The Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change (ROC) was inspired by the philosophy and actions of the social reformer, Robert Owen. The Centre was launched in November 2013 with the explicit purpose of researching issues of educational equity and supporting the development of more equitable education systems to improve outcomes for all learners and to promote social justice.

Over time, ROC has grown to 19 core members of academic staff. The Centre’s focus on equity and educational change has now been organised into three strands of work that reflect and focus our expertise and engagement:

- Systems Change, Governance and Leadership
- Equity and Public Policy
- International Development

This e-bulletin introduces some of our new research projects and findings from ongoing studies. As ever, these reflect our ongoing commitment to theory-driven research which impacts on policy and practice in international, national and local contexts.

Professor Michele Schweisfurth
Co Director,
Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change
July 2016
Research highlights

Policies Supporting Young Adults in their Life Course: A Comparative Perspective of Lifelong Learning and Inclusion in Education and Work in Europe (YOUNG-ADULLLT).

The Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change is part of a European consortium that has recently been awarded this 2.5 million Euros research project by the European Commission’s Horizons 2020. The research consortium is led by the University of Münster (Germany) and includes partners from a range of other countries including Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The team of researchers includes Professor Michele Schweisfurth, Kevin Lowden, Dr Kristinn Hermannsson, Professor Chris Chapman and Dr Lesley Doyle (CRADALL), all under the leadership of RoC member Dr Oscar Valiente.

The YOUNG-ADULLLT project is a mixed-method comparative study which will contribute new knowledge about the impact of LLL policies on young adults’ life courses highlighting potential conflicts they may cause. The research will thus yield insights on the individual conditions, strategies, contingencies, and necessities for policies to become effective. The analyses will not only identify policies and initiatives (including informal and non-formal learning and vocational training) that benefit particular vulnerable groups, but will also contribute to a better understanding of the structural relationships and functional match between education/training and the labour market sectors.

The project will also deliver a thorough regional review of policies and programmes in the countries studied, putting particular attention on regional/local networks of actors, dynamics and trends as well as mismatches and redundancies. Finally, at the practice and policy level, the project will identify successful sustainable institutional solutions that integrate labour market, social inclusion and individual life courses, and discuss their transferability to other contexts. Importantly, by means of Policy Roundtables involving a range of relevant stakeholders and decision-makers, the project further fosters networking and coordinated policy-making at the local level.

The National Advisory Board of YOUNG-ADULLLT in Scotland has representatives from a wide range of regional actors including Education Scotland; Scottish Qualifications Authority; Scottish Funding Council; Skills Development Scotland; Scottish Government Chief Researcher and Colleges Scotland, as well as representatives from the Universities of Glasgow, Cardiff, Strathclyde and University College London.

www.young-adulllt.eu

Contact: Oscar.Valiente@glasgow.ac.uk
Using music for integration

An award has recently been made by the University of Glasgow’s “Chancellor’s Fund” to investigate the use of music education activities as a tool to integrate new arrivals in schools hosting children from other countries. The grant is being used to involve B.Ed (Music) students in observing activities, data collection and analysis to identify good practice and enhance understanding of the impact of such activities.

Dr Oscar Odena is Reader in Education at the Robert Owen Centre: ‘There is growing evidence that using music activities as integration tools can overcome linguistic and socio-cultural barriers,’ he says. ‘This is particularly important in the current context of increasing numbers of new arrivals in Scottish schools from a variety of backgrounds and with shared linguistic barriers. Music education activities can be used to support community cohesion, promote intercultural education and facilitate inclusive learning. In Spain, festivals including students’ performances have been used for reducing absenteeism and in England creative music projects and digital technology have been used to re-engage disaffected students. Our project will be the first of its type in Scotland. Over 600 children in ten schools will initially benefit and we then hope to expand the project to benefit all student teachers in the School of Education and thousands of children in partner schools.’

The project fits with the strategic aim of the Robert Owen Centre to promote more equitable education systems through applied research underpinned by a commitment to the principles of social justice. The project team includes Oscar Odena (PI), Moira Summers (BEd Music Programme Leader), Angela Jaap (Learning and Teaching Centre) and Andrea Rodriguez (Affiliate Visiting Researcher, National University of Colombia and Universitat Jaume I, Spain). Further information can be found at: http://robertowencentre.academicblogs.co.uk/tag/oscar-odena/

Contact: Oscar.Odena@glasgow.ac.uk

Using Social Network Analysis in educational research

ROC is currently engaged in research in Glasgow city aimed at providing a fuller understanding how and why some secondary schools in the city are more successful in dealing with educational inequity. To date this has involved combining secondary analysis of Glasgow’s data on pupil attainment, destinations, exclusions and attendance with in-depth case studies in five of the City’s Learning Communities.

