Centre for Research in **Inclusion**

7: Spring 2020

SPEAKERS AT THE SELF-BUILDING OUR LIVES EVENT SHARING KEY MESSAGES

About us

The Centre for Research in Inclusion (CRI) in the Education School at the University of Southampton is committed to internationally significant research towards the inclusion of children, adults, families, and practitioners in education. We work with a strong network of collaborators in research that addresses inclusion and engages with the needs of participants and research users. CRI is unusual in working with teachers, young people, disabled and other marginalised groups to carry out the research. See our Centre for Research in Inclusion video [https://tinyurl.com/yc28fpur].

CRI News
CRI Prizes

A proud Professor Melanie Nind was awarded an honorary doctorate at VID Sandnes, Norway during the special occasion of the 50th anniversary of their social education provision. Melanie has been working with researchers across Norway to support the development of their inclusive research network of academics working with people with learning disabilities on researching together for better lives. Melanie was also interviewed for TVBra, a television channel by and for people with learning disabilities.

Melanie Nind receiving her honorary doctorate

Professor Kiki Messiou was awarded winner of the best paper in the Inclusive Education Special Interest Group stream of the most recent British Educational Research Association conference. Her paper was entitled 'Reaching out to all children through dialogues in schools'. This year's conference will be in Liverpool and CRI will be hoping for more prizes!

Doctoral researcher Sadhbh O'Dwyer devised a theory workshop on a tombola theme for the Association for Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE). Participants win 'prizes' such as a Bourdieu Habitus mug and then learn about the theory associated with each prize. Dyslexia specialists have little opportunity to engage with the sociology of education and this is an accessible way to introduce practitioners to the work of Freire, Sen, hooks and Bourdieu.

Paul Barnes, University of Sheffield, delighted with his Bourdieu habitus mug celebrates with Sadhbh

Other CRI News
At the start of the year, CRI's Dr Sarah Lewthwaite, UKRI Future Leaders Fellow and PI on the Teaching Accessibility project, was promoted to Senior Research Fellow. She has also become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) in recognition of her work in digital accessibility education. Sarah and Angharad Butler-Rees were recorded in conversation for the #AXSchat podcast and video series, ahead of a UK/US

Twitter Chat focussed on accessibility professionals' experiences of teaching and learning accessibility as novices and experts. See:

- Video (subtitled): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCTooEsDp-E

- Podcast: https://www.buzzsprout.com/719037/2683279-axschat-podcast-with-sarah-lewthwaite-angharad-butler-rees-from-university-of-southampton

The CRI way

One of the distinctive things about the Centre for Research in Inclusion is the way in which we work with partners in schools and communities to ensure that our research makes an impact in areas of concern to them and benefits them. This is why we have ACoRNS (Autism Community Research Network @ Southampton) and SPIRIT (Southampton Platform for Inclusive Research and Ideas Together). We are always working to make an impact on the educational and everyday lives of the children and adults we work with.

Rocket artist providing graphic illustrations of the Self-Building Our lives Event

Both the ACoRNS and SPIRIT teams recently put on events as part of the Festival of Social Science, one at Richard Taunton College and one at Eastleigh College. The collaborative events supported students and colleagues from schools, organisations, and families in understanding the findings from our research. For ACoRNS this meant sharing some of the outcomes from the Froebel Trust funded Digital Stories project, which is already making a difference to the transition practices of

young autistic children. For SPIRIT it enabled health and social care students to appreciate aspects of the lives of people with learning disabilities (see the project website Self-BuildingOurLives.org).

ACoRNS has been recognised in the Autism Education Trust's recently published.

The work of Professor Sarah Parsons and ACoRNS has been recognised in the Autism Education Trust's recently published Good Autism Practice Guidance. Here we see the collaborative model of ACoRNS promoted as a means of connecting research and practice. Similarly, the Resource Packs produced by Dr Andy Coverdale for Self-buildingOurLives.org combine key findings with ideas for what more can be done to support people with the building blocks of managing and learning in the community. Both projects have won the Impact Acceleration Award to enable them to continue to work collaboratively to ensure that core messages are produced and shared in co-productive ways.

