels when it is compared to other science subjects like Chemistry and Physics because they need Biology knowledge to survive (Agboghoroma 2015).

Literature Review

Existing literature revealed that punishments, chalkboard and lecture methods dominate the Biology learning environments (Okebukola and Ogunniyi, 2006, Ajaja, 2009). Further researches showed that Biology classes were unfriendly (Onwuachu and Nwakonbi 2009) and the students found topics such as Genetics, Heredity and Ecology difficult to understand (Agboghoroma and Oyovwi 2015). Biology class sizes of 50 and more were reported and more students take Biology when compared to Chemistry and Physics (Adeyemi, 2008, Onifade and Yusuf, 2016, FRN, 2004). In a study which identified the major barriers to meaningful learning of science subjects in Nigeria particularly Biology, Okebukola (2012) acknowledged the subject Biology, the learners, the learning environment, culture, language of instruction, teachers, home, government and the examination bodies as barriers to effective teaching and learning of science subjects in Nigeria, mainly, Biology (Ododo, 2014).

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study is to improve the Biology learning environments and pedagogical activities for Biology teachers and students. The reasons being that improved Biology learning environments would lead to good pedagogical activities and outcome(s).

Research Questions

- What forms of teacher/student engagements are found in the Biology learning environment? What might be the reason(s)?
- What are the Biology classroom participants (both teachers and students) perceptions and feelings about the classroom learning environment activities?
 - What forms of students' behaviours are found in Biology lessons? What might be the reason(s)?
- How do teachers manage disruptive behaviours?

Research Design

The study adopts an exploratory case study research design and interpretivist paradigm because it is about the Biology learning environment(s) and pedagogical activities. Interpretivists are of the view that people living together can interpret what is happening to each other (Swanborn, 2010). The chosen research design aims to prevent a mismatch where findings will not address initial research questions (Yin, 2014). Through a case study approach, the study shall explore the Biology teachers and students' knowledges about activities in the classroom to comprehend how Biology teachers interact with students.

The diagram below (figure 1) is my conceptual frame work. The parts labelled (A and B) summarise the reasons for my thesis and how I will make contributions to theory and practice. The conceptual frame work shows the themes that will run through the thesis in addition to the thesis structure.

Environment: The physical setting where Biology teaching and learning occur.

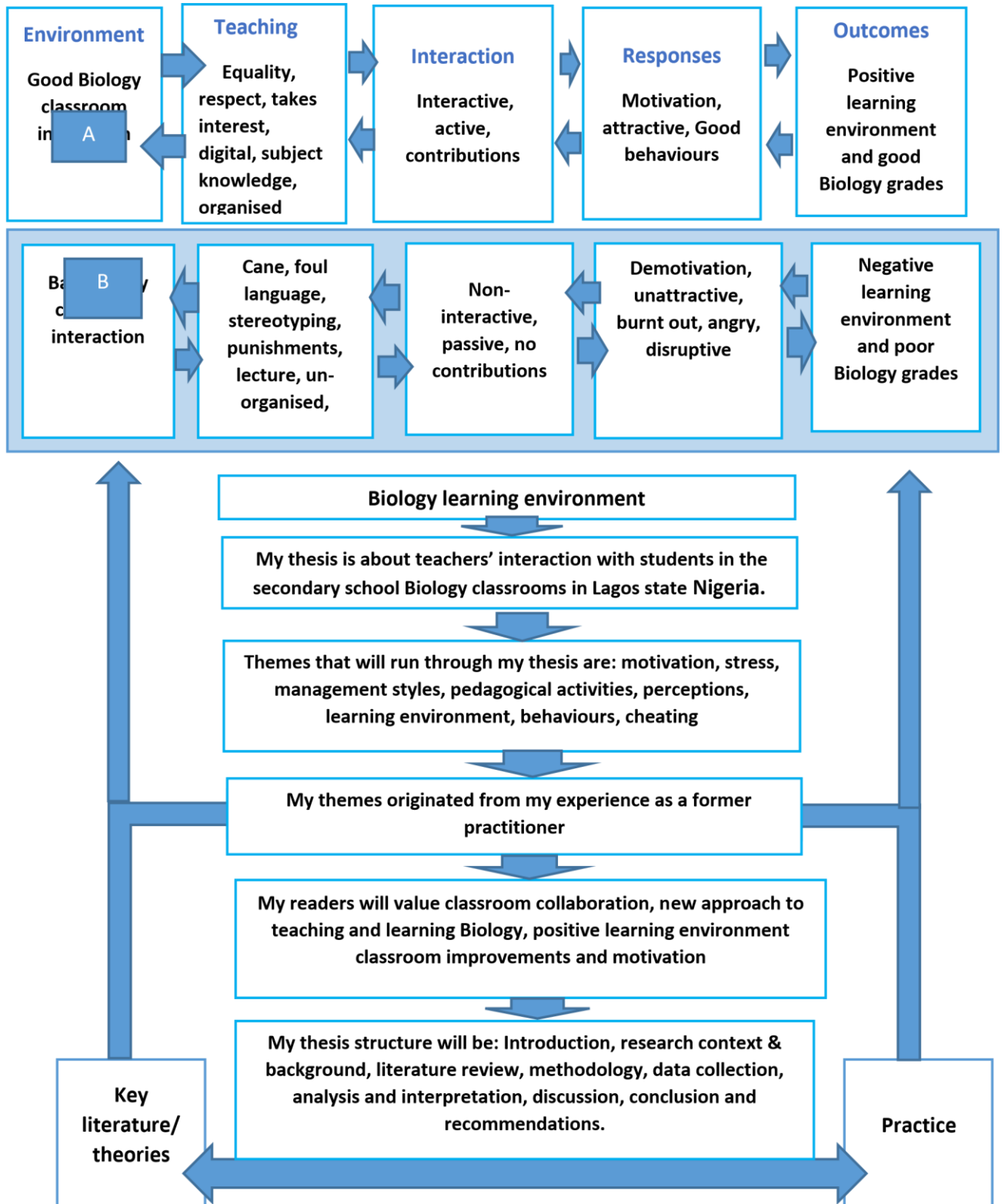
Teaching: The process of Imparting knowledge to students.

Interaction: Biology teachers and students' activities in the classroom and how they relate.

Responses: Feedback from the Biology learning environment and interaction.

Outcomes: Biology classroom results/grades after pedagogical activities

Conceptual Framework Figure 1



Research Approach

The study shall adopt qualitative approaches to collect detailed information from participants and from the Biology learning environments. The researcher will explain the study to the participants and allow them to freely decide if they will take part or not. The participants will be given the participant information sheets and consent forms to enable them to make good decisions. The participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time without given any reason and they will not be disadvantaged in any way.