Part of the case study approach includes the use of Social Network Analysis (SNA). SNA has allowed the research to investigate the strength, nature and direction of relationships among staff groups and has contributed to our understanding of how the relationships within a school support a number of areas including ethos, learning and teaching, professional development and pupil support.

Following the SNA survey in schools, sociograms (diagrammatic representations of staff networks) have been used in interviews with staff to ‘interpret’ the networks and explore how particular network patterns support attainment and achievement. The ‘Achilles heel’ of SNA is a requirement for a very high survey response rate - 85% or greater. To achieve this the research team had strong support from senior managers in the City. In addition the ROC team have taken time to build relationships with those included in the case studies.

In addition to the SNA work in Glasgow ROC is also using SNA in North Ayrshire where the council is reviewing its support for pupils in secondary schools. As in Glasgow, the ROC team are conducting SNA with staff in a number of secondary schools prior to in-depth interviews with staff and pupils. Interviews will again focus on evaluating how different staff network patterns contribute to pupil support. To date, SNA is proving to be a valuable addition to the range of methods used to elicit the factors and process that influence practitioners’ working to tackle educational inequity.

Contact: Stuart.Hall@glasgow.ac.uk
Supporting system change: Implementing school transformation in Vietnam

In November 2015, a research team comprising four ROC staff, in collaboration with researchers from Vietnam National University’s University of Education and the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, began an eight-month research project, funded by the British Council in Vietnam, and University of Glasgow. The purpose of the project was to investigate the challenges - as perceived by school principals and teachers - of implementing recent government multiple and simultaneous educational reforms, or ‘renovations’, in Vietnam parlance.

In 2012, the Vietnam government announced a programme of ‘radical and comprehensive renovations’ to its school system. Coming at that time, the announcement was surprising, since the 2012 PISA results had just shown Vietnam – having entered for the first time – ranking a creditable, even surprising, 17th place out of 65, well ahead of England, Scotland and the USA. So what prompted the Vietnam government to announce such drastic renovations to its education system at a time when its international status had never been higher?

Although the Government was justifiably proud of its students’ PISA results, it realized the inherent weaknesses of a traditional education system within a fast changing society and economy. To realize the latter goal, the Government decided that nothing less than wholesale change to the curriculum and textbooks, pedagogy, assessment, teacher professional development, and leadership and management was required: hence ‘radical and comprehensive’. Schools are responsible for implementing these transformations simultaneously and over a period of many years. In a communist system known traditionally for its central control, top-down bureaucratic decision making, and traditional teaching methods, the intention is to devolve more powers and responsibilities to provinces, districts and schools. The situation is compounded by a lack of resources, and significant inequalities between rich and poor, and urban and rural schools. Inequities and social injustices between students and schools abound, due to socio-economic and geographical diversity in a large country with nearly 100 million people.

The team has collected survey and interview data from a small range of schools in and outside Hanoi, in order to clarify principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of the multiple reforms, and the challenges they face in implementation. A conference is planned in Hanoi on 29 June 2016 to disseminate the findings, with Prof Chris Chapman and Clive Dimmock delivering keynotes. The conference will also be setting the Vietnamese educational reforms within those of the larger ASEAN and Asian region. Hence, keynote presentations will also address lessons to be learnt from experts on Shanghai’s and Singapore’s educational reforms. A number of international funding agencies have been invited to the conference, and it is planned to approach them for funding of a larger second phase of the project, plans for which are to engage schools across Vietnam, and to design supportive interventions aimed at school capacity building.

Contact: Clive.Dimmock@glasgow.ac.uk
Q-Step: a step-change in quantitative skills training in Education

Q-Step is a UK-wide programme funded by the ESRC and the Nuffield Foundation with the objective of achieving a step-change in undergraduate quantitative Social Science training. The programme was developed to address the UK’s shortage of Social Science graduates with quantitative skills. It intends to help meet the increasing demand from employers from various sectors for Social Sciences graduates with the ability to evaluate quantitative evidence and to analyse quantitative data, and design and commission quantitative research. There are Q-Step Centres at fifteen universities in the UK, and in 2014, (after a competitive bidding process) a Q-Step Centre was established at the University of Glasgow.