The influence of ACoRNS is expanding with a new Pan-Sussex Autism Schools Network connecting with the Pan-London Autism Schools Network-Research (of which Sarah Parsons was a founding member). Sarah particularly values these networks in building an autism education evidence base in a way that is close to practice. ACoRNS members have also contributed to a Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology briefing on autism providing an overview of current policy for autistic

children, young people and their families and the issues that they face.

CRI members will be sharing a lot of this work at the ISEC 2020 conference in London in the summer. The main theme of the conference is closing the research to practice gap which is a great match for work in the Centre. It provides an opportunity for knowledge exchange and, as one of the papers by Sarah and colleagues will argue, to advocate for research and practice that are jointly constructed and mutually informing. This ethos underpinned the Self-building Our Lives impact event in which people with learning disabilities took part as advisors, speakers, delegates and artists.

Speakers enjoying the main stage at the Self-Building Our Lives event in London

Open access papers

Lewthwaite, S. & James, A. (2020) Accessible at last? What do new European digital accessibility laws mean for disabled people in the UK? published in *Disability & Society* and featured in Issue 6 of our newsletter is available open access at https://teachingaccessibility.ac.uk/publications/

Science Magazine featured Sarah Lewthwaite's perspective on developing inclusive research teams in the January Issue, as part of a series of articles on disability inclusion in science careers. See: https://www.sciencemag.org/features/2020/01/inclusivity-all-how-make-your-research-group-accessible

New papers from CRI – research synopses

The CRI newsletter has traditionally publicised the open access publications of its members. This allows readers to download papers without needing to have access to a university library. We are now expanding the newsletter so that you can also read a short synopsis of other CRI research. Just get in touch with the authors if you would like the full paper.

Zilli, C., Parsons, S. & Kovshoff, H. (2019) Keys to engagement: A case study exploring the participation of autistic pupils in educational decision-making at school. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12331

Education policy in England says that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities have the right to be involved in decisions about their education. However, sometimes children's views are not included because people think that it is too difficult to find out what children know. For example, some people say that autistic children's views are 'too hard to reach'. We wanted to challenge this view in this project.

Four autistic male pupils aged 11-15 years and 11 staff members from a special school took part. We wanted to find out:

- where the pupils felt they were listened to at school;
- what choices and decisions they made about their education;
- and what teachers do to support them.

The pupils took photographs on an iPad of people and places at the school where they felt listened to. The photos helped the pupils to talk about the choices that they made at school. Chantelle (the researcher) also spent a lot of time in the school with the pupils to get to know them. This helped the students to feel comfortable talking to her about school.

We talked to teachers about how they support pupils to make decisions about what happens in the classroom. Sometimes decisions were also made about things that happened outside of the classroom, for example clubs at lunch time or after school.

We found out some important things from the pupils and teachers about how decision-making and listening are supported:

- Respecting each other
- Senior school staff being available to talk to and to listen to what is said
- Senior school staff acting on what has been said
- Having clear options to choose from
- Being flexible about teaching timetables
- Offering some choices about topics to study
- Getting to know pupils' special interests
- Using special interests to encourage pupils to learn.

These are helpful ideas that any school could use to support the learning and decision-making of pupils.

Croydon, A., Remington, A., Kenny, L. & and Pellicano, E. (2019) "This is what we've always wanted": Perspectives on young autistic people's transition from special school to mainstream satellite classes. *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, https://doi.org/10.1177/2396941519886475

According to parents, teachers and policymakers alike, including autistic children and young people in mainstream schools is notoriously difficult – especially so for the significant minority of young people on the autism spectrum with additional intellectual, communication and behavioural needs. The current study sought to understand the perceived impact of one particular, emerging model of education, in which selected students from special schools are transferred to dedicated 'satellite' classes in local,

mainstream partner schools, while continuing to receive the tailored curriculum and specialist teaching of the originating school.

We conducted interviews with 19 London-based autistic young people, their parents/carers and teachers to understand their experiences of transitioning from specialist to satellite mainstream provision.

