

History of Education Interdisciplinary Symposium

Date: 19th March 2026, 17:00-20:00

Venue: King William Building, [KW002](#), University of Greenwich

The History of Education Interdisciplinary Symposium brings together speakers from a wide range of disciplines and fields across the University of Greenwich who are experts in this significant area of scholarly practice. The symposium involves a rich tapestry of themes and perspectives in this area, showcasing examples of research-based educational practice, while providing valuable opportunities for networking and the exchange of knowledge and practice. Through this event, we aim to model good practice in interdisciplinary research and demonstrate the importance of the history of education to various disciplines and research practice.

The symposium is conducted in collaboration with the *Pedagogic Research SIG*, the Centre for Workforce Development in the *Institute for Lifecourse Development (ILD)*, and the *Centre for Research in Language and Heritage (CREL)* in the Institute for Inclusive Communities and Environments (ICE), all at the University of Greenwich

[Please register your interest to attend the event here.](#)

Refreshments will be provided.

A dinner will follow near campus after the event. If you are interested, please [complete this form](#) in advance to make a reservation.

Symposium Organisers: Dr Mary Clare Martin (Associate Professor in Childhood, History and the Life Course, Leader of the Cluster for the Study of Play and Recreation (CCF) and of the Hub for History, the Life Course and the Professions (CfWfD) in the Institute for Lifecourse Development, University of Greenwich)

Dr Angeliki Voskou (Senior Lecturer in Learning and Teaching, Co-leader of the Pedagogic Research SIG, University of Greenwich)

Programme

16:30-17:00 Refreshments and networking

17:00-17:10 Welcome and announcements, Dr Mary Clare Martin and Dr Angeliki Voskou

Why History of Education Matters: Contexts and Innovations Over Time

Chairs: Dr Mary Clare Martin & Dr Suzan Koseoglu

17:10-17:30 Dr Emma Kennedy (Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching, Academic and Learning Enhancement)

“Learning from the Past: Using the History of Education for Professional Development”

17:30-17:50 Dr Katarina Stenke (Senior Lecturer in Eighteenth-century English Literature, School of Humanities and Social Sciences)

“Dissenting Identities and Life-long Learning in Eighteenth-century Manuscript Poems”

17:50-18:05 Dr Angeliki Voskou (Senior Lecturer in Learning and Teaching, Academic and Learning Enhancement)

“I think my culture is more me ...”: The Education of Greek Immigrant Children in England and Identity Development from Nineteenth Century until Today”

18:05-18:15 Noah Eneh (MA Education student)

“Elders and Nigerian Education”

18:15-18:25: Break and refreshments

Education, Theory and Power

Chairs: Dr Emma Kennedy & Dr Suzan Koseoglu

18:25-18:40 Dr Ewa Sidorenko (Programme Leader for Doctorate in Education, Senior Lecturer in MA Education, School of Education)

“Education as Resistance During World War II: An Autoethnographic Project”

18:40-19:00 Dr Michael Harpham (Research Fellow, School of Human Sciences)

“Through the Looking Glass: The Evolution of Technology in Education and the Dawn of a Fourth Episteme”

19:00-19:10: Break and refreshments

Decolonising the Curriculum Across Age Ranges

Chair: Dr Angeliki Voskou

19:10-19:20 Alison Hales (Associate Professor of Teacher Education and Primary History, School of Education Lead: Professional Placements, School of Education)

“Challenging Histories and Difficult Geographies: Teaching Controversial Issues in the Primary Classroom”

19:20-19:30 Phoebe Howard (MPhil/PhD candidate, School of Education)

“Could Decolonisation be a Solution to a Stagnant Secondary School History Curriculum?”

History of Education and Archival Practice - Keynote Session

19:30-20:00 Nathan Finlayson (Apprentice Archivist, Information & Library Services Directorate, Libraries & Academic Enhancement)

“Teaching Old Records New Tricks: Education Collections as Tools for Archive Traineeship – Theory, Practice and Case Study”

Abstracts:

“Learning from the Past: Using the History of Education for Professional Development”

Dr Emma Kennedy (Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching, Academic and Learning Enhancement)

Abstract: This paper will explore how the history of education can enliven and enhance staff development activities. Drawing on experience at multiple institutions, I will argue that history can interest and engage colleagues from all disciplines. We will consider current trends in professional development and how the nuance and complexity that history offers can help us deal with the complex problems of higher education today.'