The Q-Step centre in Glasgow aims to promote the design and delivery of quantitative skills training through undergraduate quantitative programmes, work experience opportunities and pathways to postgraduate study. The Q-Step Centre is located at the School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) and has a presence in the School of Education (through RoC member Katherin Barg) and in the School of Mathematics and Statistics.

In the School of Education of the University of Glasgow, Q-Step supports the development of quantitative literacy among students in the MA Education, which leads to a Teaching Qualification. It aims to promote students’ understanding of and ability to critically assess quantitative evidence, research design, applied statistical methods, and data sets as presented in governmental reports, academic publications, and public media. Beyond that it will contribute to the development of students’ knowledge of relevant quantitative research and give them skills to conduct own quantitative research as part of Practitioner Enquiry. It will also enable them to present quantitative evidence obtained from their own research and from secondary sources to other education professionals, pupils, parents, and academic audiences.

Scottish education policy emphasises the importance of teachers enquiring into their own practice and requires teachers who have knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to question, challenge, and understand their personal approaches to teaching and learning. With the introduction of Scotland’s “Curriculum for Excellence” came the requirement that all schools develop strategies to ensure that pupils develop high levels of numeracy skills. All teachers, regardless of the subject being taught, are required to support and extend pupils’ numeracy skills so that skills acquired in earlier years are continuously refreshed and strengthened. The Q-Step embedding work is contributing to meeting these requirements through promoting numeracy among student teachers. In order to contribute to the development of teachers’ quantitative skills Q-Step aims to promote four quantitative learning outcomes: knowledge of relevant quantitative research; skills of understanding quantitative evidence; skills of collection and analysis of quantitative data; and skills of presenting quantitative results. Achieving these outcomes will equip teachers with the skills and enthusiasm to make use of quantitative data also when teaching their subjects.

Contact: Katherin.Barg@glasgow.ac.uk
South Africa suffers from extremely high levels of youth unemployment, particularly among those without postsecondary educational experience, with 3.8 million 18-25 year-olds currently not in education, employment or training. Many young people enter the labour force with minimal skills while employers are demanding advanced skills to drive technological development.

Funded under the Newton programme by the British Academy, Professor Andy Furlong with colleagues from the Centre for Social Development in Africa at Johannesburg University are focusing on the role of Youth employability programs in assisting young people to access the labour market.

While there is some evidence that youth employability programmes in South Africa play a key role in skills development, very little is known about their reach, their nature or the ways in which they enhance employability. The key objectives of this project are:

• To evaluate the contribution of community-based youth employment programmes to enhancing young peoples’ employability;
• To help develop capacity in the design and implementation of appropriate methodologies that are empirically rigorous and that can feasibly be adapted to assess innovation in youth employability programmes;
• To contribute to developing the theoretical understanding of transitions to school-to-work in developing country contexts.

The South African team, led by Dr Lauren Graham, recently spent a few days in Glasgow to lay the foundations for this study and Andy Furlong will be visiting Johannesburg in December where he will help with the analysis, visit projects and provide a lecture at the University. The teams have ambitious publication plans for the project and are also exploring the possibility of extending their work through opportunities under the Global Challenges Fund.

Contact: Andy.Furlong@glasgow.ac.uk

Stronger Communities is a pilot initiative led by Save the Children, in partnership with five other Scottish children’s charities, which aims to empower local people to drive improvements in services and opportunities for families, and young people in two deprived communities in Scotland. The Robert Owen Centre is evaluating the initiative to identify lessons in implementing a programme of this kind and to understand its potential to affect positive change in deprived communities.

The ROC team has been engaging with community members, observing various community events and working closely with Save the Children to ensure that emerging findings help to inform programme development. In January 2016 ROC produced two reports that examined community stakeholders’ perspectives on local strengths, needs and priorities for change in each area. The final evaluation report, due in July 2016, will draw on literature on area-based approaches (to set the initiative within its wider context); provide a contextual analysis of the two Stronger Communities areas; document how the initiative has been implemented, focusing on what works; and conclude by proposing a logic model to explicate how Stronger Communities might empower deprived communities to affect change.