Data Collection Methods

The data will be collected through individual interviews, card sorting, diary reflections, photographs and observations. Individual interview and card sorts will take place during Biology lesson free time at school in the board room on the same day for Biology teachers and students. Interview will come first and card sorts shall follow afterwards. Participants will sort cards into three headings. These are (a) acceptable practices in use, (b) unacceptable practices in use and (c) acceptable practices not in use. Also, I will take Biology classroom desks arrangement and wall artefacts photographs and will do classroom observations.

Individual Interviews: This is a conversation between the researcher and a participant.

Card Sorting: The process of organising cards labelled with activities into pre-established groups by the participants.

Diary Reflections: The participants' personal reflection(s) about Biology classroom activities in which they attended.

Photographs: Visual images taken from the Biology learning environment(s).

Observations: Watching how Biology teachers interact with students in the classrooms and taken notes.

Access/Selection

The permissions to gain entrance into the secondary schools were obtained from the Lagos State ministry of education and from the schools' head teachers. I visited the schools and the ministry of education and they were happy for the study to take place. Then, an approval was granted in writing for the study to commence.

Three secondary schools were randomly selected to participate in this study from the Ojo areas of Lagos State Nigeria. Six Biology teachers and thirty-six Biology students were selected randomly to take part. Purposive sampling was adopted and random sampling was introduced for representativeness.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) enumerated the elements of trustworthiness as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

- **Credibility:** How realistic are the discoveries?
- **Transferability:** Do the discoveries relate to other situation?

- Dependability: Are the discoveries likely to apply at other times?
- Confirmability: Has the investigator permitted his/ her beliefs to intrude to a high degree?

I will conduct the study following the good practice guidelines as stipulated in the United Kingdom and in the secondary schools in Nigeria where the research will take place. I will ensure that the information is recorded appropriately and that the photographs are true and unbiased. The data that I will collect will be a true representation of the study.

Data Analysis

I will use the framework approach to sort, sift and rank data methodically in accordance with key issues because it is iterative. The Framework Method was developed by Jane Ritchie and Liz Spencer in the late 1980s from the Qualitative Research Unit at the National Centre for Social Research in the United Kingdom (Gale et al, 2013). The method (framework approach) is positioned within a broad family of analysis methods often called thematic analysis or qualitative content analysis (Gale et al, 2013). The Framework Method will identify similarities and differences in qualitative data, before focusing on relationships between different parts of the data to draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions from the themes (Gale et al, 2013). The Framework Method is appropriate for my study because this framework will enable me to organise and manage the data collected (Nat-Cen learning, 2012, Gale et al, 2013). The framework approach is iterative which is good for my study (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009). A reflexive iteration is at the heart of visiting and revisiting data to connect themes with emerged insights to refine my focus and understanding. By engaging with the Framework Method, I will analyse Biology teachers' pedagogical activities in the selected secondary schools in the Ojo areas while employing coding. Coding will enable me to categorise the themes, create memo, give the participants voice and to reduce the emerged themes to manageable numbers.

Conclusions

The approaches to the study have been outlined in this paper. These should enable detailed data collection and analysis. Access was negotiated and the schools' gatekeepers were happy for the study to proceed and they gave approvals in writing. The research questions are at the forefront of this study and needed to be answered upon the completion. Adequate qualitative data will be collected from the Biology learning environments and from the participants (Biology teachers and students) through individual interviews, card sorts, diary reflections, photographs and observations as detailed in this paper.

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Biographical note

Nnamdi Anthony Okonta is a professional doctoral student at Anglia Ruskin University in the United Kingdom. He holds a degree in Biology education, accounting and a master from the University of Wales (United Kingdom) and Lagos State University (Nigeria). He is the author to a novel titled Birth Mark online.

Perceptions and reasons of taking graded music examinations in Hong Kong

Yee Ni Tse

Abstract

Entering for graded music examinations is a commonplace musical activity in instrumental learning and seems to be a 'must-follow' path in Hong Kong's instrumental learning culture. Previous literature has reported the role and possible impacts of graded music examinations in instrumental learning in the UK (ABRSM, 2014; Davidson & Scutt, 1999; Salaman, 1994). No research has been undertaken to investigate the role and functions of these examinations in Hong Kong. The empirical research reported here employed a questionnaire-based investigation and aimed to understand: (i) the nature and role of graded music examinations in the Hong Kong education system; (ii) the reasons of taking these examinations; and (iii) the possible impacts of Hong Kong context on instrumental learning and certification. Results suggest that graded instrumental music examinations were used for multiple reasons and were, generally, perceived to be of high value and importance in Hong Kong's education culture.

Background

Most instrumental students, especially those studying classical music, will have experience of taking graded music instrumental examinations. It is a commonplace musical activity in the process of instrumental learning in Hong Kong. There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that the taking of graded music examinations was seen as necessary in Hong Kong for the reason of obtaining certification or proof of student's musical abilities. For example, the need to have achieved a highly graded music examination seems to be an implicit requirement for students to be accepted into a reputable school in Hong Kong. The available data have extensively highlighted the importance of graded music examinations and thus, by implication, were likely to have impacted directly also on the instrumental learning and teaching behaviour.

The context of Hong Kong education seems to play a substantial part in shaping the role and use of graded music examinations. This is believed to be due to the competitiveness of the Hong Kong education system. Hong Kong was a British colony for over 150 years. It was not surprising, therefore, that Hong Kong's educational system resembled features of that found in England in terms of structure and curricula, especially during the colonial era (Cheung, 2004). It is only recently that Hong Kong has undergone major educational reform to accommodate the change of society after Hong Kong had been ceded back to China in 1997. Yet, the traditional process of children's allocation to Primary and Secondary school have not been changed. School places are allocated to pupils either through Primary One Admission (POA) System and Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System operated by the Education Bureau (EDB) of Hong Kong, or by direct application (EDB, 2012). Students are

assessed on academic excellence and extra-curricular achievement according to the preferred school choices of the pupils and parents. As a native of Hong Kong, I have encountered a common belief that, by obtaining a highly graded music examination certificate, students will have a higher chance to secure a place in their target school(s). Relatedly, many believe that students would have a higher possibility of acceptance at a university by studying in a higher-ranking or reputable Primary and Secondary school. It is not difficult to imagine that such schools would have a high standard in their school entry requirement, including pupil's musical achievements.

Although instrumental learning is not a compulsory element in the Hong Kong curriculum, most parents send their child to instrumental lessons (Cheung, 2004; Ho, 2009a). It is reported that parents in Hong Kong believe instrumental learning is beneficial to the child's intellectual development (Ho, 2009b). Although some parents identify that music education could potentially bring life-long enjoyment and satisfaction to the child, musical accomplishment is reportedly often valued more than the learning process (Ho, 2009a). To gain reassurance of their children's musical achievements, parents, in general are keen to enter their child for public music instrumental examinations as operated by international authorities (Cheung, 2004), such as the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and Trinity College London. Despite great effort being invested in the child's instrumental training and achievement in formal music examinations, parents at the same time are reported to hold doubts and reservations towards their child pursuing actual careers in music and often discourage them from continuing to learn their musical instruments, particularly when their child need to cope with increasing amount of pressure in academic work (Ho, 2009a).

