

Session Reports: Create



Oral Session 1

Discussant: Elizabeth Sandell

Author: Glenn Arthur Ricci

The first presentation of Oral Session 1: Create presented the work of Zachary Koestler, Harrison Wong and Lydia Jagodzinski (Minnesota State University Mankato, Minnesota, USA). This undergraduate research looked at changing teaching methods and the impact of these experiences on students. Their work looked especially at preparing future researchers with a more positive global cultural competency, which they defined as a set of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts. Using archived data from 2010 to 2018 for instructional purposes, the researchers were able to look at the starting level of the student's intercultural competence and whether or not this changes during specially designed courses that are meant to enhance global cultural competency. Their research is a useful starting point for other universities looking to specifically design courses that wish to focus on being more intercultural.

The second presentation continued the theme of multicultural connections by showing the work of Henry Paul Sekaayi (Makerere University, Uganda) who, as a teacher trainee of English and literature, experienced multicultural classrooms consisting of refugees from Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and other surrounding regions. These students were re-settled into Uganda's educational system, but due to inadequate incorporation of these multicultural students, many of them were non-responsive and silent throughout the school lessons. This project examined how schools can address the challenge of incorporating these students with the rest of the class, thereby closing the teaching gap between Ugandan students and non-Ugandan students. Using a quantitative and qualitative approach to data gathered from students, teachers and school managers, the researcher proposed a new model for the schools to approach the education of refugees.

The final presentation looked at the research done by Sean O'Rourke, Tori Smith and Jonathon Arndt (Minnesota State University Mankato, Minnesota, USA), which also looked at how future teachers are preparing to deal with multi-cultural classrooms. Specifically, the researchers looked at how inter-cultural competency (ICC) developed in undergraduate students. 48 undergraduate students in elementary education were tested at three different points in their academic career. Their findings showed that the undergraduate students greatly increased their ICC from the beginning of their studies to the beginning of their teaching careers, demonstrating the strong benefit of the inter-cultural programs being undertaken. The positive benefit of the research is currently being shared with other administrators to assist in the future education of teachers at Minnesota State University.



Oral Session 2

Discussant: Colleen Carpenter

Author: Glenn Arthur Ricci

The first presentation was the planned fieldwork of Sophia-Elisa Segler and Marcel Prigge (University of Bremen, Germany) to look at the collective memories and changes among the Mewlevi-Order, specifically the whirling dervishes. Using the observations made by 18th century traveller Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, the fieldwork by the researchers will compare observations from the past to those of the present. Are the observations by Seetzen still found today and do the functions of music and instruments remain the same as in the past? The planned fieldwork will be carried out in Istanbul.

The following presentation by Aaron Reynolds (University of Kentucky, USA) examined the Lexington Camera Club from 1950s and 1960s America. During this time artists were beginning to explore concepts of Zen, a Buddhist philosophy that emphasises direct experience as a means to awaken from the “suffering” of everyday existence. By examining the works of amateur artists that made up the Lexington Camera Club, the project will explore how Zen philosophy influenced and developed within the club in rural America. To carry out the project, the researchers will utilise the archives at the University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center.

The final presentation continued the theme of sub-cultures, however this project by Amani Khalil Al Hosani (Zayed University, United Arab Emirates) looked at the Emirates Riders Club, a motorcycle club that recently developed in the United Arab Emirates. The club is viewed as a pseudo-deviant culture within the traditional Emirati society and this project aims to understand the subculture by providing a reliable and non-stereotypical picture of the club. Through a series of interviews with the founding fathers, an online questionnaire for other members, and fieldwork through participant and non-participant observation, the project put together a descriptive analysis that shows how the group is heavily influenced by Western culture concerning motorcycling. Most importantly, the ethnography shows that traditional Emirati society does not have anything to fear from the sub-culture.



Oral Session 3

Discussant and Author: Emily Kashka

This oral session was under the theme of “create”. The presentations within this session covered a broad range of disciplines including education, psychology, and anthropology.

The first presenters of the session were Bukelwa Kumalo and Lukhanyo Boligello from the Nelson Mandela University in South Africa. Their presentation, titled “Critical thinking in mathematics teacher preparation: Teacher educator understandings, beliefs and use of critical thinking teaching strategies”, provided attendees with a deep dive into the importance of critical thinking. Kumalo and Boligello conducted interviews of 4 teacher educators, 2 from Germany and 2 from South African, with the aim of learning more about their views on best practices for teaching critical thinking skills to mathematics instructors.

