



Scottish Pedagogies of Educational Transitions
Transitions as a Tool for Change



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

Transitions as a Tool for Change Conference Programme

University of Strathclyde
Glasgow, Scotland
Tuesday 7th May 2019
Wednesday 8th May 2019

Early childhood and family transitions influence children's day-to-day experiences and may have an impact in the longer term. Transitions have become a way of life: for young children the first transitions may be in and out of care and early learning settings beyond the family and later into early primary school.

Following our original Seminar Series and Succeeding Against the Odds Conference we have been working on themes of participation, opportunities, expectations, entitlements and aspirations in relation to early childhood experience before and after school start. Family engagement, learning journeys and leadership around transitions each make a contribution to supporting children to cope with change and future transitions.

Day 1 will focus strongly on research into transitions, with priority given to presenters selected from the Call for Papers, while the potential of an organisational, practitioner and policy focus on transitions to bring about change for children and families will be the focus for Day 2 of the conference.

Conference Aims

- To look at the opportunities, expectations and aspirations of early educators, children and families at times of transition
- To understand children's learning journeys, attainment and learning outcomes and the contribution of positive transitions
- To consider children's entitlements at times of transition
- To analyse early educators' beliefs and practices around transitions, and the contribution of transitions leadership to children's and families' experiences
- To interrogate the extent to which early years transitions and transitions to school provide new opportunities for family participation and professional engagement together.

By focusing on transitions as tools for change an increased focus on children's learning journeys helps to ensure approaches that foster well-being and the agency of children to influence what happens for them, bringing about thoughtful reflection on existing approaches, to change our beliefs and practices in children's favour so supporting the child's journey. Shifts and change in adult practices, relational agency between a range of practitioners and between different sectors, and engagement of and with parents, enable the re-framing of transitions as positive opportunities, which become tools to influence the experience of the child.

Day 1 - Tuesday 7th May 2019

The Senate Suite, University of Strathclyde, Richmond Street, Glasgow

Transitions as a Tool for Change: Relating research to impact on policy and practices

9:30	Registration and Coffee
10.00	Researching Transitions in Early Childhood: What and Why? Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop, University of Strathclyde Chair: Dr Marion Burns, University of Strathclyde In this opening presentation Aline-Wendy will present an overview of early childhood transitions research to date and consider why after 50 years there continue to be many transitions issues to resolve. Looking positively at transitions as tools for change allows positive connections between research, policy and practices.
10.30	Research Methodologies and Methods for Transitions: some thoughts. Sally Peters, Associate Professor, Head of School, Te Oranga School of Human Development and Counselling, University of Waikato, New Zealand. Chair: Siân Neil, Senior Education Officer - Children and Families, Education Scotland This conference looks closely at transitions as a tool for change. National and international research agendas have led to increased attention to children's learning journeys and the complex interactions that shape these pathways. As we re-frame transitions to focus on positive opportunities to influence the experiences of children and the adults in their lives, we look for research approaches that help us understand the complexities for all involved. This presentation provides some thoughts on choosing from the breadth of research methodologies and methods and highlights some of the interesting dilemmas and challenges of transitions research in diverse communities. Sometimes getting it wrong can open possibilities for greater insights.
11.00	Open Discussion , Coffee, Fruit, Pastries
11.30	Parallel Research Presentations
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Parallel Research Presentations
15.30	Look Who's Talking: eight principles for eliciting voice with young children: Professor Kate Wall, University of Strathclyde. Chair: Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop, University of Strathclyde If we are to foster children and young people's democratic skills, dispositions and understanding, then we need to develop practices that support this from the earliest age. I will offer a series of factors for consideration when working democratically with very young children – those under seven – in facilitating their voices. Grounded in the work around children's rights, the factors are explored more widely to propose a series of questions designed to support practitioners in advancing children's voices.
16.00	Open Discussion : Research, Policy and Practice Issues, Coffee, Fruit, Cake followed by drinks reception.