Although graded music examinations were only established since around 1870s, there has already been a long tradition in assessing musical performance (Fautley, 2010), both formally and informally. Regardless of formal or informal assessment, it has been argued that the most important purpose of assessment is to improve and enhance student's learning (Fautley, *op. cit.*). Assessments ideally provide feedback to students and teachers, enable reflection on student's learning progress and serve as an incentive for students to learn (Holmes, 2006). Through assessments, students can gain a sense of achievement, as well as seek formal approval of their abilities. Fautley (2010) suggested seven reasons why assessment is used in music education. These include: (i) enhancing, ensuring and evaluating student's progress; (ii) measuring student's attainment level; (iii) providing evidence on student's effort; (iv) providing evidence on student's achievement; (v) monitoring effectiveness of teaching and learning; (vi) showing student's potential; and (vii) providing evidence on student's progress to parents. Assessments might have multiple functions and roles simultaneously. It is, however, seen as essential to put the focus on student's learning and only by doing so can assessment be a beneficial tool to enhance student's learning.

It is reported that the existence of graded music assessments has a huge effect on student's musical learning (Holmes, 2006; Salaman, 1994). Salaman (1994) believed

that graded music examinations brought beneficial effects to student's learning in terms of increasing motivation, structuring learning, providing challenges for students and obtaining certification. Although students might have simultaneous motivations for entering graded examinations, Sloboda (1994) and Davidon and Scutt (1999) each acknowledged the importance of not utilising the examinations as an external motivational device. On the other hand, previous studies have found that graded examinations were used for student non-related reasons, such as boosting an instrumental teacher's reputation and parental pressure (Mills, 2003; Salaman, 1994). Holmes (2006) found that instrumental teachers used external music examinations, such as graded music examinations, for a variety of reasons, including goal setting, measuring student's achievement, boosting the professional reputation and for economic necessity. There is no doubt that there are various different reasons for entering students for graded music examinations. Nevertheless, it would seem anecdotal that there is a tendency nowadays for the initial purpose of taking examinations to no longer to focus on student's learning, but rather on other external reasons such as in response to parental pressure and certification. This unbalanced attitude and behaviour might impact on student's learning experience and so could need to be addressed.

The study

The purpose of the current study was to explore how graded instrumental music examinations were perceived and used in Hong Kong, particularly in relation to the Hong Kong learning culture and environment. Two research questions were identified:

1. What are the reasons for taking external graded music instrumental examinations in Hong Kong? and
2. To what extent do people in Hong Kong believe that external music examinations are important and necessary?

This small-scale empirical research employed a questionnaire-based approach. Questionnaires were given out to collect data on participants' demographic information, personal experience, their perceptions on the reasons for taking graded music examinations and their views on the impacts of taking these examinations.

Participants

The study took place in Hong Kong in 2016. N=73 participants (21 Male, 51 Female), including 28 pupils, 25 parents and 20 instrumental teachers, were recruited publicly online and through personal contacts. Participants include (i) Primary and Secondary school pupils; (ii) parents; and (iii) instrumental teachers who were teaching/ learning instrument(s) or who had children learning instrument(s) in Hong Kong.

Questionnaire design

Three slightly different semi-structured questionnaires were designed for the three target groups, one for students, one for parents and one for instrumental teachers. The differences were designed to allow the differences in data on musical background and experience to be collected from each group of stakeholders. The main bodies of the questionnaires were, however, similar enough for comparison and analysis.

The three questionnaires were divided into four sections with the last being the core: (i) demographic information; (ii) musical background information; (iii) personal experience on music examinations; and (iv) perceptions on graded music examinations. Participants were asked questions specifically about their personal beliefs, views and perceptions on graded music examinations. These included the reasons for instrumental learning, the use of graded music examinations in their learning and teaching experience, possible impacts of these examinations on student's instrumental learning, and the importance and relevance of these examinations in the context of contemporary Hong Kong. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via open-ended and closed questions, which included Likert scales and ranking order questions. Descriptive frequencies, cross-tabulations and individual T-tests were operated using SPSS to analyse the quantitative data. Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data.

Findings

Finding 1

Participants were asked to rate their five most important reasons for pupils to be entered for graded music examinations from a range of 13 pre-determined options, derived from past literature and a pilot study. They were then asked to rank those reasons in order, indicating from "most" to "least important". Results suggest that the five most common reasons for entering graded music examinations were goal setting, proof or certification, sense of achievement, motivation and parental request (see Table 1). Goal setting had the most ratings from the participants, particularly from the teachers. This matches with data from Holmes earlier (2006)'s study, which suggested that most teachers used graded examinations for the reason of goal setting. As graded examinations have clear published requirements, using these examinations as goals can provide an easily understandable level of standards for parents and students on what exactly is required from them. They, therefore, serve as an effective tool to guide student's progress. "Proof or certification" has the second highest ratings from all participants and was rated most highly by students. Most students also believed that gaining proof or a certificate was more important than any other reasons for entering graded music examinations (see Table 2). At the same time, "proof or certification" was also rated highly by teachers and parents overall and as the "most important" reason (see Table 1 and Table 2). This suggested that certification was most likely their priority when deciding on whether or not to enter for a grade examination.

A possible explanation might be that certification was seen as a tangible proof of the student's musical abilities and, especially from the parent's point of view, demonstrating 'value for money' (cf Davidson & Scutt, 1999). Certification was also

viewed as symbolisation of their children's achievement (Ho, 2009a). This finding is also in line with Ho (2011), who stated that certification in Hong Kong was given a high importance in instrumental learning. The current findings confirmed the claim made previously that there is an increasing tendency to view external (non-musical) reasons as the initial purpose of entering graded examinations.

Table 1. Percentages of students, parents and teachers' ratings of their five most important reasons for entering graded music examinations

	Students	Parents	Teachers	Total
Goal setting	54	76	100	74
Proof/ certification	75	56	80	70
Sense of achievement	71	48	60	60
Motivation	47	64	75	60
Parental request	50	-	70	58
Student's enjoyment	43	56	15	40
Self-esteem	46	56	15	40
Musical abilities development	43	52	0	33
Student's request	-	36	15	27
Teacher's recommendation	28	24	-	26
Student's school requirement	25	20	0	16
Teacher's professional reputation	-	-	15	15
Others	0	0	5	1

Table 2. The three most commonly rated reasons as "most important", ranked in order by students, parents and teachers

		Students	Parents	Teachers
Most important	1	Proof/certification	Proof/certification	Goal setting
	2	Parental request	Self-esteem	Proof/certification
	3	Goal setting	Goal setting	Parental request

It must be noted that no teacher reported that "musical abilities development" was an important reason for entering graded music examinations, although there were at least 40% of students and parents who believed that this was the case (see Table 1). This finding suggested that there might be at least one key difference in perceptions in the use and function of graded music examinations between teachers, students and parents.

