



Centre for Research in Inclusion

10: Spring 2021

PICTURED ABOVE: THE INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION (IHE) ADVOCACY GROUP

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) [<https://tinyurl.com/yc28fpur>].

CRI News

Grant success

[Professor Sarah Parsons](#) and [Dr Hanna Kovshoff](#) have been awarded **£135k** funding from the ESRC as part of a call for projects to develop **innovative methods**. 'Our Stories...': co-constructing Digital Storytelling methodologies for supporting the transitions of autistic children' is a collaboration with [Professor Nicola Yuill](#) at the University of Sussex, and local community partners. This project

extends a participatory Digital Storytelling methodology to explore the challenge of gathering a range of views from autistic children, families, and practice in authentic ways. Digital Storytelling is an accessible and inclusive methodology that supports the sharing of views and experiences in visual, video form. The project starts in February 2021 and runs for 12 months.

New colleagues



Dr Asha Ward and Sarah Horton

CRI welcomes Dr Asha Ward and [Sarah Horton](#). Asha joins the *Our Stories* project as Research Fellow. She recently completed her EngD at Bournemouth University on utilising action research to develop a technological toolkit to facilitate access to music-making. Her work focuses on using participatory design methods to create bespoke technology-based systems through combinations of hardware,

software, and tangible objects. She is passionate about finding new and interesting ways to interact with the computer and how these can be used to benefit humans.

Sarah Horton joins [Dr Sarah Lewthwaite](#) and [Dr Andy Coverdale](#) on the [Teaching Accessibility in the Digital Skill Set](#) research team. Sarah began as a designer and developer in 1991 at Yale University, making instructional CD-ROMs on cardiothoracic imaging. She was an instructional technologist at Dartmouth College, helping faculty across disciplines use technology to teach. Later she worked at the institutional level, as web director at Dartmouth and then strategy lead on Harvard University's web transformation project.

The [Teaching Accessibility in the Digital Skill Set](#) project benefits from Sarah's interest in accessibility, which grew as a natural extension of a user-centered design practice. Access to technology can minimise or eliminate barriers for disabled people, but technology built without accessibility can cause exclusion. Recognising its potential and risks, Sarah became a champion of accessibility as part of technology

professionalism. As an accessibility engineer, Sarah has performed design reviews and audits of websites, applications, apps, and devices, and conducted user research and usability studies. She was lead for The Paciello Group's strategy services, providing strategic consulting to teams and organizations seeking to incorporate accessibility into culture and practice and she has worked with a broad range of companies and organizations, gaining insights into how accessibility is currently managed and manifested in our digital world.

To be effective, attention to accessibility must be shared among everyone who designs, builds, and uses technology. One clear challenge is a lack of knowledge and skills to successfully meet accessibility responsibilities. Many people in these roles have not been taught about accessibility in their education or professional programs. CRI's Teaching Accessibility in the Digital Skill Set study aims to address this gap. Look out for news from the project in the Summer newsletter.

New paper from CRI - Research synopsis

Marta Cristina Azaola (2021) Social fragmentation and the public-private school divide: the case of high-achieving high schools in Mexico City. Globalisation, Societies and Education.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2021.1878011>

We live in a polarised world and Mexico is no exception. Drawing on data from semi-structured interviews, this paper explores views on social fragmentation amongst participants from public and private high-achieving high schools in Mexico City. While issues relating to social fragmentation have recently received more attention in Mexico, there is a lack of research in relation to the existing divisions amongst both school types. The paper exposes some of the implications of the public-private school divide for achieving social cohesion. The findings show many barriers for social interaction amongst different school

types, such as students' lack of knowledge and awareness about the country's rich cultural diversity. However, the study also found some opportunities for an open discussion about the historic social fragmentation. For example, many students mentioned the right of all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, to receive education of good quality and many were aware of the current social inequalities prevailing in Mexico. Given that current opportunities of shared learning across institutions are scarce and inconsistent, the study proposes allowing interaction across different school types amongst students from different socioeconomic backgrounds who would otherwise not be able to meet. The purpose is to allow collective learning as equals. Similar initiatives of shared learning between students from very different backgrounds and with dissimilar educational attainment have been implemented across Arab and Jewish schools in Israel. Although the paper focuses on a particular context, the public-private divide in education and the prevalent negative perception of public education exist in many different contexts around the world so the study makes a call for further research in this area.

