

# School of Education News



## New multimedia studio

*Why not take a look at the school's newly refurbished multimedia studio. This has been designed to provide both staff and students with excellent facilities dedicated to the production of video and audio content. Completed projects can be streamed and Podcasted through the University's various servers.*

We took a decision to install Apple iMac's - I have had experience with their computers for a number of years and surprisingly, the chaps at Apple tell me that this is one of only a few Apple computer suites here at the University (they have Macs over at Martin Harris).

When considering the choice of software, rather than installing Apple's Final Cut Pro for editing video, Adobe CS3 Production Premium was chosen, this contains a number of applications and is supported across both platforms. There are a couple of PC laptops available with CS3 installed.

I shall be providing technical support in the studio and running a number of workshops next Semester.

**Location:** C block, ground floor, audio Visual studio 2, next to CG53

**Contact:** Peter Leigh (multimedia technician) x58674 or 7759432  
mobile: 07810 850439



### Equipment

Apple 20" iMac 2.4 Ghz 3Gb  
Apple Macbook 2.4 Ghz 2Gb laptop  
Dell D630 laptops  
JVC SR-DVM 700E edit deck  
Behringer Xeynx 802 audio mixing desk  
Sennheiser HD201 headphones  
Marantz PMD620 field recorder  
Audio Technica AT804 Mic  
Canon & Sony Mini Dv cameras

### Software

Adobe Production Premium CS3 which includes:

Premiere	Flash
Soundbooth	Illustrator
Photoshop	After effects

### Apple software

imovie	iPhoto
iWeb	iTunes
iDVD	Garageband

### Other Software

Audacity

### Issue 2 - Summer 2008

New Multimedia Studio  
Graduates recognised for work arising from Masters dissertation research  
Using children's drawings to investigate

racial inclusion in a school in England  
Professor John Smyth (Simon Visiting Professor 2008)  
George Veletsianos (new lecturer on MA DTCE)

## Graduates recognised for work arising from Masters dissertation research

*Emma Pathare and Joy Lee graduated from the Masters in Educational Technology and English Language Teaching programme, which they both studied by distance learning. They have both received awards for work arising from the excellent research they carried out for their dissertations.*



Emma works at Dubai Women's College in the U.A.E and for her dissertation began development of an online vocabulary course, the impact of which was researched on language learners in her local context. Significant gains in core vocabulary skills were demonstrated. Based on these foundations, the course has gone on to be adopted by her institution, and has thus far been used by over 1500 learners. In recognition of this work, Emma has won the **International category of the 2008 British Council ELTons** (English Language Teaching Innovation Awards) <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-innovation-awards-2008-winners.htm>.

Joy is a primary school teacher based in Singapore. She carried out an action research project to explore how using visual learning strategies might help learners to improve narrative writing. This involved the use of Inspiration mapping software. Joy was able to identify the impact of specific integration approaches and develop a repertoire of researched learning materials. In recognition of her work, she was awarded one of **Inspiration's 2007-2008 Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning**. Joy intends to use her scholarship for further professional development and to disseminate her work at conferences, the first of which, the International Conference on Teaching and Learning in Singapore, she is about to attend.



# Using children's drawings to investigate racial inclusion in a school in England

Annita Eliadou, Wai Ming Lo, Sara Servio, Francis Simui

*As part of our Masters Degree course in Inclusive Education (2006-7), we had to undertake a school-based inquiry research project in a Manchester primary school.*

Our group included students from Cyprus, Hong Kong, England and Zambia and our focus was 'pupil voice'. Racial inclusion was a key concern for the primary school where we did our research. Pupils come from 15 different ethnic backgrounds and speak 19 different languages; 57% of pupils are Caucasian and 43% are non-Caucasian. The school wanted to know if racial background is a barrier to students' inclusion. The school is committed to continuously working to remove such barriers, and has received a gold award for its efforts.

Our research took four months, and we made eight visits to the school. We had regular meetings with the principal to ensure that the research was jointly planned. We focused on break times because we wanted to see if all pupils' were included in play.

We asked all 233 pupils aged 5-11 to participate in the research through a drawing competition in which they could win prizes. They were asked to draw and name the friends they played with during break time. We used their drawings to identify all the play relationships that were happening and we plotted these in sociograms (see

diagram). From this we could begin to see whether the pupils were playing in racially inclusive or in racially segregated groups. We also interviewed pupils about their views on their school lives and whether they felt included in school or not; 95% said their school is a friendly place.

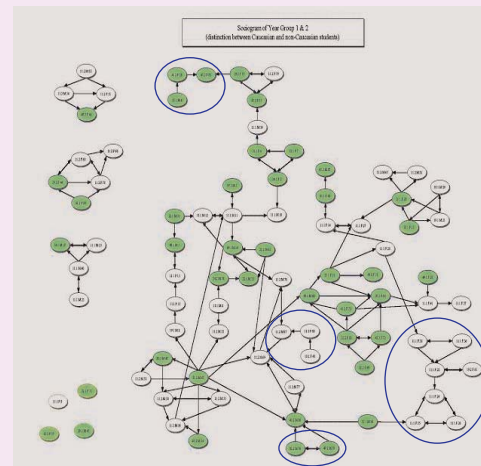
We found that, overall, the school is racially inclusive, but some instances of racial segregation were happening among some of the pupils. This could become a barrier to their full inclusion in school life.

The school is already committed to using action research approaches to improve its practices. The findings from the pupil drawing activity could therefore be a starting point for further investigation into why this segregation is happening. As such, the school's principal committed himself to taking action to address the instances of racial segregation identified among pupils.