To support the above results, student participants were also asked to state the reason(s) why they had entered for their most recent music examinations. Parent

participants were asked why they had entered their child for the most recent examination. Responses were coded into six themes: (i) proof/certification; (ii) request from other parties; (iii) need for future studies; (iv) requirement for continuation of instrumental learning; (v) tool for enhancing instrumental learning and personal development; and (vi) student's own interest. Although responses from student participants spread across the six themes, responses captured were mostly focused on external factors, in particular "proof/certification". Five students reported that they entered their examinations because their parents or teachers had requested them to do so. Brand (2002) once suggested that students are often at the bottom of the decision tree in controlling their learning in a Chinese culture. Students were also reported to be more obedient to people who have higher authority in their learning (Cheung, 2004; Wong, 2005). This could, to a certain extent, explain the reason why students often state that they experience an external force from others in their learning process. Although most students who mentioned the need for entering examinations to help their future studies did not explain clearly why they believed this was the case, there was one response which stated that:

"Because this was needed for going to a secondary school and it helps the allocation of the secondary placement [English translation]."

Similar assumptions could, therefore, be possibly made concerning other students who also perceived that taking graded examinations would aid their future studies. This would tend to confirm the notion of the existence of a belief that graded examinations play an important role in Hong Kong education, and that the Hong Kong education system has influenced the behaviour of instrumental teaching and learning in Hong Kong. These are external (non-musical) motivations. Yet, in order to sustain student's work drive, it has been reported that intrinsic motivation should be in place (Sloboda, 1994).

Finding 2

Two questions in the questionnaires addressed the second research question. Results suggested that graded music examinations were generally perceived to be of high importance and necessary in Hong Kong.

Participants were first asked to give a rating ranging from "Extremely unimportant" (or numerically 1) to "Extremely important" (numerically 6) to indicate to what extent they believed that taking graded music examinations was important in Hong Kong or not. Although there was some dispersion of the raw scores, results suggested that most participants believed that graded examinations were important in Hong Kong, a view especially endorsed by the instrumental teachers. No participants had rated graded examinations as "Extremely unimportant" (1). Instrumental teachers had the highest mean score amongst all three groups (see Table 3) and had a significantly higher score when compared to parents, $t(42.4)=2.090$, $p=0.043$. No research previously had been undertaken to compare this rating between instrumental teachers and parents.

Potential reasons might be that instrumental teachers themselves have experienced the importance of taking graded examinations and, therefore, this encouraged a higher rating to be recorded. This finding may also relate to the question being linked closely to their professional identify as teachers,

i.e. that their student’s success in examinations was a seen as a validation of their music instrumental pedagogy and their professional identity.

Table 3. Students, parents and instrumental teachers' ratings on the importance of taking graded music examinations in Hong Kong

	Mean	Median	Mode	Min.	Max.	SD
Students	4.75	5	5	3	6	1.04
Parents	4.48	5	6	2	6	1.45
Teachers	5.25	5.5	6	2	6	1.02

A dichotomous question was asked on whether participants believed that taking graded examinations in Hong Kong was necessary. Results show that, in general, around two-thirds of participants (62%) believed that graded examinations were necessary in Hong Kong (see Figure 1) and more than half from each individual participant group considered that taking graded examinations was necessary in Hong Kong. However, when comparing the three target groups, instrumental teachers (65%) and students (64%) had a higher percentage in rating “Yes”, compared to the responses by parents (56%). However, there is no data which suggest that this was related to the teaching and learning contexts, nor the educational level of the participants.

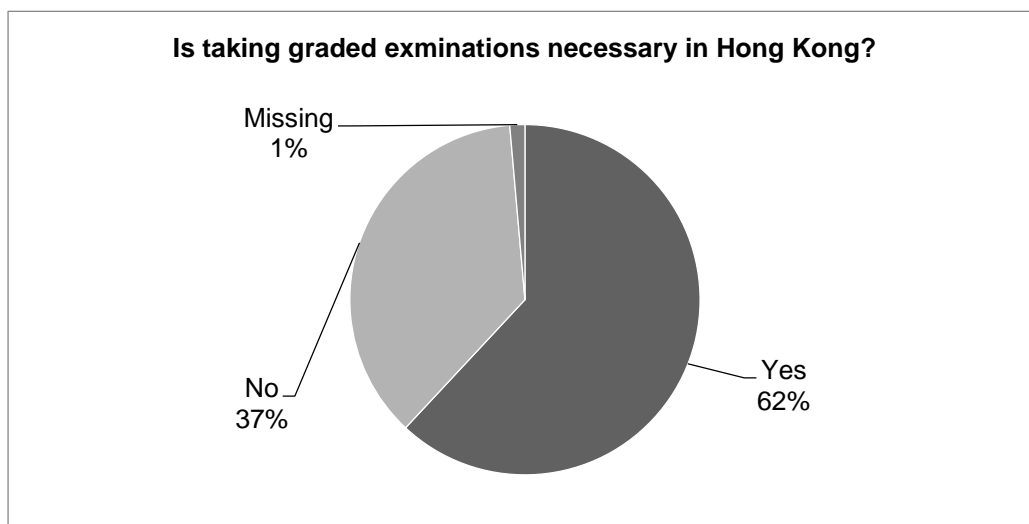


Figure 1. Participants' views on whether taking graded examinations is necessary in Hong Kong

To further explain why participants believed that graded music examinations are necessary or not in Hong Kong, qualitative data were collected via an optional openended question to follow up the dichotomous question response. A total of 42 and 22 responses were captured respectively to explain why a graded music examination is necessary or unnecessary. Most respondents reconfirmed their reasons why examinations were taken, such as “gaining proof”.

All responses captured from participants reporting that graded examination is necessary indicated a necessity of taking graded music examinations in relation to the design of the current Hong Kong education system. Explanations related to competitive and abilities approval, based on the educational environment and requirements for school and further education – these were recorded almost in every response. This data suggest that these concerns were widely observed by students, parents and instrumental teachers. There was one instrumental teacher who even reported that,

“Having music graded examination certificates has already become a trend in Hong Kong. Same as studying, you cannot live without it [English translations].”

