RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2016

Royal Geographical Society
with IBG
Advancing geography
and geographical learning

124	Geographies of youth, schools and education
Chair(s)	Peter Hopkins (Newcastle University, UK)
Timetable	Wednesday 31 August 2016, Session 4 (16:50 - 18:30)

Contact the conference organisers to request a change to session or paper details: AC2016@rgs.org

Discourses of 'risk' and (in)visible subjectivities in the spatial interconnections of marginalised young people with museums
Ioannis Athanasiou (Goldsmiths, University of London, UK)

Despite a growing body of research on young people's engagement with museums in recent years, little research explores the possibility of museums to bring about change to young people, especially to those who are considered as being 'at risk'. The ideas of being 'disadvantaged' automatically invoke frameworks of risk, class and race (Hickey-Moody 2013). In locating particular youth in museum discourses of disadvantage, we simultaneously reproduce the young people as being disadvantaged and group them into a homogenised socially excluded group. In this respect, if young people are not marked out as needy or failing, an inclusive history museum has to acknowledge this potential of marking and facilitate access to the past for everyone (Merriman 1991) as equally as for those who are young. My paper seeks to critically explore the discursive practices of museums and shed light on the power relations that play out in the spatial interconnections of local museums with young people at the margins of society. In concert with post-structural and critical pedagogical perspectives, our ideas about 'other' young people can be 'questioned in between locations, at the frontiers of traditional disciplinary boundaries, and beyond the confines of institutional spaces' (original emphasis, Golding 2009)

Examining Pre-service teachers' Multicultural Competence in Greece: The Contribution of Nexus Thinking
Panagiota Sotiropoulou (Loughborough University, UK)

The general acknowledgement of the multicultural nature of contemporary western schools has resulted in educational policies stressing the need for producing educators able to effectively and efficiently address diversity. However, evidence indicates that pre-service teachers feel inadequately prepared to address multicultural classrooms. This is especially true in countries like Greece, which have only recently become immigrant host societies. Thus, it seems that we must first identify the determinants of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence, before we can effectively design educational policies aiming at producing multiculturally competent educators. This paper utilizes Nexus Thinking, combining elements of Education, Sociology and Geography, in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the predictors of pre-service teachers' multicultural competence. Previous research, focusing primarily on the impact of university diversity-related training attended, has generated inconsistent findings, ranging from positive to non-significant effects. This paper argues that, apart from their university training, pre-service teachers might also be influenced by their past experiences with diversity in places of both formal and informal learning as well as their socio-economic background in developing their multicultural competence. A mixed-methods approach is proposed for testing the validity of the argument made, examining pre-service primary education teachers in Greece.

Playful exploration and meaning making in and out of school with cross-curricula creative computing
John Reeves (University of Cumbria, UK)

This paper shows how the methods of software development and the art of computer programming can provide meaning in the school's and the wider curriculum, while encouraging a playful exploration and expression of knowledge with young people. The paper provides an analysis of computing's place in the educational world. This includes a focus on creativity in computing as an influence in helping people to explore information, communicate their worldview in an expressive and engaging way, and work well with other people in facilitating the expression of their ideas. The research into the influence of creative computing in the learning of both primary and secondary age pupils is focused on weekly computing clubs in a primary and secondary school. The self-study focuses on a pedagogical approach that is cross-curricula and design based, in keeping with professional practice of software development, and allows each child to uniquely express themselves within the living curriculum, while achieving results that are measureable within the given curriculum. The creative development of 150 children is used to demonstrate how computing can be used to reinforce the educational strands of literacy and numeracy, as well as other cross-curricula activities, such as evidence, environment and sustainability, and constructive self-expression.

