

Research Newsletter



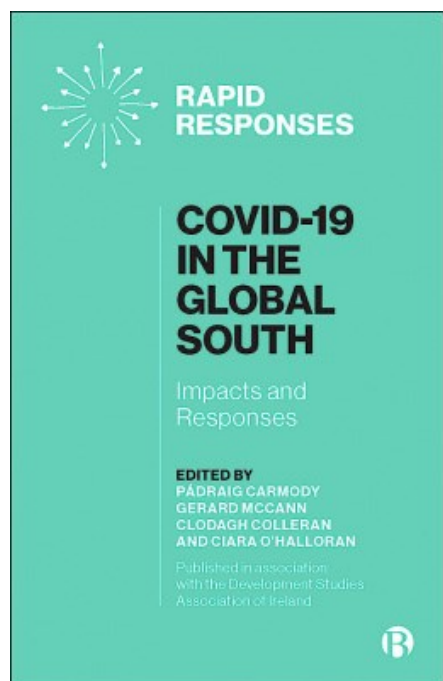
St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University

BOOK GIVES INSIGHT INTO IMPACT OF COVID IN GLOBAL SOUTH

An important contribution to the numerous publications that relate to the current pandemic was co-edited by Dr Gerard McCann and made openly accessible via the Bristol University Press website during October 2020. The book, titled “COVID-19 In The Global South: Impacts And Responses”, was co-edited by Gerard and colleagues from Trinity College Dublin and the Development Studies Association of Ireland. As well as his co-editing role, Gerard also co-authored the introduction and conclusion, and even found time to co-author an individual chapter, titled **COVID-19 Mitigation And Global Inequality**. The book itself brought together a range of experts across various sectors and explored some of the key issues that have arisen in the Global South with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Situating the worldwide health crisis within broader processes of globalisation, the book investigated implications for development and gender, as well as the effects on

migration, climate change and economic inequality. Contributors considered how widespread and long-lasting responses to the pandemic should be, while paying particular attention to the accentuated risks faced by vulnerable populations. Providing answers that will be essential to development practitioners and policy makers, the book offered vital insights into how the impact of COVID-19 can be mitigated in some of the most challenging socio-economic contexts worldwide.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- [Book gives insight into impact of COVID in Global South](#)
- [Opinion on using algorithms to grade exams](#)
- [Chapter on role of sub-Saharan Africa in Britain's legitimacy crisis after WWII](#)
- [Reminding people where human rights start](#)
- [Drawing upon research to inform expert group on COVID](#)
- [Research seminar series Nov—Dec 2020](#)
- [Using creative methods to determine what entices pupils to read for pleasure](#)
- [Historical examination of workers' strike in Caledon during 1919](#)
- [Article on using stories to teach key concepts across curriculum](#)
- [Research article featured in leading international education journal](#)
- [Children's Research Network publishes paper](#)
- [Action research with student teachers on critical literacy](#)
- [Student collaboration results in publication](#)
- [Colleagues work together on research article](#)
- [Academic historian has research published](#)
- [Editorial work for academic journal and professional periodical](#)
- [Staff profile](#)

OPINION ON USING ALGORITHMS TO GRADE EXAMS

“RTÉ Brainstorm”, an online space, is used by academic staff from higher education institutions in Ireland to submit new ideas and to provide research-related insights about Ireland and the rest of the world. The academic and research community are enabled by its corresponding website to contribute to public debate, to reflect on what is happening across the world, and to communicate innovative thinking on a range of important issues. It combines opinions and analyses with features, and one such opinion was shared during October 2020 by Dr Birgit Schippers in relation to algorithms increasingly ruling the world, without many people being sufficiently trained or knowledgeable about how they work.

The article, titled **As Leaving Cert Students Have Found Out, Algorithms Can Be Flawed**, showed concern for the use of opaque and little understood technological systems replacing debate, contest, and the deliberative quality of democratic will formation. Birgit was particularly worried about how policy decisions, based on algorithmic prediction, have presented a veneer of technological accuracy and impartiality, which can be deemed superior to flawed human judgement.



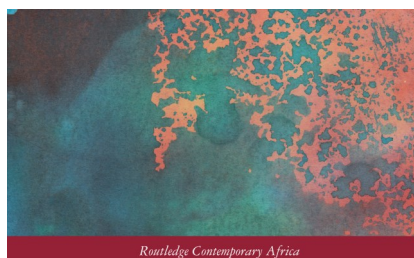
“... worried about how policy decisions, based on algorithmic prediction, have presented a veneer of technological accuracy and impartiality ...”