Contact: Chris.Chapman@glasgow.ac.uk
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<tr>
<th>Date/Event</th>
<th>Seminar Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 23rd Feb.</td>
<td>“What else do we know about assessment? The consequences and concomitants of national education reforms”</td>
<td>Professor Stephen Ball, University College London Sir Charles Wilson Building</td>
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<td>Evening Event</td>
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<td>Thursday 3rd March</td>
<td>“Female leadership compared: Women vice chancellors in Germany and the UK.”</td>
<td>Professor Barbara Kehm and Dr Barbara Read, University of Glasgow Room 432, St Andrew’s Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 7th April</td>
<td>“Citizenship education, democracy and the market”</td>
<td>Professor Andreas Fejes, Linkoping University, Sweden Room 337, St Andrew’s Building</td>
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<td>Thursday 5th of May</td>
<td>“Socioeconomic Background and Participation in Higher Education: The Role of Expectations and Financial Constraints”</td>
<td>Dr Kristinn Hermannsson and Dr Jeanette Findlay, University of Glasgow Room 337, St Andrew’s Building</td>
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<td>Lunchtime seminar</td>
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<td>Thursday 9th June</td>
<td>“The incidence of and returns to “Overeducation”: PIAAC Evidence on the G7”</td>
<td>Professor Geraint Joñes, Lancaster University, school of Management Room 433A/B</td>
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<td>Lunchtime seminar</td>
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<td>Thursday 9th of June</td>
<td>“Inspiring Teaching: What we can learn from exemplary practitioners”</td>
<td>Professor Pamela Sammons, University of Oxford. Event co-hosted by GTCS Room 213, St Andrew’s Building</td>
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<td>Wednesday 22nd Sept.</td>
<td>“Educational change and teacher unions: reform and/or resistance?”</td>
<td>Professor Howard Stevenson, University of Nottingham. Event co-hosted by EIS Sir Charles Wilson Building</td>
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<td>Thursday Oct. 6th</td>
<td>“Decolonising Intercultural Education, the Geopolitics of Knowledge and Inter-epistemic dialogue”</td>
<td>Dr Robert Aman, University of Glasgow TBC</td>
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<td>Lunchtime seminar</td>
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<td>Thursday Nov. 3rd</td>
<td>‘Quantitative literacy training for teacher students: current developments and a first evaluation of the Q-Step activities in the School of Education’</td>
<td>Dr Katherin Barg, University of Glasgow TBC</td>
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<td>Lunchtime seminar</td>
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<td>Wednesday 17th Nov.</td>
<td>“Why bother with school improvement when it’s the “teacher-effect” which is so important?”</td>
<td>Professor Sir Tim Brighouse, University of Oxford. Event co-hosted by SCEL Humanities Lecture Theatre</td>
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Knowledge Exchange links

Conferences held

Comparative Education Society in Europe 2016 (31st May-1st June)
As part of our ongoing engagement with academic and policy communities and our commitment to internationalisation, ROC recently hosted the Comparative Education Society in Europe’s 2016 conference. In the spirit of ROC’s research agenda, the meeting was entitled ‘Equity in and through Education: changing contexts, consequences and contestations’ and was hosted by the Centre from 31 May to 3rd June. The conference attracted close to 200 participants from around the world. Michele Schweisfurth led a local team which included ROC members Katherin Barg, Kevin Lowden, Barbara Read and Oscar Valiente as working group convenors. Andy Furlong was one of the keynote speakers.

Robert Owen, Past Present and Future (9-10th January)
Following the ICSEI conference which was held in Glasgow this year, ROC hosted a post conference event in New Lanark Mill village on the work of Robert Owen. Over 50 international scholars took the opportunity to find out more about his revolutionary practices in establishing educational and social reforms for his workers in the mill village of New Lanark. Guest speakers included Professor Andy Hargreaves, Boston College and Professor Bob Davis, University of Glasgow.
Knowledge Exchange links

Invited presentations

Katherine Barg
• Invited talk ‘Parent’s occupational skills and children’s early cognitive development – a decomposition of social origin effects with the Millennium Cohort Study’ at Sociology Seminar at School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow, December 2015.