“Dissenting Identities and Life-long Learning in Eighteenth-century Manuscript Poems”

Dr Katarina Stenke (Senior Lecturer in Eighteenth-century English Literature, School of Humanities and Social Sciences)

Abstract: In a 2011 review article, sociologist Marjan Laal starts with a helpfully broad definition of lifelong learning: it “means that learning should take place at all stages of life cycle (from the cradle to the grave) and, in more recent versions that it should be life-wide; that is embedded in all life contexts from the school to the workplace, the home and the community” (Laal, 2011). The present paper is premised on the fact that, from my own point of view as a scholar of eighteenth-century British literature and history, Laal’s definition actually works equally well to describe what was known in that period as “practical devotion.” That is, the embedding of devotional practices of prayer, study, conversation and reflection into every stage of human life, all in the light of Christian futurity.

The paper focuses on a small archive of records of such eighteenth-century devotional life-long learning, namely a group of short poems composed by the Particular Baptist poet Anne Steele (1717-78), of Broughton, Hampshire, her brother William Steele, Jr. (1715-1785) and her half-sister Mary Wakeford nee Steele (1724-72). Presenting some intriguing details and contexts of these sources and relating them to wider contemporary Dissenting (that is non-Anglican Protestant) culture, I reflect on what contemporary pedagogies of life-long-learning might themselves learn from eighteenth-century practical devotion, and especially from how it theorizes the ‘length of life’ itself, whether measured in years, across a life, or in the minutes and hours of daily practice.

“I think my culture is more me ...”: The Education of Greek Immigrant Children in England and Identity Development from Nineteenth Century until Today”

Dr Angeliki Voskou (Senior Lecturer in Learning and Teaching, Academic and Learning Enhancement)

Abstract: This session sets out the long-term historical processes and events that explain the emergence of Greek communities and the education of Greek immigrant students in the UK from the 19th century until the present. It further explores how social and ethnic histories are communicated in the space of Greek supplementary schools in England and how immigrant students’ identities are developed as a result of their social positioning as symbolic members of the Greek diaspora, Greek supplementary schooling, and a wider nation-state, fostering the preservation of ethnic identity.

This session also explores teachers’ roles as cultural and identity mediators and students’ expositions of their identities in schooling, history learning, the space of the Greek community, as well as in a pluralistic society. Finally, drawing on postmodern theories of identity development, the paper draws implications for today’s role of Greek supplementary schools in a changing community and society.

“Education as Resistance During World War II: An Autoethnographic Project”

Dr Ewa Sidorenko (Programme Leader for Doctorate in Education, Senior Lecturer in MA Education, School of Education)

Abstract: Following the discovery of my family archive, I began the long process of interpreting its contents—letters, documents, and personal records spanning the early twentieth century, including extensive wartime correspondence. What emerged was a set of family histories I had never been told, ultimately leading to a series of conference presentations and an autoethnographic paper (Sidorenko, 2022) examining the intergenerational impact of my grandmother’s imprisonment in Ravensbrück concentration camp.

This presentation draws on the archive to explore the interconnected stories of my grandmother, mother, and great-aunt, revealing experiences that resonate with broader patterns in the history of Polish education. Across four generations, the women in my family engaged in education as a form of resistance: my great-grandmother teaching village children under the Russian Empire; my grandmother maintaining intellectual life as a slave labourer in the German camp; my great-aunt working as a clandestine teacher in occupied Warsaw; and my mother, as a young child, learning beyond her years in a context where knowledge itself was political. I too, attended clandestine history lessons under communism.

Education—particularly the teaching of history, literature, and geography—has long functioned in Poland as an act of cultural and political resilience. To make sense of these interwoven personal and historical narratives, I draw on a range of sociological and educational theorists, including Marx, Durkheim, Foucault, and Freire, using their frameworks to illuminate how private archives can reveal collective histories of oppression, resistance and learning.