New Research Reports

On- and off-the-job training in Apprenticeships in England

In the context of recent reforms aimed at enhancing the quality of apprenticeships in England, the Gatsby Foundation commissioned two research projects that together examined the quality of the two main elements of apprenticeship: on- and off-the-job training:

- *On-the-job training in apprenticeship in England* by [Dr Michaela Brockmann](#) and Ian Laurie at the Centre for Research in Inclusion, University of Southampton
- *The factors affecting the quality of the 'off-the-job' element of apprenticeships in the West Midlands region* by Rob Smith and Vanessa Cui at Birmingham City University.

The report presents the findings of the two studies, both of which adopted a case study approach based on interviews with employers and apprentices across a range of sectors.



The report On- and off-the-job Training in Apprenticeships in England was published on 5 February 2021

Many employers in the research (those in the traditional sectors, such as engineering) offered high-quality apprenticeships, where comprehensive on- and off-the-job training was designed to develop apprentices' occupational competence. The employer role was critical in ensuring a carefully integrated approach and in providing extensive on-the-job training that was carefully integrated with the off-the-job element.

At the other end of the spectrum, the research identified employers (commonly in the service sector) whose engagement with and understanding of apprenticeship went counter the idea of a gradual development of expertise in a community of practice. Apprentices were commonly regarded as fully-fledged workers rather than learners. They received little training in the workplace, whilst the apprenticeship was referred to only as the off-the-job element (20% of their contracted working hours). These employers relied on training providers to deliver the apprenticeship whilst there was a lack of appreciation of the importance of their own role in providing quality training. The onus of completing the apprenticeship was on the apprentices, who struggled to complete the off-the-job training in pressurised work environments.

The researchers recommend that an apprenticeship be based on comprehensive on- and off-the-job training, extending to 100% of an

apprentice's working hours, and question whether the low-cost/low-skills approach by some employers should be funded under the apprenticeship programme.

The report *On- and off-the-job Training in Apprenticeships in England* was published on 5 February 2021 and is available on the Gatsby website: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/latest/employers-attitudes-to-training-critical-to-delivering-a-world-class-apprenticeship-system>

Formation of the 'Inclusion in Higher Education UK Advocacy Group' (IHE, UK)

[Dr Sue Carpenter](#) spent her sabbatical from the City University of New York (where she teaches arts in education and disability studies courses in the Education Program in the Department of Behavioral Sciences) exploring programmes in Europe and the UK in higher education for students with learning (intellectual) disabilities. There are programmes running (although mostly online at the moment) in Austria, Ireland, Iceland, Germany and being planned in Norway. Although there are opportunities to be involved in research in the UK (as in the [Self-building our lives](#) collaborative research project featured in previous CRI newsletters), currently there are no opportunities for students with learning disabilities to attend and contribute to the learning environment of a university in the UK.

There are provisions in further education for students up to age 25 years with learning disabilities to attend a college. There are also over 100 colleges that are part of the National Association of Special Education Colleges that are not yet inclusive. There were programmes and provisions run by The Open University in the 1980s and 90s which sadly are no longer running or funded.

So, in January 2021 Sue formed the Inclusion in Higher Education (IHE) UK Advocacy group. The group includes: faculty, students with learning disabilities, administrators, disability advocates and parents from the UK, USA, Ireland, Greece, Norway and

Iceland. The first meeting was held on 18 January, Martin Luther King Day - a public holiday in the USA, an appropriate day to be advocating for a civil rights issue.

The mission of the IHE includes: to advocate for students with learning disabilities of any age to have a choice to have access to a University, and the ability to enrich and contribute to that learning environment. It is also to raise awareness of the inequality in higher education in the UK and draw attention to the fact that matriculating students within a university are missing out by not having the opportunity to engage with their peers with learning disabilities.

For further information about the group and or if would like to join please contact Sue at scarpenter@kbcc.cuny.edu.

An online, international inclusive music outreach project

[Dr Sue Carpenter](#) - an arts educator at City University of New York (CUNY) and Visiting Research Fellow with CRI remained in the New Forest 'sheltering in place' once her sabbatical from CUNY finished in 2020. She continues teaching online with trainee teachers in the first or second year of their degree in Brooklyn. Maintaining her involvement with CRI, Sue initiated a collaboration and inclusive online music outreach project with Dr Ceri Edwards-Hawthorne, a former doctoral researcher from Southampton University who now teaches at Sheiling College, Ringwood. Sheiling College provides education for students with severe or complex learning disabilities and is part of the National Association of Special Education Colleges.



Music outreach session on Zoom!

Ceri was eager to expand inclusion opportunities for her students including those who are pre-verbal. This was an opportunity for her students to connect with peers through music via Zoom and Sue wanted the trainee teachers to experience this particular approach to inclusive community music-making. Sue trained in music outreach in the Music Engagement Program with Susan West PhD at the Australian National University.