CHAPTER ON ROLE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN BRITAIN’S LEGITIMACY CRISIS AFTER WWII

A book that examined how representations of African in the Anglophone West have changed in the post-imperial age was published by Routledge during November 2020 and it was titled “Modern Representations Of Sub-Saharan Africa”. One of the many chapters in this book was written by Dr Gerard McCann who considered the role played by sub-Saharan Africa in the legitimacy crisis Britain had to face after the Second World War. Gerard’s chapter, titled **African Liberation And The Reaction Of The British Establishment**, showed that while Britain

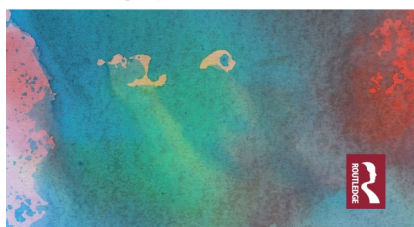
was a waning colonial power, and showing weaknesses theretofore unknown to some parts of the globe, Africa saw the emergence of secessionist voices, leading up to the construction of new ideologies, especially designed to support the establishment of a pan-African identity.

By focusing on the specific cases of Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, among others, Gerard studied the complex power dynamics at work when, on the one hand, the British establishment betrayed a sense of decaying power by resorting to such strategies as economic incentives or repression, while on the other hand, the local liberation movements became stronger and stronger. While analysing this period of change, Gerard also described the emergence of ‘modernisation as a concept of development’, both in sub-Saharan Africa and in Britain, where leaders and citizens had to adapt their understanding of colonialism to what it ‘had actually come to mean’.



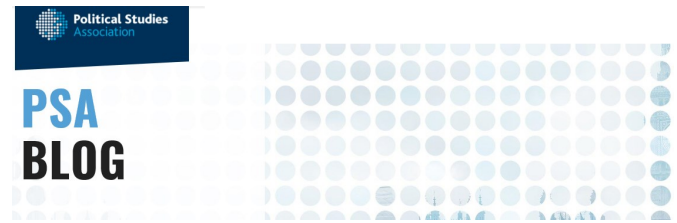
MODERN REPRESENTATIONS OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Edited by
Lori Maguire, Susan Ball and Sébastien Lefait



REMINDING PEOPLE WHERE HUMAN RIGHTS START

As part of the “UK Parliament Week” during November 2020, Dr Birgit Schippers had an article featured on the Political Studies Association’s online blog page titled **Human Rights Start With You: UK Parliament Week 2020**. In the article Brigit referred to examples of courageous actions from those who struggled for rights, equality, dignity and non-discrimination that resulted in forcing parliament to introduce changes to the law.



She also highlighted the many young people who protested against the decision to determine GCSE and A-level results by algorithms, and who saw them as a symbol of computer-generated inequality and injustice. In relation to parliament, Birgit outlined the key role of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, whose members scrutinise whether or not UK government bills are compatible with human rights. She then went further to explain how that is carried out, and highlighted how individuals can act to protect and enhance their own human rights.

DRAWING UPON RESEARCH TO INFORM EXPERT GROUP ON COVID

Dr Birgit Schippers was nominated by the Royal Irish Academy for appointment to the “COVID-19 Expert Group of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP)” and was successful in taking up this prestigious position during November 2020.

This group of experts is charged with responding to enquiries routed through academies related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic across a broad range of health, social, environmental and other direct and indirect consequences. Birgit’s expertise will focus on the ethics of new technologies, social sciences and human rights.



IAP COVID-19 EXPERT GROUP

RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES NOV—DEC 2020

During November and December 2020, the long-established Research Seminar Series, which is coordinated by Dr Brian Hanratty, went from colleagues being part of a physical gathering in conference room two to colleagues being part of a virtual gathering online. Fortunately, it worked out to be a success, with the same high-level delivery of research ideas and feedback from those presenting and attending. The five presentations were delivered by:

Dr Geraldine Magennis: **Exploring The Potential For Teacher Professional Learning Through Participation In A Book Study Group.**

Maria Stewart: **Home-School Partnership To Engage The Cultural Capital Of Translingual Pupils In Primary School In Northern Ireland.**

Dr Seán Mac Corraidh: **A Lifetime Learning About The Irish Song Tradition: An Autoethnographic Approach.**

Dr Birgit Schippers: **‘Power Without Vulnerability’: Drones And The Re-Ordering Of Politics.**

Writing Circle Participants: **Our Writing Circle: A Round Table Containing Insights From Participants On Writing Their Research.**