Day 2 - Wednesday 8th May 2019

Technology and Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde, George Street, Glasgow Transitions as a Tool for Change Bringing Together Research, Policy and Practices

9:30	Registration and Coffee
9:50	Welcome Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop Launch of the Scottish Early Childhood Children and Families Transitions Position Statement
10.15	Transforming our education systems: the potential of early childhood education and care. Dr Nora Milotay, Policy Analyst (Education, Social and Employment Policy), European Parliament

Chair: Heather Douglas: Early Years Manager, City of Glasgow Council

In our increasingly globalised and connected world new demands are put on the education systems: ranging from providing universal access to addressing the very diverse populations, including helping each and everyone to achieve good outcomes. Simultaneously, there is a general understanding that early learning has long-standing positive effects on children's lives. Being partly or completely outside the formal education systems, early years services have a great potential for experimenting with innovative methods of instruction and models of delivery of services. In this context the presentation will look into recent European policy work carried out in the field of early childhood education and care. This opened up avenues to reflect on achieving systemic change in the education systems to address some of the new demands. Central to this reflection was the idea of a 'competent system' in which individual, institutional and inter-institutional competencies equally matter. Such a system can accommodate innovation that can, in turn, lead to systemic change in the education systems

11.15	Open Discussion, Coffee, Fruit, Pastries
11:45	Keynote Seminars

Keynote Seminar 1: Children starting school: the role of the teacher in planning and delivering their entitlement to play as pedagogy in P1 Dr Marion Burns, University of Strathclyde.

This keynote seminar will focus on the findings of a qualitative case study which explored the barriers and challenges in implementing the Curriculum for Excellence-Early Level as intended. Children aged three to six are entitled to experience a continuous curriculum that builds progressively on their prior learning in an environment where they are afforded opportunities to exercise agency and where practitioners and teachers work in close collaboration to enact play as pedagogy. The seminar will consider the role of the teacher in planning and delivering the 'early level' and the extent to which they engage children as experts in their lives in the curriculum planning process. The seminar will document how one school not involved in the study engaged in such collaboration to embrace play-based pedagogy in P1 as part of their improvement agenda which aimed to improve through play, the social, emotional and cognitive outcomes for children starting school. Lesley Wallace, the P1 teacher at Rowantree PS will co-present with Marion.

Keynote Seminar 2: Do Early Childhood Transitions Matter in the Longer Term? Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop, University of Strathclyde

This seminar presents data from a longitudinal study of transitions in education 3-18 in Scotland, that aims to identify what counts as a "good" transition to school, and its impact on longer term wellbeing and attainment. Children's trajectories through life are launched very early and remain very stable after the first two years of school: beginning school is a distinctive life-course transition (Alexander, Entwisle & Olsen, 2014) in which positive continuities and discontinuities matter. The study explores environments, interactions and individual differences and concludes that while there are helpful common approaches that can inform policy and practice, what makes a good transition may vary from child to child. Carol Smith, will co-present with Aline-Wendy.

Keynote Seminar 3: Counternarratives of transitions in marginalized neighbourhoods: Listening to mothers, early childhood educators, and kindergarten teachers: Dr Joanne Lehrer, Associate Professor in the department of Education at the University of Quebec in Outaouais and President of the Canadian Association for Research in Early Childhood.

This keynote seminar will present findings from a narrative research project that followed mothers, early childhood educators, and kindergarten teachers over the course of one year as children prepared for and adjusted to their new educational environment. Analyses explored the content and form of participant narratives of their transition experiences, as well as how these narratives supported or contested three metanarratives that can be found in transition and readiness discourse in government policy and popular media. While the study took place in Quebec (Canada), findings regarding the idea that children need to be made ready for school, that children living in poverty are less well-prepared for school, and that parents are responsible for their children's successful transitions, and regarding the creative ways that educators, teachers, and parents contested those metanarratives, will be of interest to those in other contexts.

Keynote Seminar 4: Pathways, plans and priorities: Transitions policy and practice in New Zealand, Associate Professor Sally Peters, University of Waikato

The New Zealand early childhood curriculum Te Whariki was updated in 2017. It recognises the shared responsibility of each part of the education system for children's learning journeys and a 'pathways' section illustrates how the weaving metaphor of Te Whariki might support continuity, with new learning at school weaving onto the ECE strands and principles. The draft Early Learning Strategic 10 Year Plan (2019-2029) anticipates shared understandings about children and their learning to facilitate transition to school. These approaches sit in the context of a political focus on wellbeing, empathy and kindness and an anticipated 2019 Wellbeing Budget. This seminar considers current intersections of transitions research, policy and practice and their implications for transition to school.

12.45	Lunch
13.45	Developing a progressive curriculum: Professor Elizabeth Wood, University of Sheffield

Chair: Jean Carwood-Edwards, CEO, Early Years Scotland

Policy intensification in ECE is moving away from multiple approaches to a single mandated framework, often with narrowly defined goals that focus on 'school readiness'. The 'school ready' curriculum phases out play in favour of more 'formal' learning, and constructs the 'school ready' child. I will argue that this approach to school readiness, and to transitions, needs to be contested, based on viable alternatives informed by international research. I will draw on the concepts of children's interests and funds of knowledge as sources for curriculum content, children's converged play, and integrated pedagogical approaches. Taken together, these organising concepts propose that play contributes to seamless progression rather than abrupt and inappropriate transitions.