The second presenter was Ayling Dominguez, a student at the University of Chicago in the United States. Dominguez’s presentation, titled “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of health: An immigrant’s decision-making as influenced by borders” examined the concept of borders within the US healthcare system through the lens of an undocumented immigrant living in NYC. Through this interview, Dominguez highlighted the difficulties faced by undocumented immigrants in seeking medical care, particularly due to fear of deportation.

Finally, Nam Nguyen from Washington State University in the United States shared his multitudes of experiences studying abroad across the globe. His presentation, titled “Development of a survey to investigate study abroad destination choice” focused specifically on the decision-making process of undergraduate students when selecting a study abroad location. Nguyen’s worked to develop a survey that helped his university determine why students select specific study abroad locations.

The discussion following these three presentations focused on several shared themes. First a discussion on the important examining issues from a global context related understanding teacher training across different countries, understanding experiences of immigrants, and broadening cultural understandings via study abroad. The discussion continued as we discussed critical thinking as it applies to intercultural competency, and how thinking critically about systems can help us to improve upon them. The discussion wrapped up with some reflections on the difficulty on the shared methodology of interviewing and the challenges associated with it.



Oral Session 4: Create

Discussant and Author: Emily Kashka

This oral session was under the theme of “create”. The presentations within this session covered a broad range of disciplines including education and cultural studies.

The first session presenter was Dan Nadasan from the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom. Nadasan’s presentation, titled “Widening participation in higher education through undergraduate research”, focused on the evidence-based outcomes of undergraduate research participation on students. He defined research as a high impact practice and discussed the Widening Participation policy movement within the UK. Though Nadasan’s presentation was cut short due to time, his discussion of the importance of engaging in undergraduate research was insightful and topical at a congress focused on this topic.

Our second presenter was Cady Parker from Bridgewater State University in the United States. Parker’s presentation was titled “The TAB Choice - Teaching for Artistic Behavior: Student learning in a choice-based art classroom” and focused on a specific art curriculum called TAB-Choice (Teacher for Artistic Behavior in a Choice-Based Setting). Parker interviewed teachers who utilize this student-led curriculum to better understand how it empowers students to be more creative.

The final presentation of this session was given by Jonathon Arndt, Olivia Thomas, Tori Smith, and Sean O’Rourke from Minnesota State University, Mankato in the United States. The group’s presentation was titled “Intercultural competencies among undergraduates in the College of Arts & Humanities at Minnesota State University, Mankato” and examined the gains in intercultural competencies experienced by undergraduate students enrolled in an intercultural communications course. The group surveyed undergraduate students at the beginning of the course and the end of the course based on an intercultural inventory.

While our discussion was limited due to time constraints, we were able to spend a few minutes talking about how education institutions can rethink their approach to learning to help students gain applicable skills. The three presentations provided various frameworks in which education goes beyond standard knowledge acquisitions and prepares students to be more prepared to tackle complex real-world problems.



Oral Session 5

Discussant and Author: Gregory Young

This session was comprised of three presentations: Uncovering Sartre: Analysis of an unpublished journal by Dealla Samadi from the University of Kentucky; A memoir of Eric Funk: Music influences in a global environment by Peter Pomajevich from Montana State University; and Escape stories: Experience and entering. A Student Project by Julia Kreuch from the Faculty of Protestant Theology Ruhr-University Bochum.

All three presenters brought history and discovery to life by delving deeply into stories informed by primary sources. They all had global ramifications as well, in that Sartre's writings have been studied around the world, Eric Funk's music has been performed in many countries, and the refugee crisis is by its nature international. Discussions were robust and involved, and centered on the techniques used, especially in personal interviews, to glean the most essential and salient information.

Dealla Samadi researched a French journal in the collection at the University of Kentucky purported to be written by the famous existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, to ascertain the authenticity of the journal. It was found that this unknown and undocumented Sartre journal is the opening chapter of a book Sartre wrote in 1951 entitled "La Reine Albemarle". Unread for over 50 years, this text has provided valuable insights into the life of the famous French philosopher and has allowed Sartre experts a new opportunity for scholarship and research. A digital humanities project was created to retrace Sartre's steps in Rome, Italy as outlined in his 15-paged journal.