USING CREATIVE METHODS TO DETERMINE WHAT ENTICES PUPILS TO READ FOR PLEASURE

An article appeared online during October 2020, which was written by Dr Geraldine Magennis, and it was titled **Reading For Pleasure Research - How To Find Out Pupils' Views On What Entices Them To Read**. This article stemmed from one that featured in the professional periodical "Teach Primary", and it was published on the website known as "TeachWire" that offers the education community details of the latest resources, products and news from the world of education. In her article, Geraldine drew upon her supervision of a recent M.Ed. graduate from the college, Gemma Fitzpatrick, whose dissertation

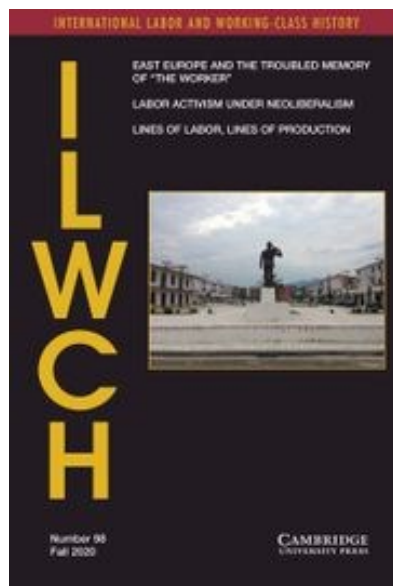
related to the topic. Geraldine wrote the piece for teachers to inform their practice by using creative methods to seek out their pupils' views on what entices them to read for pleasure. In it, she outlined a case study related to seeking out the views of pupils towards what entices or disincentivises them to read voluntarily.

teachwire
YOUR LINK TO THE BEST IN EDUCATION

"...for teachers to inform their practice by using creative methods to seek out their pupils' views on what entices them to read for pleasure."

HISTORICAL EXAMINATION OF WORKERS' STRIKE IN CALEDON DURING 1919

Cambridge University Press published an article online by Dr Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh during November 2020 titled **The Caledon Lockout: Revolution And Counter-Revolution In Rural Ulster, 1918–1922**. It was featured in an academic journal, which has an international reputation for scholarly innovation and quality, called "International Labor And Working-Class History". In his research paper, Fearghal examined an unsuccessful strike by Irish Catholic and Protestant workers at a woollen mill in 1919. The location, Caledon in County Tyrone, is renowned as a stronghold of Ulster Unionism and Orangeism, yet in the context of the revolutionary period in Ireland from 1916–1926, traditional sectarian divisions briefly abated in the face of working-class solidarity.

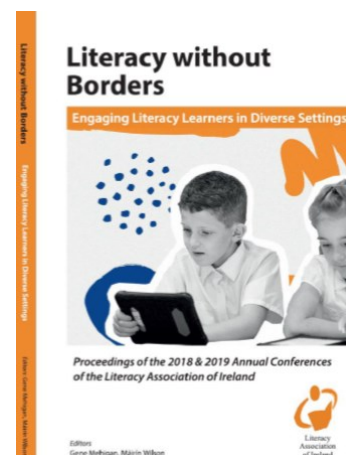


In this respect, the analysis offered something of a corrective to assumptions regarding the immutability of sectarian divisions in Ulster. The article also placed Caledon within the context of a widespread and sustained movement of unskilled workers in the main provincial city, Belfast, and across much of rural Ulster between 1918–1920. Fearghal argued that the manner in which the employer defeated the strike and the village's subsequent history of violent sectarianism offer valuable insights into the creation and consolidation of Northern Ireland, or what many local Catholics called 'the Orange State', which celebrated its centenary in 2020.

ARTICLE ON USING STORIES TO TEACH KEY CONCEPTS ACROSS CURRICULUM

The Literacy Association of Ireland published the proceedings of its 2018 and 2019 conferences during October 2020 and it included an article by Catherine Gilliland, titled **The ‘Velcrocity’ Of Story**, with contributions from Dr Katrina Mulholland, Teresa Cash and Padaí de Bléine. The book itself, titled “Literacy Without Borders: Engaging Literacy Learners In Diverse Settings”, took the form of a journal-type publication and it featured a wide-ranging collection of articles prompted by the continuously evolving literacy landscape.

The article by Catherine and her colleagues examined how stories can be used to teach key concepts across all areas of the curriculum. The wisdom and story of Albert Einstein was central to the article and demonstrated how vital it is to use stories to introduce and consolidate language. The article provided various active approaches to telling a story using, for example, a graphic organiser or other visualisation techniques to unlock children’s semantic stories. In the article, there was the suggestion that the localisation of a story can be an effective classroom technique, which was exemplified using a case study based on “The Gruffalo” by Julia Donaldson.