There were, however, various different foci and contradictions when looking at responses that do not support graded music examination as being necessary in Hong Kong. These were mostly not related to the Hong Kong context, but instead focused on why participants did not consider taking examinations as necessary in general. These include a belief of whether graded examination would affect (or not) the student’s future education or career, whether the child’s goal was music-related or not, and graded examinations failing to develop student’s musical abilities, a comment in particular from instrumental teachers. Whilst some expressed their disagreement with the necessity, they reaffirmed that this was true of the current practice in Hong Kong. Although there were contrasting views and contradictions on the necessity and current function of certification in Hong Kong, it was agreed amongst participants that Hong Kong is an ‘abilities approval based’ society.

Future research

This study sought to understand music educator’s attention to the current instrumental teaching and learning situation in Hong Kong, especially in terms of the use of graded examinations. Although there were some significant findings arising in the current study, the limitations in terms of non-random sampling, small sample size and perhaps unwitting bias must be taken into account when interpreting the results and applying them to practice. A larger sample size would be of benefit in any future research on similar topics. Further research could be undertaken to explore how instrumental teachers and students associated with different teaching and learning contexts might perceive and view instrumental learning and graded examinations, as well as the

possible impacts graded examinations might have on the parent-pupilteacher relationship in Hong Kong.

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Biography

Yee-Ni Tse is currently a PhD candidate at the UCL Institute of Education and an instrumental teacher for over 15 years. Miss Tse is one of the few focusing research on the wider impacts of graded music examinations on the culture of instrumental teaching and learning in Hong Kong.

An investigation of the factors that affect the development and application of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of mathematics PGCE students.

Nikolaos Vlaseros, Dave Hewitt, Paul Hernandez-Martinez

Abstract

For prospective teachers in England, there are many routes to getting a teaching qualification with considerable differences between them. But even within the same route, the experiences of trainee teachers can vary a lot. In this paper, we are presenting early findings of an investigation of trainee teachers' experiences during a mathematics PGCE course offered in the Midlands. This investigation focuses on the prospective teachers' perception of factors that affect application and development of their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) during this course. The terms needed for the investigation (e.g. PCK and its components) are defined and early results from one of the case studies of a trainee mathematics teacher are presented.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) was a term coined by Shulman (1987) in an attempt to define a particular type of knowledge that teachers have but which had not been examined adequately up to that point in time. His original definition for PCK was *"that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding"* (Shulman, 1987, p. 7). The introduction of this term influenced many researchers seeking to identify what teachers need to know to be effective in their profession.

There have been a number of frameworks organizing teachers' knowledge that make use of this term, both general ones and those that are subject-specific. In mathematics education literature we have identified eleven frameworks that have been used in studies of teacher knowledge, eight of which are made for mathematics and three are generic teacher knowledge frameworks (Ball et al., 2008; Escudero et al., 2007; Lannin et al., 2013; An et al., 2004; Baumert et al., 2010; Rowland et al., 2007; Bednarz et al., 2009; Ferrini-Mundi et al., 2005; Shulman, 1987; Grossman, 1990; Cochran et al., 1992). While a complete discussion of all the frameworks is beyond the scope of this paper, I will briefly describe two of the most influential, to provide some context.

The most commonly cited framework in the literature is Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching (MKT) (Ball et al., 2008). In this framework, mathematics teachers' knowledge is split into two parts, Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) and PCK. Each is further divided into three parts as seen in Figure 1, below:

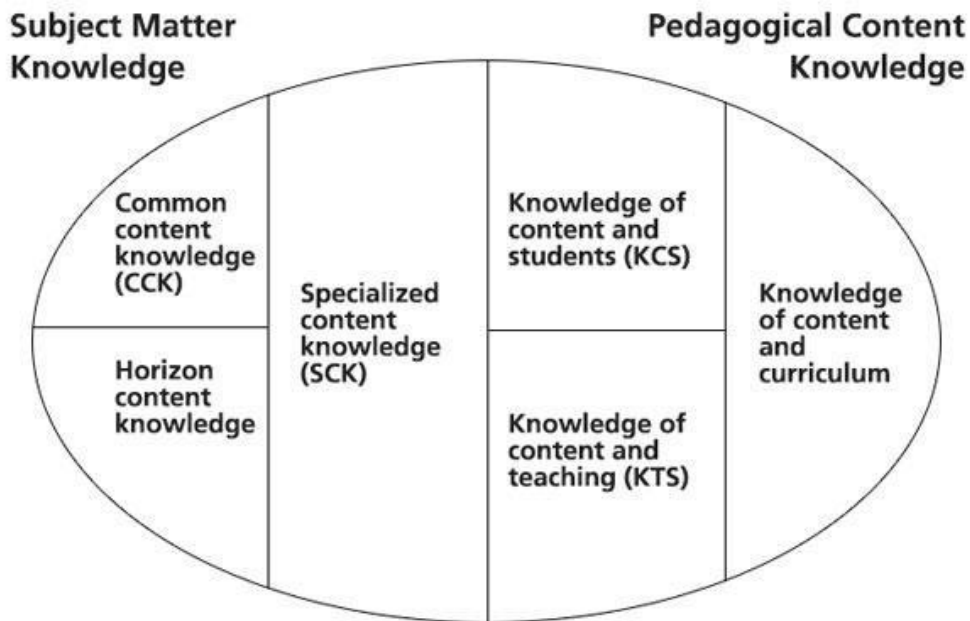


Figure 1: Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching (Ball et al., 2008)

The subcategories in Figure 1 require their own definitions. KCS, for example involves knowing about student misconceptions, what they might find interesting, etc., while SCK is a more complex construct that includes answering “why?” questions, finding good examples, evaluate explanations and other elements.

For comparison, another framework used in the literature is the Network of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (NPCK) (An et al., 2004). In this categorization of knowledge, there are three categories, Content, Curriculum and Teaching. Content knowledge is defined as broad mathematical knowledge on the content to be taught, Curriculum knowledge is about knowing the goals and the materials available and Teaching knowledge contains knowing about student thinking, preparing instruction, etc.

As can be seen from just these two frameworks researchers in this field often categorize teacher knowledge using the same terminology for different elements or group the same components into different categories. In these two frameworks, NPCK includes content knowledge in PCK, while MKT does not; knowledge of students in MKT is its own subcategory, while in NPCK it is part of the knowledge of Teaching, etc.

While there is a complicated picture of what constitutes PCK, Derpaepe et al. (2013) compiled a list of four criteria that most researchers agree should be met when defining the term:

1. PCK connects two forms of knowledge: content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.
2. PCK deals with the teachers’ knowledge necessary to achieve the aims of teaching.

3. PCK is specific to particular subject matter (in this case mathematics).
4. Content knowledge is a prerequisite for PCK.