The philosophy of the outreach is based on the work of John Diamond MD. It emphasises the social outcomes and connections that can be made through music. Ordinarily in a music outreach, participants are encouraged to make eye contact, take each other's hands, singing for and with others. The former was not possible via Zoom! But even online, through the vehicle of singing, connections were made between the students and staff at Sheiling College and trainee teachers in Brooklyn. When they 'meet' on a Wednesday afternoon the repertoire used includes folk and Tin Pan Alley songs like 'Daisy Bell' and 'You are my sunshine'.

Ceri commented that there was an 'aha' moment when one of her students realised she was being personally addressed via the big screen in their classroom – it was not just a video! Importantly, support staff also participated. The trainee teachers in Brooklyn appeared to really enjoy meeting students from the UK and commented on the enthusiasm and energy in their classroom. One of the enthusiastic participants from Brooklyn is a student on the autistic spectrum with an intellectual disability, who is part of the Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program. The project continues and will expand over the Spring semester.



Adapting participatory research methods during Covid-19

Story by Andy Coverdale. Image: Chris Montgomery

[Professor Melanie Nind](#) and [Dr Andy Coverdale](#), alongside [Dr Robert Meckin](#) (University of Manchester), are completing a short ESRC-funded project for the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM). The *Changing Research Practice: Undertaking social science research in the context of Covid-19* project has combined rapid evidence review with a series of online knowledge exchange workshops. Here, Andy highlights examples of how methods have been adapted and adopted, particularly in relation to inclusive and participatory research.

Social researchers, many working with some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised communities that have been most adversely affected by the pandemic, have faced the dilemma of continuing or postponing their research. Constraints on contact and travel have particularly affected participatory research, denying opportunities for the face-to-face engagement that help establish trust and collaborative relationships. While some researchers have used the opportunity to pause and reflect, others have had to respond quickly, and be creative and innovative in adapting their methods.

The shift to online has enabled interviews and focus groups to continue, albeit with challenges and limitations. The pandemic has highlighted familiar concerns around inequalities in digital access, but specific participatory and communicative features of digital technologies can also potentially limit engagement, as well as restrict inclusionary gestures such as small talk

and interpreting and responding to body language ([Braun et al., 2020](#)).

We have seen examples where social researchers have explored and adopted remote participatory methods, entrusting participants with greater independence and responsibilities. [Gratton et al. \(2020\)](#) for example replaced face-to-face meetings with telephone interviews and group video calls, but also introduced creative remote methods including the use of photographs, blogs, diaries, poems, podcasts, and even a lockdown recipe book! [Olimpia Mosteanu](#) explored cognitive mapping in her place-based research, connecting participants' drawings, maps and photos with discussions about their local community. The web has also enabled several examples of collaborative, globally dispersed participatory projects, such as the sharing of creative diary writing and photos around crafting ([Clarke & Watson, 2020](#)), promoting connectivity and rapport between participants.

Participatory methods such as diaries, reflective writing and photo-elicitation have been [therapeutic, promoting wellbeing](#) and giving participants [a sense of purpose](#). After turning to digital storytelling and diary writing for their research with young people in the Middle East, [Jones et al. \(2020\)](#) suggest their participants' benefited from a space for self-expression.

For some, participatory approaches during the pandemic have corresponded with collectivist and feminist ideas that also recognise the wellbeing of

researchers, promoting the idea 'that we are all connected, dependent on, and responsible to, each other' ([Ravitch, 2020](#)). In her participatory action research project with migrant women in Medellín, [Sonja Marzi](#) and colleagues shared their own video diaries, to demonstrate the process, to provide training in the technology, and to emphasise the collaborative relationship with their participants through the shared experiences of lockdown.

The pandemic has also highlighted the role of gatekeepers and local contacts in maintaining or re-establishing relations with communities. Having abandoned their original interviews and observations, [Goldstein et al. \(2020\)](#) faced the challenge of conducting ethnographic research remotely with homeless youths in São Paulo without internet access. Here, close collaboration with a community co-operative to distribute disposable cameras and mobile phones for self-recorded journaling is critical to capture their experiences during the pandemic.

As we approach the 'long-tail' of the pandemic and the expected easing of restrictions, researchers will have to continue to negotiate fluctuations, perhaps mixing remote with tentative, safe in-person methods such as walking methods. Meanwhile, project reports and resources, including wayfinder guides, reading and resource lists, and recordings and presentations from two webinars are available on the NCRM website at <https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/socsci/covid19/>.