14.45	Maree Todd, Minister for Children and Young People will endorse the Scottish Children and Families Early Childhood Position Statement
15.00	Round Table Discussions : The Scottish Children and Families Transitions Position Statement

Chaired by Dr Marion Burns, Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Siân Neil, Jean Carwood-Edwards, Janine Ryan and Heather Douglas

15.45	Coffee, Fruit, Cake
16:00	Close of Conference

Speaker Profiles



Dr Nóra Milotay

Nóra Milotay is a policy analyst at the European Parliamentary Research Service, working on issues of European social policy. She joined EPRS in November 2015 after having worked on several aspects of education policy, particularly in relation to schools, in Hungary and then for many years at the European Commission. She has built up European policy cooperation within the field of early childhood education and care. Between 2012-14 she led and managed the thematic working group of member states experts on early childhood education and care at the European Commission that has prepared a proposal for a Quality Framework in ECEC that has become a proposal for a Council recommendation in 2018. Her main areas of interest are issues of inequality, governance and social innovation. A historian by training, she holds a BA Hons. from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, an MA from the Central European University, Budapest and an MPhil and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. She is deeply interested in systemic change and the intersection of the fields of research, policy and practice with an experience in each of them.



Professor Kate Wall

Kate's work focuses on the development of innovative pedagogies and research methodologies (including visual approaches) that facilitate effective talk about learning (metacognition). She is interested in the development and exploration of democratic spaces where learners can talk about

their experiences of learning. Interested in methodologies for gathering learners' views on experience, curriculum and learning, Kate is particularly interested in how visual approaches can facilitate voice with young children: "I often think we have not been asking children their opinion or to participate in appropriate ways. I am interested in generating knowledge of ethical practice for eliciting voice within a democratic community and to do this, particularly with young children, then I think we need to look to more creative methods and practices for supporting the level of participation and ensuring authentic voice."



Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop

Aline-Wendy's role as Scottish Coordinator for the Pedagogies of Educational Transitions International Project (2013-2016) widened her understandings of transitions research, policy and practices internationally. This international perspective is reflected in her recent publication "Transitions in Early

Childhood Education" Oxford Bibliographies in Education (Dunlop, 2018). The Transitions as a Tool for Change Seminar Series brought this focus home to Scotland: resulting in the Scottish Children and Families Early Childhood Position Statement which will be launched at this conference.



Dr Marion Burns

Marion Burns has been an HM Inspector with Education Scotland (HMIE) since 2004, where she now works part time. Marion is also a part time doctorate student at Strathclyde University where her main research focus is curriculum transition across the 'early level' of Curriculum for Excellence.

Marion will graduate in June this year following the successful completion of her doctoral degree. Marion has travelled to New South Wales, New Zealand and Iceland to participate in a range of professional learning activities as part of the Pedagogies of Educational Transitions (POET) work package.



Professor Elizabeth Wood

Dr Elizabeth Wood is Professor of Education at the University of Sheffield. Her current research spans projects on children's play in a multi diverse ECE setting; teachers' understanding of converged play; and a comparative study of educational leadership in ECE in England and Australia. She

has written extensively about play in books, academic and practitioner journals, and has recently written a critique of the Ofsted 'research' report 'Teaching and play: a balancing act' (Ofsted, 2015) Education 3-13 (2019, in press).



Associate Professor Sally Peters

Associate Professor Sally Peters is Head of School Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education at the University of Waikato. Sally has a background in early childhood education and a particular interest in children's development from 0-8 years.

Sally has led or co-led a number of funded research projects exploring aspects of transition experiences. This included co-leading the New Zealand team in a Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES) project focused on Pedagogies of Educational Transitions (POET). Many of her research projects have involved working in partnership with teachers. In 2017 she was part of the writing team for the update of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki. She is currently evaluating a pilot project aimed at supporting children's health and participation in early education.



Dr Joanne Lehrer

Joanne Lehrer is Associate Professor in the department of Education at the University of Quebec in Outaouais and President of the Canadian Association for Research in Early Childhood. Her research focuses on the transition to school, relationships

with families, and professional identity in early childhood education and care. She is involved with multisectoral networks to support young children and families during the transition to kindergarten, where she attempts to dismantle the myth of school readiness and bring attention to children's, parents', and professional's transitions and the importance of well-being in the present. Before entering the higher education sector, she was a kindergarten and elementary school teacher and pedagogical consultant in early childhood.