Chris Chapman
• Chaired “State of the Art” Session ICSEA, January 2016
• Chaired National Attainment Challenge Event, Feb 2016
• Chaired Attainment Advisors Professional Learning Programme, March 2016
• Presented Keynote at Hanoi Conference, theme Building capacity in Vietnam schools for successful implementation of System change, June 2016

Hannah Chestnutt
• “Strategic Alliances”, invited panelist at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, April 2016.
• “Using Social Network Analysis to examine educational change”, invited talk at Social Network Analysis in Scotland (SNAS), March 2016.

Clive Dimmock
• Keynote at Hanoi Conference, theme – Building capacity in Vietnam schools for successful implementation of System change, June 2016
• Led seminar for Scottish Centre for Studies in School Administration (SCSSA) on High performing leadership and school improvement, Edinburgh, May 2016.

Andy Furlong
• Presentation on Youth Transitions at University of Newcastle, Australia, November 2015
• Keynote address to the Norwegian Sociological Association Winter conference, Lillehammer
• Invited Keynote at CESE conference May 2016.

Barbara Kehm
• “Education and Research – A Winning Interaction?” Invited keynote at the Conference on Higher Education and research organised by the Swedish Quality Assurance Agency (UKÄ), November 2015
• “Doctoral Training in the UK”. Invited presentation at the workshop “Doctoral Training for the Knowledge Society: Global Convergence or Divergence” organised by Seoul National University, Seoul, April 2016.

Barbara Read

Michele Schweisfurth
• Invited seminar presentation at Humboldt University Berlin, ‘Pedagogical Traditions as Travelling Policies’, December 2015
• Keynote, Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong Conference, ‘Student Mobility and Learning to Live Together’, April 2016

Oscar Valiente
Recent awards and appointments

Contracts and Awards

Heather Chestnutt
- Awarded Principal’s Early Career Development Award, 2015-16

Andy Furlong
- Australian Research Council Learning to Make it Work (2016-2020)

Mark Murphy

Oscar Odena
- Contracted by Routledge to complete (by 31/12/2016) the single-authored research monograph Musical Creativity Revisited: Educational Foundations, Practices and Research. Contains a section on using music as a tool for inclusion.

Michele Schweisfurth

Oscar Valiente
- Awarded project TVET-CHILE. Award £319,884 (£234,309 University of Glasgow and £85,575 Universidad Alberto Hurtado) RCUK – CONICYT Research Partnerships Call Newton-Picarte Fund 2015. Team: Oscar Valiente (PI), Andy Furlong, Daniel Leyton (University of Sussex), Leandro Sepulveda (Universidad Alberto Hurtado), Maria Jose Valdebenito (Universidad Alberto Hurtado). December, 2015.

Appointments

Chris Chapman
- Appointed as Senior Academic Advisor to the Scottish Attainment Challenge, November 2015

Andy Furlong
- Appointed Professorial Fellow at University of Melbourne (2016-2020)

Clive Dimmock
- Appointed to oversee the design and delivery of the Scottish College for Educational Leadership Fellowship programme, 2016
- Appointments – Fellow of the Head Foundation in Singapore (a charitable Foundation funding socio-economic-educational development projects in South-East Asia), November, 2015

Barbara Kehm
- Member of the Academic Advisory Board of the Centre for Globally Engaged Higher Education (CGHE) at the UCL Institute of Education, February 2016.
- Appointed to be the Chair of the Commissioning Panel for the “Newton Higher Education South Africa call” which is jointly funded by the ESRC and the National Research Foundation of South Africa, June 2016.

Mark Murphy
- Appointed onto editorial board, American Education Research Journal, December 2015

Oscar Valiente
- Appointed to the Editorial Board of Compare Journal of International and Comparative Education, January 2016

Michele Schweisfurth
- Elected Vice-President of the Comparative Education Society in Europe, June 2016
Recent publications


Members of the Robert Owen Centre

Director(s)
Professor Chris Chapman
Dr Mark Murphy
Professor Michele Schweisfurth

Other core members
Dr Robert Aman
Dr Katherin Barg
Ms Hannah Chestnutt
Professor Clive Dimmock
Professor Graham Donaldson
Professor Andy Furlong
Professor Anthony Finn
Dr Niamh Friel
Mr Stuart Hall
Dr Kristinn Hermannsson
Professor Barbara Kehm
Dr Deirdre Kelly
Mr Kevin Lowden
Professor Jim O’ Brien
Dr Oscar Odena
Dr Barbara Read
Ms Adele Rowe
Dr Gijsbert Stoet
Dr Oscar Valiente

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