Using these criteria as a guide, we examined the 11 frameworks used in the literature and I identified the elements in the frameworks that fit this set of criteria, irrespective of if the original authors called them PCK or put them in a PCK category. After this we recorded which of these elements were most commonly used in the frameworks, identifying what the core of the PCK construct was. This investigation led to six distinct components of PCK:

1. Examples: Being able to describe mathematical concepts using appropriate examples.
2. Representations: Being aware of different representations of mathematical ideas and know when to use them.
3. Tasks: Being able to select, evaluate and implement mathematical tasks.
4. Student strategies: Knowing how students might approach a particular subject and what might be their most common strategies and methods.
5. Student errors and misconceptions: Being aware of the most common errors and misconceptions, as well as what students might find hard or easy.
6. Making connections: Knowing how to sequence mathematical tasks and how to plan teaching a concept in an appropriate way, taking into account students' prior knowledge and future requirements.

This framework for PCK is the one we will be referring to in our study.

Context of the study

This study examines the application and development of PCK of trainee teachers in a Midlands university PGCE programme. Five trainee teachers were part of the study for the whole academic year and they were observed and interviewed multiple times. The analysis of the data is ongoing and is done through a grounded theory approach (Corbin et al., 2014).

Methodological considerations

This study is a qualitative study with interviews as the main data collection instrument. This choice was made because the goal of the study is to examine the factors affecting the application of PCK, which is knowledge used in teaching, not how the trainees perform in some PCK measures. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were appropriate as they allowed the trainees to reflect on the choices they made and provide some insight on what affected those choices. Since the study was also tracking the development of PCK, five interviews were scheduled with each of the trainees at critical points in the academic year:

1. The first interview was just as they started the programme with the aim to get their initial positions and background information.

2. The second interview was in their first school placement after observing them teach and was based on that teaching.
3. The third interview was when they returned to the university and was about their first placement and the university course.
4. The fourth interview was similar to the second but held in their second school placement.
5. The fifth and final interview was done just before the PGCE programme ended and dealt with their second placement as a whole and their final views.

The interviews asked the trainees to reflect on their experiences and follow-up questions intended to delve into that experience. After the data collection process, approximately 30 hours of audio were collected which was transcribed and put through software for qualitative analysis. Since the factors that would affect PCK were not known beforehand, a grounded theory approach was selected for the analysis. The analysis is still ongoing and has produced in excess of 500 distinct initial codes for each trainee, which will in later stages be condensed into themes and categories with the goal of providing a theory to describe the experience of applying and developing PCK as a trainee teacher.

Case study: Mike

While the analysis is still in the early stages, some themes have begun to emerge. We will now present these early findings from one of the participants, named Mike (which is, of course, a pseudonym). Mike comes from working in industry and had a degree in mathematics. He liked the subject and had some small experience teaching that he enjoyed, so he decided to become a mathematics teacher. He prides himself on being logical and methodical and would like to bring these qualities into his teaching.

Initial observations

In his initial teaching experiences, Mike fell back to his knowledge and beliefs about teaching mathematics. He produced well-thought lesson plans in a methodical way, always having the goals of the lessons in mind. Still, he faced some difficulties in certain elements of teaching. While he enjoyed having his students explore and question, he was unsure of when he was supposed to stop them investigating and simply provide information so that the lesson would move along. He was also unsure about what the students already knew and often had to find out during the lesson through questioning unless his mentor told him beforehand. A final issue that he faced was that he was unsure of the long-term plan, of how the content he was teaching at the moment would be connected with the later content.

The effect of school culture

One of the very important things that affected Mike's experience as a trainee teacher was the school cultures in the two placements. The two schools were very different. In

his first placement, Mike felt that the school was a chaotic environment with little support. He also had issues with his mentor not letting him use his own materials and having him teach lesson plans prepared by the mentor without adequate guidance. This soon led to a lack of enthusiasm on his part, which in turn led to him not trying as much as he would if he was motivated to find the best examples and provide his best teaching. This situation was radically different in the second placement where he had the freedom to be creative and teach the way he wanted and received useful feedback from the teachers and his mentor.

The effect of university courses

At the start of this study, the Director of the PGCE programme was interviewed with the intention of finding out what the goals of the programme and each of the courses were. Mike showed good awareness of what the university courses were trying to teach him, with his answers often being similar to what the Director had said about them. He also used some concepts from the courses (for example “low threshold, high ceiling” exercises) and he even used some of his limited time to look for research for student misconceptions when he needed to teach something he was not sure about, an idea that came directly from a university assignment. Another important influence of the university was during his first placement, where contact with the university representative during one of his observations mitigated the problems he faced with his mentor, as the representative was able to explain some of the things his mentor asked from Mike, enabling him to understand why they were useful ideas for teaching.

Mathematical content

Before starting his PGCE, Mike was not sure how he would be able to cope with the mathematical content he would need to know for teaching, but soon he felt very comfortable, especially after comparing himself with others in the same programme. This confidence in his mathematical abilities translated to his teaching as well – he often chose examples because he “liked” them and found them mathematically interesting. When he had issues with content they were related to PCK issues. For example, he faced some problems with the terminology used in teaching that he had not encountered before, such as the term “percentage multiplier” that his mentor used and with which he was not familiar. Another example would be questions from students that he would never have thought to have prepared for (for example, “how many vertices are there in a cone?”). There were a number of lessons that he considered “failures” and the reasons that he considered that they did not work out were one of the following:

1. He did not know what the students were supposed to be learning. One example was a lesson where he had them playing with 3D blocks creating some 3D shapes. In this example, he was unsure about how to teach the lesson and during the interviews he admitted not knowing that the learning goals were.
2. He did not know how he should teach them, usually because they were created by his mentor and he could not see how their components worked together.

3. He could not see the importance of the mathematical content. For example, he had trouble teaching simple interest, because he could not find a real-life example where that was useful, while compound interest was much easier for him to prepare for.

Development of PCK There were a few important changes during the academic year in Mike's PCK. Firstly, Mike started by evaluating materials according to his own mathematical knowledge and aesthetics, but, by the end of his training, he started choosing and creating content according to his students' needs and what they would find enjoyable. A second thing that Mike said that he learned was that teaching the same thing in different classes could have very different results and that changing even the smallest detail could make or break a lesson. For example, when teaching rotations, he had some pieces of paper for the students to rotate, which worked well, but when the next time he did it on the smartboard instead of using paper, the students felt lost. A final important change was the time he needed in order to prepare a lesson. In his first placement, he needed a lot of time for each lesson he prepared (he even spent 15 hours on some). This was because of a number of factors, including his lack of enthusiasm at the time; pressure to use material he did not like from the mentor; constant revision of his lesson plan due to mentor feedback and his own inexperience creating lessons. This time was drastically reduced in the second placement, as he had the freedom to use what he liked and his cooperation with the mentor and the school was much improved.

Conclusions

While the analysis of Mike's interviews is ongoing, from the results thus far we can see the importance of school culture and especially the mentor-trainee relationship, as well as the value of the university portion of the training in the teacher training experience. In the case of Mike, both factors affected his application of PCK: he was assisted (or forced) in choosing examples and tasks by the mentors; he investigated student misconceptions in the research as suggested by the university teacher and he often asked the school teachers about prior student knowledge. Possibly his weakest PCK component was making connections, as even by the end of the programme he was unsure about how the different lessons fit together in a consistent curriculum.