“Through the Looking Glass: The Evolution of Technology in Education and the Dawn of a Fourth Episteme”

Dr Michael Harpham, Research Fellow, School of Human Sciences

Abstract: In using ‘Alice Through the Looking Glass’ as a metaphor for our current use of communication technology in education, the rationale for this talk is to present a fresh perspective to help situate the debate around the current use of technologies in education, especially Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) on a professional educational continuum. A conceptual framework is used to explore the evolution of education and inform present teaching practice in relation to current challenges. A search of three databases, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost and Scopus was carried out to locate relevant sources utilising Foucault’s style of exploration, known as archaeological historiography outlined in ‘The Order of Things: Archaeology of the Human Sciences’ (1970). The exploration uncovers six key changes in the evolution of communication technologies, education and their impact on teaching. The conceptual framework explores the political context within which education is delivered, how it is delivered and the locus of control over who is to be educated and how. Relating this evolution to Foucault’s original three epistemes and exploring knowledge-making from the past, it is suggested that in this increasingly algorithm-generated knowledge-creating era, we are seeing the dawn of a fourth, Technological Episteme. This novel lens and the implications of a new fourth episteme raise further questions and issues for research and professional exploration. The discussion and conclusion present the implications of this technological and epistemological shift for both educators and policy makers, offering pedagogical reflections on the past, which may inform policy and practice in the future.

“Could Decolonisation be a Solution to a Stagnant Secondary School History Curriculum?”

Phoebe Howard (MPhil/PhD candidate, School of Education)

Abstract: Whilst curriculum content in secondary education, and the need for its decolonisation has long been discussed, it received a greater level of scrutiny after the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the growth in support for the Black Lives Matter

movement. Many history educators are now focussed on promoting ‘untold histories’ of the past, which have until recently been ignored in our curricula. It is, however, important to consider how changes in the curriculum can be implemented impactfully without becoming a tokenistic strategy that is utilised by teachers without understanding its real impact. Thus, creating an awareness of what decolonisation means and looks like in teaching that all teachers can understand is a good starting point in a step towards dismantling a ‘stagnant’ secondary history curriculum and promoting diverse student uptake. To encourage this step towards a decolonised history curriculum, this work will also highlight, and use, participatory action research from students, staff and parents to shift the lens of teaching from the ‘coloniser’ to the ‘colonised’ perspective. The importance of this change is arguably not only necessary to keep the curriculum current and engaging but also ensure that History is a sought-after option of study for all. The Royal Historical Society (2018) state, ‘pupils in some BME groups are slightly less likely to choose History than White pupils’ (p.30), with Moncrieffe adding that ‘the proportion who do becomes progressively smaller as students move on to A-level and undergraduate study’ (Moncrieffe, p.2020, p.17). Therefore, we must explore the impact that radically altering the curriculum can have on improving the diversity of student uptake after History becomes optional.

“Teaching Old Records New Tricks: Education Collections as Tools for Archive Traineeship – Theory, Practice and Case Study”

Nathan Finlayson (Apprentice Archivist, Information & Library Services Directorate, Libraries & Academic Enhancement)

Abstract: Archival repositories have often been considered a curated graveyard for no-longer active records. The widely utilised ‘Records Life Cycle’ even posits the archive as the last stop in any given document’s life, a record ‘heaven’ for important papers in opposition to the damnation of disposal. In contrast, this paper will present both theoretical and practical applications of furthering the use of Educational Archival Records long into their twilight years.

Considering theories of archival structuration and creation, (Derrida, Upward, Jenkinson) I will examine an approach to teaching archival practice utilised in the University of Greenwich Archive and Special Collections. Such an approach is one that holds in its core a respect for the practical curation and preservation of archives, while celebrating equally their original use purpose and the purpose of their arrangement as a collection of historical nature. I will consider its use in the training of 2nd and 3rd year History in Practice placement students, who join the archive team every year during academic term 2.

The act of training placement students has historically engaged all types of records that are held in the University repository. Recently, often taking students own interests as

impetus, our Educational Archives have taken a front foot in this process. I will use the case study of the Lifelong Learning Archive, a collection of adult education and literacy programs, material and media, to showcase both the value these educational records have in preserving a specific moment in adult literacy education, and their use as tools to teach the science of archiving to a new generation of would be record custodians.