RESEARCH ARTICLE FEATURED IN LEADING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION JOURNAL

Throughout her time on the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) Committee, Dr Geraldine Magennis collaborated with members to produce an article that was published online during November 2020 in the long-established academic journal “Oxford Review Of Education”. The editors of the journal made the article, titled **Assessing The Value Of SCoTENS As A Cross-Border Professional Learning Network In Ireland Using The Wenger-Trayner Value-Creation Framework**, openly accessible to readers via their corresponding website, where, as of February 2021, it had been viewed over five hundred times.

In the article, the authors referred to SCoTENS as a unique network of teacher educators from north and south of the Irish border. However, they stated that even though it was funded by government departments and membership institutions across the island, it was facing a range of potential uncertainties. Their research study attempted to map the values and impacts of a complex boundary object. A framework, designed by Wenger-Trayner, was adapted to create a bespoke research tool. This was deployed to collect data in semi-structured conversations (cross-border pairs of respondents) and in monologues from individual contributors. The study permitted researchers to access both the breadth (from a range of stakeholders) and depth (from immediate to transformative) of significances and to capture the unique flavours and forms of perceived values across their terrain. They claimed that the useful findings from their study would inform sustaining this vulnerable and valuable network in an uncertain future.



CHILDREN'S RESEARCH NETWORK PUBLISHES PAPER

Following on from a conference held the previous year, Catherine Gilliland had her paper featured in the “Children’s Research Digest”, which was published during December 2020 by the Children’s Research Network.

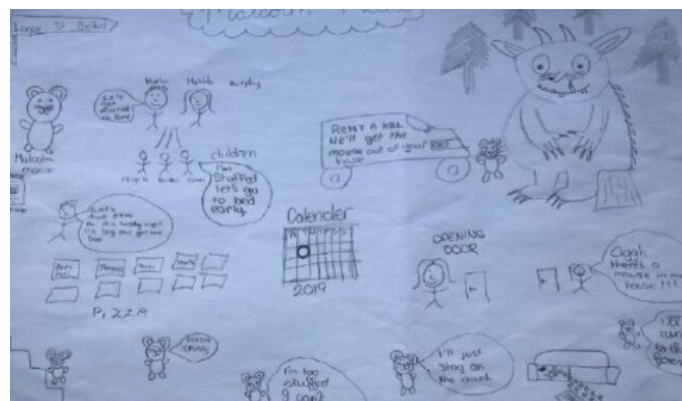


Catherine’s paper, titled **‘Once Upon A Time And Happily Ever After’: A Case Of Bibliotherapy In Action**, began with

references to academic literature on using story books with children and how they possess healing properties for children.

She then went on to present a case study that demonstrated how to take children’s fondness for a particular story and use it to create

another story that is rich in natural language and localised to their learning context. In her conclusion to the article, Catherine referred to the term bibliotherapy, which she claimed is good for us all, because when we tell a story we are free and can learn so much about the world we live in and the feelings we experience as we navigate our way through it.



“... when we tell a story we are free and can learn so much about the world we live in and the feelings we experience ...”

ACTION RESEARCH WITH STUDENT TEACHERS ON CRITICAL LITERACY

The “International Journal of Educational Research” highlights research on various educational topics of international significance and, during February 2021, it featured an article written by Dr Donna Hazzard. The title of Donna’s research was **Challenging Misrecognition: A Case For Critical Literacy** and it set out to examine if a critical literacy pedagogy can help student teachers better understand how inequity is reproduced in the field of education. Donna explored these issues using Bourdieu’s distinctive concepts that frame literacy as an ideological act, an act of misrecognition that results in ‘symbolic violence’.



Volume 106

2021

ISSN 0883-0365

International Journal of
**Educational
Research**

Available online at www.elsevier.com/locate/ijer
ScienceDirect

The study took place in a small, specialist teacher education college and the methodological design was based on action research supported by semi-structured interviews, pre- and post-intervention. For the action research, a semester-long, pre-existing undergraduate literacy course was restructured to embed critical literacy. A group of eight self-selecting third-year student teachers participated in the research project. Findings revealed that the students held beliefs that tended to conflate poverty with prejudicial stereotyping and attribution of fault to others who are located differently in the social world. Underpinning this was unquestioning acceptance of the education system. By acquiring a sociological, specifically a critical literacy perspective, Donna concluded that it can help nurture student teachers’ ideas and understanding about teaching for social justice.