This study is still at an early stage and only preliminary results from one participant are available. Still, there are indications from looking at the data that there are complex connections between the application and development of PCK in a PGCE programme and the experiences of the trainee in the university, the schools in which they are placed and their own personalities and prior knowledge. Additionally, early results from the other participants indicate that each has a very different experience, as they start from different positions and encounter very different situations. A complete analysis of all five participants should offer a more complete picture of the connections between PCK and all the factors affecting a trainee in such a programme.

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Biographies

Nikolaos Vlaseros obtained a Bachelor in Mathematics from the University of Athens and a MSc in Mathematics and Science Education from the University of Amsterdam.

After teaching in secondary education he is currently a PhD student and research assistant in Loughborough University, investigating the PCK of trainee teachers.

Dave Hewitt obtained a mathematics degree from Warwick University. After his PGCE, Dave taught 11 years in secondary schools before getting his PhD and working at the University of Birmingham and now Loughborough University running teacher training courses. His research interests include the learning of algebra and use of technology.

Paul Hernandez-Martinez is a senior lecturer in Mathematics Education at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. He is interested in how people teach and learn mathematics at university, and how their backgrounds and social environments help or hinder their attainment and dispositions towards the subject.

Can the use of Socratic critical thinking in healthcare education influence the humanities across disciplines?

Catherine Kelsey

Abstract

Criticism of the nursing profession in recent years has called for nurses to demonstrate humanitarian acts of kindness, compassion and understanding towards patients and to ensure that both physical and psychological needs are recognised and met.

Furthermore the importance of nurses being able to critically reflect and act, a process known as praxis (Freire, 2012) whilst recognising the significance of values, wisdom and rationality in decision making is key to ensuring that social injustice is challenged, enabling the vulnerable, sick and needy to be a key focus of government policy and global reform.

As a conceivable solution, this paper will argue that by introducing Socratic Critical Thinking as Lazenby (2013) purports into nurse education we have the opportunity to empower nursing and interdisciplinary teams to collaborate in a way that positively influences the humanities within health and social care practice. Empowering patients and healthcare professionals alike to ensure social equity prevails.

Introduction

Within nurse education change is all-pervading and once again the profession is ironically set to witness 'the dawn of a new era'. Challenges to professional practice both pre and post-registration and the growing demands placed upon an increasingly global workforce requires nurses to 'take up the gauntlet' and become actively involved in shaping healthcare reform; the aim of which is to move towards social justice and equity for all. Encouragingly the medical humanities is now considered central to nurturing a deeper level of understanding as to how human relationships can be improved (Chiapperino and Boniolo 2014). So, whilst there is evidence to indicate that the medical humanities has continued to grow (Bates and Goodman 2014) and now includes, ethical issues, literature and integrative subjects, the same cannot be said for nursing, perhaps due to the stereotypical view that nurses are caring and therefore such learning is considered redundant (Dellasega et al. 2007). Disappointingly, despite the importance of nurses being able to demonstrate humanitarian acts of kindness and compassion enabling the development of trusting and empathic relationships, there is no clear evidence that the humanities have become a distinct and integral part of nurse education. This miraculously must somehow be built within a curriculum that is already pushed to the limit. In order to create a balance between task theory based learning and the humanities, nurse educationalists must actively seek opportunities to integrate the humanities into nurse education, the aim of which is to encourage nurses to recognise suffering in all its forms, including physical, emotional and social.

Social Suffering

Understanding social suffering argues Plummer (2016) can empower others to demonstrate compassion and provide practical care. Healthcare professionals through the witnessing of social injustice, tragedy and disempowerment must act accordingly and respond without fear not just to individual suffering but also those of populations, communities and society as a whole (Wilkinson and Kleinman, 2016). This can be achieved by nurses empowering patients to tell their stories. The information gained being a valuable catalyst to bring about change.

There is a developing prominence therefore on the use of patient narratives; the challenge being to utilise these in a way that improves both nursing practice and the patient experience (Buckley et al. 2016) and through this process empower patients to create meaning from their experiences (Joyce 2015). For such stories provide a lens through which nurses can begin to gain an understanding of patients' needs and ensure the delivery of safe and effective care that is in harmony with personal experiences and social networks and ultimately promotes recovery (Hall and Powell 2011). Such behaviour argues Joyce (2015) can be particularly valuable in helping to establish good nurse-patient relationships.

Storytelling enables patients to confront their illness and mortality, gives voice to their experiences, makes sense of their suffering and ultimately enables the provision of humane treatment and personalised care (Neeley, n.d.). Stories can create deeper insight into the lived experience including past, present and imagined futures (McAdams, 2007) and requires the nurse to listen with intent; for although considered time-consuming and alien to many, stories told are an intrinsic aspect of what it means to be human (Neeley, n.d.) They provide considerable insight into the importance of effective communication and observational skills, interpretation and understanding within context (Neeley, n.d.) and as Joyce, (2015) purports can also be a useful subject for nursing research.

Storytelling, often entwined with tales of happiness, grief, suffering and unimaginable fear, can encourage the emergence of open expression of emotions, (Woodside, et al. 2008) and can naturally validate events and enable cathartic release (Woodside, 2010). Storytelling can help scaffold learning opportunities and enable nurses to understand how to respond to human experience (McHaffie, 2015).

Opportunities for understanding the importance of story-telling should therefore be a central focus of the humanities and become a fundamental aspect of nurse education. For ultimately the humanities can become a catalyst for healing (An-bang Yu, 2014). Furthermore listening to patients tell their stories can act as a conduit for critical thought improving the likelihood that patients will receive treatment that encourages the delivery of person centred care. Critical thought however requires nurturing and forethought, making it a staple 'diet' of clinical decision making, critical analysis and praxis (Freire, 2012).

The ability to extract and interpret information from a patient's story is considered 'narrative competence' (Divinsky, 2007). As children we have often listened attentively and with anticipation to stories being told; in nursing the same interest must be shown as we listen with intent and in so doing gain an insight and an appreciation of the life stories of others (Robertson and Clegg, 2017). Furthermore Robertson and Clegg,

(2017) opine that the art of storytelling and listening should be central to current medical practice. Arguably this should be no different within the nursing profession.

Nurturing Critical Thought

To be able to effectively develop skills of critical thought, nurses must utilise a Socratic form of critical thinking, which begins with self-examination, principally relating to those personal values and goals that contributes to who we are (Lazenby, 2013). By initiating thought through questions, we are able to promote comprehension, inspire a deeper level of understanding and encourage critical thinking that not only facilitates the recall of important accurate, theoretical, and procedural information but also requires the ability to be able to examine, appraise, and construct (Tofade et al. 2013). To do this however, requires nurses to demonstrate a level of maturity, wisdom and a willingness to think for themselves and move beyond the automatous mechanistic and oppressive landscape of nursing, in which the profession currently resides (Lazenby, 2013).

