

Welcome to the PGCE Programme's research bulletin. As the first cohort of student teachers on the Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE come to the end of their course, we look forward to hearing about their small-scale research studies at our first research conference on Friday 24 June. This free conference is open to all Partnership PGCE student teachers and partner school colleagues. Registration details can be found at the end of this bulletin.

If there is any research you and/or your setting are involved in we would welcome the opportunity to share this across the Partnership, or if you wish to know more about any of the research included in these bulletins please contact Alison Glover (alison.glover@open.ac.uk).

In this issue



Home-school partnerships: The importance of adopting a strength-based approach and the role of family-learning practitioners in supporting more equal partnerships.

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Welsh language in English medium schools: Interaction, linguistic content, language management and classroom activities are reported on following observations and interviews in schools.



The culture of disciplines: Rich and engaging educational experiences can be facilitated by focusing on culture and emphasising the co-existence and interplay of subjects.



Additional Learning Needs and curriculum reform: It is suggested that more needs to be done to acknowledge and address practitioners' beliefs in the continuation of practices for learners with ALN if real change is to be realised.



Effective mentoring in Initial Teacher Education – what works and why? The PGCE team worked with partner schools to investigate why certain strategies work.



Other Open University research: Centre for Children and Young People's Wellbeing: Research undertaken aims to understand young people's experiences and worlds.



Home-school partnerships

'Engaging parents and children in family learning generates collaborative partnerships and can increase children's attainment.'

This small-scale study in socio-economically disadvantaged area of a Scottish city interviewed five headteachers, seven family-learning practitioners and 10 mothers. The focus was on the transition into school. A range of groups/classes were offered to parents, providing opportunities to experience success in learning – they were held on school premises but no school staff were involved. If home-school partnerships focus solely on the school agenda they can be difficult to achieve. Family-learning practitioners can provide bridging and links between social capital. A strength-based approach to parents' knowledge should be prioritised.

Tett, L and Macleod, G. (2020) 'Enacting home-school partnerships: the roles of headteachers, family-learning practitioners and parents', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 50(4), pp. 451-468.
doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1722062

Welsh language education in English-medium schools has been a subject of criticism in recent years. Despite 13 years of instruction between the ages of 3-16, the number of those leaving school with any significant proficiency in Welsh is limited. Psychological and social factors influence the linguistic outcomes of provision. Welsh lessons were observed and staff interviewed in English-medium secondary and primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Monmouth and Powys. Findings focused on interaction (large classes found to be a barrier to provision); linguistic content (all used a language-orientated syllabus based on topics), language management (there were few opportunities for pupils to take ownership of the language through activities requiring spontaneous language use) and classroom activities (predominantly traditional teaching methods). It is concluded there is a need to reform existing Welsh language provision in English-medium schools.

Beard, A. (2020) 'The suitability of Welsh language provision in English-medium schools to produce speakers of the language', *Wales Journal of Education*, 22(2). doi.org/10.16922/wje.22.2.1.



The culture of disciplines

'The arts are recognised for their potential to humanise and enrich educational experience.'

This paper includes discussion of a hybrid project (The Imagineerium). It is believed that the arts hold a lowly position in the hierarchy of school subject-based curricula, thus limiting the time and consequently the influence they have. Teachers are professionally socialised to see some activities as 'naturally' belonging to a particular subject. This results in it becoming normal to draw on resources of this one subject to give meaning, and pupils' engagement with the activities will be limited to thinking in terms of one subject. But where the cultures of a number of subjects are simultaneously deployed, then the activities of the classroom can be understood more 'multiculturally'. The focus on culture, and explicitly in the ways meaning is established in subject areas, enables hybridity of cultures and the acknowledgement of hybrid meanings to the forms produced, performed and studied in a specified timetable slot.

Davies, R. and Trowdale, J. (2021). 'The culture of disciplines: Reconceptualising multi-subject curricula', *British Educational Research Journal*, 47(5), pp. 1434-1446. doi.org/10.1002/berj.3735.



Additional Learning Needs and curriculum reform

'Pedagogy is at the heart of the new curriculum and pedagogy, if it's done properly, should take account of differences in learning.'

Interviews were conducted with a small number of school-based participants, ALN policy leads at Welsh Government and regional ALN co-ordinators. Key themes discussed include the new curriculum being viewed as benefitting all learners including those with ALN; the new curriculum centrally involves continuity with existing ideas about good practice; and challenges to the success of the new curriculum. It is concluded that it is perhaps telling that Welsh Government policy in relation to ALN increasingly emphasises *systems* in relation to ALN and the effectiveness of these, rather than pedagogical practices, teachers' beliefs and the inclusivity of these.

Conn, C. and Hutt, M. (2020) 'Successful futures for all? Additional learning needs in Wales in the light of curriculum reform', *British Journal of Special Education*, 47(2), pp. 152-169. doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12307.



Effective mentoring in Initial Teacher Education – what works and why?

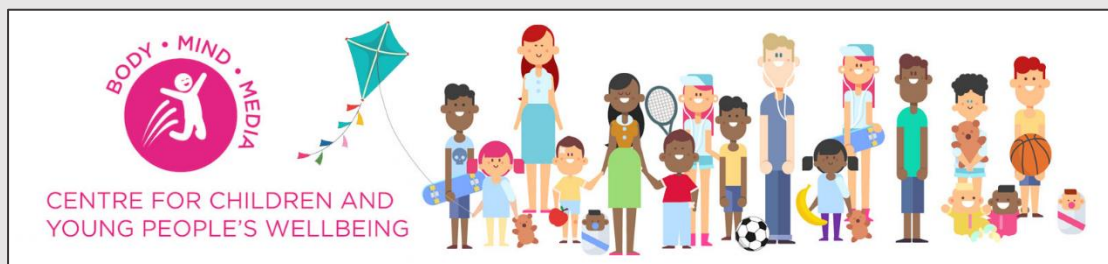
This PGCE team research study has been supported by Open University Praxis funding. Student teacher and curriculum tutor small group discussions, interviews with mentors and reflections submitted by practice tutors and school co-ordinators have been completed. All are contributing to the development of case studies to showcase approaches to mentoring and help develop materials to support future partnership mentoring. Emerging findings were presented at an ITE Education Workforce Council event in March and at the Teacher Education Advancement Network conference in May. The final report and case studies will be shared across the partnership soon.



Other Open University research: Body : Mind : Media – [Centre for Children and Young People's Wellbeing](#)

A children's rights stance is adopted, with children, parents and others invited to share their views and experience to improve policy and practice in media, health and medical care. A range of interesting [projects](#) and [publications](#) including topics such as:

1. Food, eating and food marketing.
2. Children and young people's wellbeing, mental health, self-concept, early childhood experiences.
3. The creation of [OUR VOICES](#) resource – explaining why and how working with children and young people is of value in the research process.



The PGCE Partnership is looking forward to its first research conference Friday 24 June 9.30-12.30. The programme includes - Professor Charlotte Williams (keynote) with panel members - Hannah Barry (Associate Professional Learning Partner, EAS), Dr Matthew Dicken (Headteacher, Ysgol Panteg) and Chris Shaw (Assistant Headteacher, Ysgol Gyfun Bryn Tawe) and presentations from our year 2 student teachers. You can register for this free conference [here](#).