STUDENT COLLABORATION RESULTS IN PUBLICATION

An example of a successful collaborative writing partnership between a member of academic staff and a graduate from St Mary's became apparent when Dr Geraldine Magennis had her co-authored article featured in the professional periodical "Literacy News", which is published by the Literacy Association of Ireland. The article, titled **Using Oral Language Starters To Promote Phonological Awareness**, was co-authored with Michaela Mulholland who graduated with a B.Ed. from the college in 2015 and it appeared within the Autumn 2020 issue.

The article was introduced with an understanding of extensive differences between children in language development and went on to use the metaphor of boxes contained within other boxes to explain phonology, phonological awareness and phonemic awareness. The authors included diagrams for readers to help them, for example, understand the sequence of phonological awareness, instruction and intervention, as well as the levels of difficulty involved in word segmentation. They also referred to the six Rs (rehearse, recall, refresh, refine, read and reason) in their article.



COLLEAGUES WORK TOGETHER ON RESEARCH ARTICLE

Due to the restrictions that impacted upon teachers and educators of physical education as a consequence of the pandemic, two members of academic staff, Dr Elaine McLaughlin and Dr Matthew Martin, thought it worthwhile to write an article on physical education and activity. Their co-authored article, titled **Physical Education Versus Physical Activity: Spotting The Difference When Teaching Online**, appeared in "Physical Education Matters" during Autumn 2020, which is the official journal of the Association for Physical Education.



In their article they offered many questions, one of which related to how activity-based online videos differ from skills-based online videos. Equally important, they examined how both of the above differ from the essence of what is known as physical education, which led them to reveal the difference between physical activity and physical education. Elaine and Martin also referred to the question of how effective physical education lessons can be delivered online during a pandemic, and provided an insight into this question by using netball as an example.

EDITORIAL WORK FOR ACADEMIC JOURNAL AND PROFESSIONAL PERIODICAL

Dr Donna Hazzard was invited to be a member of the editorial board for the “International Journal of Educational Research” during February 2020, which she accepted gladly. This role is in addition to her editorial work, since 2017, for “UKLA News”, which is a resource produced by the UK Literacy Association.

St Mary's University College, Belfast
191 Falls Road
Belfast
BT12 6FE
Northern Ireland

Phone: 02890 327678

Fax: 02890 333719

E-mail: research_admin@smucb.ac.uk



St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University

ACADEMIC HISTORIAN HAS RESEARCH PUBLISHED

An article by Dr Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh was featured in the most recent volume of the Irish Labour History Society's journal “Saothar” towards the end of 2020. Fearghal's article, titled **Militant Trade Unionism And The Hidden Social Revolution In Tyrone, 1917-19**, was based on academic study related to his research specialism. The journal volume itself, focused on studying Irish working-class history, was peer reviewed, and included various articles of high academic standing.



STAFF PROFILE



Padaí de Bléine has been working in the Coláiste Ollascoile Naomh Muire since 2007 as a senior lecturer in Irish language and literature for both undergraduate programmes, with a focus on language and grammar, prose translation, contemporary and classical literature, as well as the history of the Irish language. Padaí's research activities in recent years have focused on, for example, the theory and practice of translating children's literature from English to Irish. He has also translated nine children's novels into Irish.

Padaí has had papers accepted for publication in the online journal “Léann Teanga: An Reiviú” between 2018 and 2020, which was created by the National University of Ireland, Galway. The first paper in 2018, titled **An Gearrscéal Gníomhach**, was featured in the language teaching section of the journal and it related to the teaching of short stories in Irish. A subsequent article, titled **Céim ar an Bhealach: spléachadh ar an chéad chaibidil de Mo Bhealach Féin le Seosamh Mac Grianna**, was published in the 2019 edition and a third paper, titled **Aistriúchán ar úrscéal do pháistí: an cur chuige, céimeanna an aistriúcháin agus an toradh**, featured in the 2020 issue. He has also attended events that have launched this particular journal, enabling him to learn about other authors' scholarly work and research that have appeared in the journal.

Padaí has also collaborated on research with colleagues in the college, evidenced by a recent research seminar titled **Tús maith leath na hoibre (A Good Start Is Half Of The Work): The Significance Of The Opening Chapter Of Seosamh Mac Grianna's Mo Bhealach Féin (My Own Way) and An Druma Mór (The Big Drum)**. His contribution to co-writing an article, titled **Four Heads Are Better Than Two At Delivering CPD**, resulted in a publication in the professional periodical “Literacy News”, which was produced by the Literacy Association of Ireland. It explored how collaborative work in planning a continuing professional development session can be more beneficial for teachers who have a vision for better learning for children.