Comparing habitats by logging relationships among sunlight and temperature indicators: a long-term, multidisciplinary case study
David Murray (Independent Researcher, UK)

Between 1998 and 2008, an environmental datalogging case study was conducted within the grounds of a UK (Leicestershire) upper secondary (14-18 years) school. Grass and woodland and subsequently glade and woodland vegetations were monitored four times each year (solstices and equinoxes). Air and ground temperatures and incident and reflected red and near-infrared sunlight intensities were recorded. Normalized Difference Vegetation Indexes were calculated. Utilising a multi-disciplinary approach, Advanced-Level Geography and Biology teachers and students investigated the interrelationship of these indicators. They related simple statistical summaries of logged data to vegetation type and condition, to observed physical features and to the prevailing weather and season. Students could consider how changing vegetation type and condition might influence the observed microclimate and global climate. Aims of this C.L.I.M.A.T.E. (Co-ordinated Logging Investigation Monitors Altering Terrestrial Environments) protocol extended beyond the confines of school syllabi. Obtained data were comprehensively analysed between 2009 and 2012. Non-parametric quantitative techniques were preferred. Correlations and regression analyses further aided an understanding of vegetation changes, adjacent habitats with a defined common boundary and habitat boundaries that change over seasons and years. This paper illustrates the feasibility of longitudinal academic research conducted in collaboration with UK secondary education establishments. Findings justify enhanced research links between schools and universities and greater future working interdependencies. In long-term practical enquiry, students may be encouraged to monitor habitats, describe ecosystems and measure environmental changes. Spatially constrained vegetation types within school grounds can provide exceptional opportunities for proactive, original, meaningful academic research that contributes to our understanding of UK and global climate change and creates a greater 'sense of place' within local communities.

Clustering (Spatial) Relationships to unveil small-scale Schooling Markets
Sebastian Leist (IFBQ Hamburg, Germany)
Marcus Pietsch (Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany)

"How is it possible to exactly assign segregation or other socio-spatial phenomena in a large-scale schooling system of a metropolis? By revealing spatial networks of schools within which students are most likely distributed (so-called schooling markets) under consideration of local relationships.
Previous approaches define schooling markets as a spatial container which are bordered by responsibilities or travel costs. The assumptions of these approaches are problematic and may cause incorrect or even arbitrary estimates of socio-spatial phenomena. Altervatively, stochastic network approaches offer an accurate way of attributing schools to similar groups according to their relationship among each other. The advantages of this method lie first of all in the definition of groups based on an endogenous attribute of empirical data, and secondly, in the latent way of modeling which renders measurement errors irrelevant. The network of relationships between the schools in Hamburg is based on all flows of students moving from primary to secondary schools previous to the start of school year 2014/15. Applying the mentioned approach, it will be demonstrated that it is possible to detect regional and, in a subsequent step of analysis, small-scale local schooling markets. After having detected schooling markets further analysis is possible, such as: valid measures of competition firstly between schools on local markets and secondly between local markets; valid description of social segregation among students

'Even the beach is broken':Young People's experiences of unemployment in a seaside town
Emma Bond (University Campus Suffolk, UK)
Mark Manning (University Campus Suffolk, UK)

This paper presents the findings of a qualitative study undertaken in 2015 with 51 young people who were long-term unemployed and living in a small seaside town with a Blue-Flag award. Widely seen as a local problem for local people, the study examines the tensions between the physical environment, local economy and rural geography with the social domains and structural inequalities through the experiences of the young people who live there. Using a multi-method approach including visual walks, iPad technology, self-directed photography with narrative accounts, the study reveals how a myriad of micro, meso and macro influences impact on young people's life biographies, long-term poverty, criminal behaviour and hopelessness in a town which has lacked financial and political investment for many years. The paper argues that unless the complexity of seemingly separate issues is understood interventions and initiatives designed to help these young people provide a 'sticking plaster' approach. Such initiatives fail to address the wider interdependencies between environmental and (anti)social domains and the findings suggest that a wider, more integrated approach that moves beyond both policy, service provider, political, sector and disciplinary silos is required in order to identify more efficient sustainable solutions to intergenerational unemployment in local area.