Participants overwhelmingly welcomed the prospect of transition and its perceived benefits in the short and longer term. Young people and families celebrated achieving access to 'more normal places and things', 'seeing what others are doing', and greater autonomy, without losing the trusted expert support of their former special school. Young people also felt a deep sense of belonging to their new mainstream school, despite only being minimally included in regular mainstream classes and activities. Teachers were equally positive and felt that their students had responded to higher expectations in their new mainstream schools, reportedly resulting in better behavioural regulation and more sustained attention in the classroom.

The strikingly positive evaluations provided by all participants suggest that this satellite model of education might have advantages for young autistic people with additional intellectual disability, when appropriate support extends across transition and beyond. These findings shed light on the experiences of an under-researched group of autistic students and a specific model of education – following a needs-based perspective on inclusion – that seeks to extend their participation in local schools. The implications are that future research should examine the potential effects of satellite classrooms on the knowledge of, and attitudes toward, autism in non-autistic mainstream peers.

CRI welcomes international visitor from USA

Sue Carpenter, City University of New York

Sue Carpenter, centre, with students and staff at the Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Trinity College Dublin

Sue is on sabbatical for one year from City University of New York. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Behavioral Science's Education Program at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn - part of the City University of New York. She co-ordinates the arts in education courses, teaches a special education/disability studies course and facilitates a Faculty Interest Group on inclusion. She is also co-chair of the *CUNY Unlimited*, a four-year meaningful credential for students with learning disabilities (termed intellectual disabilities in the USA) to access and contribute to the University.

CUNY Unlimited in New York gives students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to contribute to the university by auditing undergraduate courses (supported by a mentor) as well as attending self-advocacy and independence skills courses (the latter being co-taught by alumni of the program). Sue has documented how including students with intellectual disabilities in her arts courses has enriched the courses, and both the *CU* students and undergraduate student teachers have stated that they have benefitted greatly from the inclusive learning environment.

While on sabbatical in Hampshire (where she grew up) Sue is exploring ways the UK might follow suit with the USA and Europe by offering access to higher education for students with learning disabilities. Six months into the sabbatical, she has had the opportunity to visit, and engage in informal communication networking and has

been measuring the climate of opinion with colleagues involved in Disability Studies and inclusion and with students and young people. Those engaged in the conversation include colleagues at Leeds, Iceland and Salzburg universities and students and staff at Trinity College Dublin and closer to home, with students attending Brockenhurst College's Foundation Studies Programme and members of Mencap's New Forest *Gateway Club*. Valuable input and insights have also been given from colleagues in the Psychology Department at Portsmouth University, at Winchester University's Centre for Philosophy and Education and here at the University of Southampton's Centre for Research in Inclusion.

At Trinity College Dublin's Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities Sue led an inclusive workshop for students and staff on *How to use music to connect in the classroom and beyond*. TCD has an innovative programme for students with intellectual disabilities that has seen encouraging results regarding future employment for their graduates.

Sue has enjoyed and appreciated the collegiality at CRI, and through connections made at the Centre has presented on *The contributions and inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in higher education in the USA and Europe* for CRI and attended the *Self-building our Lives* National Social Care Research Event in London where she linked up with an artist from *Rocket Artists* in Brighton. Sue also presented for West Hampshire Professional

Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) at Solent University, and led a *Booster* session for the PGCE secondary programme here on *How to include, build confidence in and engage ALL students.*

Upcoming, Sue will be presenting on her findings at CUNY's 3rd *Neurodiversity Conference* and at the *European State-Of-The-Art Congress on Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Programmes for Students with Intellectual Disabilities* at Salzburg University. Further information on Sue's work will be featured in the chapter *Ventures and Experience* in the forthcoming publication *Diversity-based teacher- and pedagogues-education in research and practice - Utopias, claims and challenges* published in Germany by Budrich.

Models of programmes in Universities for students with intellectual disabilities in Europe and the USA vary greatly. Programmes in the USA are fast growing - from 25 in 2014 to 272 in 2019. In Europe programmes are also expanding. As to whether Universities will follow suit or whether such programmes are wanted or needed (and financially viable) here in the UK, and how to successfully advocate and develop them – those are the burning questions!

Sue would be glad to discuss her research and work with young people and colleagues. She can be contacted at scarpenter@kbcc.cuny.edu

CRI website: https://www.southampton.ac.uk/education/research/centres/centre-for-research-in-inclusion.page