Peter Pomajevich drafted a biography of composer and Montana State University professor Eric Funk, who has written 149 major works, won numerous awards nationally and internationally, and whose music has been performed around the world for over 40 years. This research will be the first comprehensive documentation of the musical innovations of this composer, conductor, performer, presenter, and teacher. It addresses how music has transformed his life, detailing the events and the people that have led to his comprehensive artistry, and finally how he influenced the world around him with his music.

Julia Kreuch made several study visits to Lebanon and Iraq, where Ethno-religious minorities from the Syrian and Iraqi region were interviewed. Then these interviews were transcribed and partially translated. She and her fellow students were interested in the life-stories of people who experienced escape and expulsion in the current confusion in Middle East. A constructive examination of the socio-political events in this region was important to face the topic of the "refugee crisis," to understand it, as well as to find instructions for action for the various fields of activity.



Oral Session 6

Discussant and Author: Harald Mieg

The session comprised three presentations.

Sundos Alsheebani presented a study on the representation of Islamic architecture in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Sharjah developed a pattern of Islamic architecture that represents uniquely its cultural and Islamic identity which the city is regionally known for. Alsheebani research is going to explore the Islamic architectural elements in three main buildings in Sharjah: the Blue Souk, the Museum of Islamic Civilization, and King Faisal Mosque.

Kaspar Metzkwow spoke about remembering the future city - collective memory in debates on urban design. Building cities is all about tomorrow. Our future needs are to be met, our future selves to be housed. Recent building-projects in major German cities, however, point in a different direction: it is the past that is rebuilt and talked about. His research focused on past-narratives and their power, and tries to answer how future building-projects are legitimated through references to the past. By analyzing forty-nine newspaper articles and eight semi-structured interviews, such constructions are examined in a debate around urban renewal in Potsdam, Germany.

Sara Alnahdi presented her interior design project on promoting active and social life for Emirati women through proposed indoor-outdoor spaces. The project site is located at the communal area of the Cleveland Clinic building, at Marayah Island, Abu Dhabi. The project envisions the space to be used as gym by females and to provide a variety of group exercising options. The design project proposed to bring the outdoor indoors and reinstate the past link people had with their surrounding environments.

Discussion covered the relationship of architecture and people, in particular with regard to participation. It is taken for granted that architects and urban planners have to take into account the needs of the citizens. However, there is evidence both for and against the use of participatory architecture. Concentrated power - such as by an autocrat - may foster and speed up construction.



Oral Session 7

Discussant and Author: Victoria Marín

Aspects of design are cornerstone when creating for enabling or empowering learners, especially in the case of people with disabilities. The three presentations in *Oral Session 7 of Create* show clearly this importance in different interdisciplinary contexts.

How can elementary school classroom induce student creativity through spatial experiences?, by the American University in Cairo of Egypt, presented the cross-disciplinary work between teachers and architects to find out the best settings of an Egyptian classroom for promoting creativity, without modifying substantially the standard infrastructure of the school. Aspects such as lighting, spatial quality, room layout and furniture are being examined to generate design guidelines. A mixed-method approach was being followed, where in-depth interviews are carried out with educational stakeholders and architects, and creativity tests are given to students to measure the effects of those settings. The preliminary results show that each setting has its advantages and disadvantages, depending on the type of learning activities (e.g., individual / collaborative work). In the discussion it was highlighted that this research was inspired by the cases of other countries, like the worldwide known situation of Finnish classrooms.

Kinematic algorithm of anthropomorphic robotic hand for communication in Thai sign language (KART), by the King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi of Thailand, put forward an anthropomorphic robotic hand to support communication in Thai sign language for people with deaf disability. Different kinds of robotic hands were presented and compared in order to find the best design for the purpose of finger spelling, and by means of an algorithm that was able to simulate the postures of human hands. In the discussion, the further development of the system, its integration in learning contexts and the affordability of the robotic hand came into question.

Developing a mobile application to investigate the perception of a dyslexia, by the University of Oldenburg, presents an Android jigsaw puzzle (*DysPuzzle*) developed for elementary school children with dyslexia. Different design principles for mobile apps and for preschoolers' learning were considered for this development. The evaluation of the use of the app was conducted through a usability test and the Thinking-Aloud method with the children's parents, who selected the age of their children and the level of difficulty for the puzzle in the app. The discussion brought to light the further development of the app with regard to the differentiation per children's ages, the possibility to use the app as an early detection system of dyslexia according to the performed visual perception in the puzzle, and questioned the intervention of the parents in selecting the level of difficulty instead of the kids.