Nursing Challenges

Today the challenges that surround global health care include a rising demand for healthcare services, increased patient expectations, increased spending on chronic disease and comorbidities; costly new and innovative clinical practices and continued economic uncertainty (Deloitte, 2017). Along with an increasing shortage of nurses this has the potential to be the perfect storm (Merrifield, 2016). In order to reduce some of these challenges there is a need to invest in the education of registered healthcare professionals, including nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and radiographers and to teach advanced skills,(those once considered only the realm of the physician) which have the potential to span the rift between assessment and clinical decision making (Imison et al. 2016). These new and innovative ways of working developed through the necessity of physician shortages have exposed the nursing profession and others alike including paramedics and pharmacists, to a window of opportunity that has witnessed them enhance their skill set, including those of advanced clinical assessment, not only to improve the delivery of patient care but also to enhance future career aspirations.

Change on such a large scale can be considered particularly challenging to a healthcare service that continues to operate under significant financial constraints and where there is considered to be little room for manoeuvre. It is however, just this type of change that is needed if we are to ensure sustainability is maintained between available financial resources and meeting the needs of both patients and staff (Imison et al. 2016)

As with all change, there could be considered a need for caution, for in the mêlée of such change, it is often the patient who becomes the ill-informed recipient of care, becoming a tool for diagnosis rather than the central character in their healing. For care irrespective of time constraints, increased demand for knowledge and skill should be person-centred rather than task focused and should meet the psychological, social and physical needs of the individual (Brooker and Surr, 2010). By developing humanitarian skills of kindness, compassion and listening with intent and taking action to relieve suffering and maintain human dignity, nurses are in a unique position every day to demonstrate why they should still be considered 'the caring profession'.

Humanitarian Skills

The importance of developing and demonstrating humanitarian skills therefore is a crucial aspect of nurses and advancing healthcare practitioners, for it is important that we don't return to the days of 'the patient in bed number 3' where we as nurses failed to understand the importance of getting to know the patient as a human being rather than simply a number or a diagnosis.

Nonetheless, despite the clear intentions of educationalists to maintain a balance between teaching the task focused skills required and the importance of understanding the impact of compassionate care, these humanitarian skills appear to have taken second place to curriculums that are densely task focused, with the psychological and social needs of patients often being left behind. Such a dilemma however is not resolute, and all educationalists, who operate within the clinical field can and should take every opportunity to explore the humanities within the context of their teaching. For it could be argued that many of the skills that make up the humanities, such as compassion, care and courage, as clearly stated in the 6Cs, a set of values that underpin Compassion in practice (DoH, 2012), are as relevant today as they have always been. This strategy is now firmly immersed within nurse education and therefore it would be appropriate to believe that other aspects of the humanities such as reflection and action made famous by the work of Paulo Freire (2012) could also be integrated into an already crammed curriculum.

Nurses must utilise these values not simply as a means of ensuring high quality patient care but in response to a global society that fails to put healthcare needs first, provide adequate housing, eliminate domestic violence and take action to destroy the oppressive structures upon which these are built; a term coined by Johan Galtung (1969) as structural violence.

Structural Violence

Structural violence (Galtung, 1969) relates to the ways in which social structures and social institution may limit the ability of people to meet their full expectations and lead a happy and fulfilled life. Such structures considered to be, social relations, economic, political, legal, religious or cultural, dictate how people interact with others and lead their lives (Rylko-Bauer and Farmer, 2016). Although these may be controlled for example by governments, institutions, organisations, religious and cultural groups, society as a whole must take some responsibility for their behaviours towards others. For instance, a recent phenomenon is the insidious nature in which we frequently reference the increasing costs of ageing, for healthcare costs increase exponentially within an ageing population and yet, public health policies have actually achieved what it meant to, which is to support people to live longer. This phenomenon must therefore be managed with both understanding and compassion and action taken to enable elderly patients to live their lives within a culture of respect and compassion.

Praxis

The importance of creating space, in which patients are able to tell their stories, should be considered an important aspect of nursing practice. For, narrative "can offer the kind of contextual richness that creates and nurtures empathy" (Krisberg, 2017). Nurses can and should be taught how to become humanitarian practitioners by

adopting a process of 'communicative rationality', (Habermas, 2004) a paradigm through which we can identify patients concerns and in so doing, nurture the deeply meaningful relationships that empower nurses to critically reflect upon a given situation and act.

This is not the whole story however, for to be able to care for patients of today, nurses must see themselves as global citizens and through this ideology seek to rise above their personal histories, experiences and beliefs, in order to care for those in need, wherever they may live in the world (Lazenby, 2013). Developing the skills of 'communicative rationality' (Habermas, 2004) may just help us to achieve this.

Global Nursing and Global Health

The doctrine of global nursing is beginning to climb greater heights. Following on from an All Parliamentary Group Committee meeting chaired by Lord Nigel Crisp, nursing is now being recognised as a truly global entity, the aim of which is to encourage healthcare professionals across the globe to seek out ways in which we can contribute to the provision of healthcare world-wide. Through the Nursing Now! Campaign, (Crisp, 2017) nurses can work collaboratively to empower women globally, promote the delivery of universal healthcare and encourage the development of local economies; three of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) (UN, n.d.).

Nurses must also seek to understand the complex issues that surround structural violence, for the doctrine of global nursing represents a paradigmatic shift in the way in which we should see our roles as nurses and is connected by a myriad of structures including, social political, culturally, spiritually and religious (Crigger, 2008) many of which keep people oppressed and without hope.

Those concerned with the magnitude of global health issues have sought to uncover a plethora of problems, from global warming and terrorism to emerging infectious diseases, human trafficking, gender oppression, maternal health, social injustice and the existence of health disparities (Edmonson et al. 2017). Working towards global health therefore requires global nurses.

Conclusion

Almost a century ago Tagore (1930, cited in Lazenby, 2013, e13) proposed that the only way in which humanity can make progress and to achieve the aims of a global age is to develop inclusive sympathy. By introducing Socratic critical thinking as Lazenby (2013) purports into nurse education we empower nurses to examine themselves in the context of care provision and encourage them to embrace both the art and science of nursing and in so doing encourage compassion and sympathy towards others. Sympathy is an essential construct that allows people 'to see the world through another person's eyes' (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 96). It is simply what makes us human.

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Biography

My name is Catherine Kelsey and since 2001 I have developed a career in public health nursing and more recently as a nurse educationalist. My commitment to nursing has led to being conferred the Queen's Nurse Award and becoming a member of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International.