Through this school-based inquiry research project we were able to promote pupil voice activities and help the school take forward its action research. The work highlighted for us how powerful and meaningful it can be to get children's views on issues relating to the practices and policy-making that directly affect them. We discovered that inclusive education is really possible if all education stakeholders are willing to collaborate.



*A pupil's drawing. All the names have been covered to preserve anonymity*



*This is a sociogram for Years 1 and 2. Each oval has a reference number written in it to represent a pupil who participated in the drawing competition. The arrows show each pupil's preferred friends. Caucasian pupils are represented by white ovals and non-Caucasian by green ovals. The blue circles show where pupils appear to be playing only with peers from the same background as themselves (Caucasian or non-Caucasian).*

## *. . . what is school-based inquiry?*

Education systems throughout the world are facing the challenge of learner diversity. Higher Education needs to respond to this challenge.

Masters students who study Inclusive Education at the University of Manchester are required to undertake a school-based inquiry research project.

This innovatory course enables participants to develop skills and understanding so that they can take on leadership roles in relation to these challenges. It focuses on ways of bringing about change at the classroom, school and system level.

The group of students who wrote this article won first prize in the University of Manchester's annual 'Student Team Working Awards' in 2007 - in the category for post-graduate curricular entries. The judges said that the quality of their reflective writing was exceptionally high and that they were clear winners! The prize was £500.

This year (2007-8) another group of students was one of three groups to be shortlisted for the same prize. They were invited to the awards ceremony but did not win the prize.

.....  
The whole article can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.eenet.org.uk/newsletters/news11/pages5.shtml>



## Professor John Smyth

Simon Visiting Professor 2008

*Internationally renowned as an*

*educational scholar, Professor John Smyth, is the Simon Visiting Professor for 2008.*

He spent five weeks in the School of Education working with colleagues, giving a public lecture, and working with postgraduate students. Central to the visit was the development of a linked bid between the Universities of Manchester and Ballarat in Australia. The project has been designed to examine the lives of young people, and how where they live and how they think about their lives affects decisions and choices about education. The School of Education has partnered with Oldham LA, and the project bid in England is being led by Dr Carlo Raffo and Professor Helen Gunter.

John Smyth's research has focused on in particular on education and disadvantaged communities, with a particular emphasis on young people and exclusion. He has also worked on developing socially critical approaches to school leadership, effective teaching and learning, and, teachers and their work. He has published 17 books, over 50 chapters in books, 100 papers in refereed journals, and 80 papers in professional journals. He continues to work close to practice in schools with teachers and students, and strategically with national policymakers, and this was illustrated in his the public lecture during his visit.

The lecture was titled: the elusive search for social justice in educational policy: could this be the end of state education? John talked about how the newly elected Labor government in Australia has not been slow in launching a "war on poverty"-and it looks like invoking much of the language, discourses, models and practices of New Labour in the UK. The incoming Australian Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, recently announced the formation of a "social inclusion unit" to be located in her portfolio as Minister for Inclusion. John went on to ask what (if anything) has been achieved in England in terms of improvements from educational policy for the most educationally disadvantaged students? Has the bold education laboratory experiment that has been incubated in England delivered on its promises of unbounded optimism? What should we be watchful of in Australia, or terrified of? Indeed, what are the lessons to be learned from the English experience? Are approaches like the ones adopted in England that invoke the language of 'social inclusion', what they appear to be? Or, are they merely a cover for some other agenda able to be subverted and hijacked by those best positioned to do so? These are important educational policy and practice questions that John argued are crucial and worth exploring for both countries-as a means of taking stock in England, as well as providing some much needed pointers for countries like Australia which make the decision to go down the same pathway. A full copy of the lecture is available from Helen Gunter.

## George Veletsianos

New Lecturer on MA DTCE



*I am originally from Cyprus and I will be moving from the United States, where I have been for the last 8 years, to join the School of Education staff in September, 2008.*

My research and teaching interests revolve around the understanding that technological innovations provide the means for learners to engage in captivating and transformational learning experiences. More specifically, I am interested in the design, development, and evaluation of electronic learning environments and the use of virtual characters in education.

As part of various research teams I have received funding from organizations such as the National Science Foundation and the National Geographic Society to develop online learning environments for the teaching and learning of diverse topics. One such project, for example involved students in solving authentic geographic problems via social interaction, negotiation of meaning, cognitive apprenticeship, and support. A second project focused on an expedition team traveling live to circumpolar Arctic regions via dog sleds to provide opportunities for learners to explore real world issues.

My second area of study focuses on the design of virtual characters employed in electronic learning environments, video games, and virtual worlds (e.g. Second

Life). Using a multidisciplinary lens, in my doctoral thesis I developed a framework for enhancing the ways students interact and learn with virtual characters.

I am very excited to be joining the University of Manchester in general and the School of Education in particular. Since accepting my appointment I have heard so many wonderful things about the city, the university, the School of Education, and the MA in Digital Technologies, Communication & Education. I am looking forward to meeting everyone and exploring common threads of interest!

### Research & Teaching interests

Design, development, and evaluation of electronic learning environments; ICT in teaching and learning; Online learning & Distance Education; Virtual characters; Adventure Learning; Teaching and learning with Emerging Technologies; Engagement, aesthetics and the learner experience

### Recent publications

Veletsianos, G., & Miller, C. (2008). Conversing with Pedagogical Agents: A Phenomenological Exploration of Interacting with Digital Entities. *British Journal of Educational Technology*.

Wilson, B., Parrish, P., & Veletsianos, G. (2008). Raising the bar for instructional outcomes: Towards transformative learning experiences. *Educational Technology*, 48(3), 39-44.

Veletsianos, G. (2007). Cognitive and Affective Benefits of an Animated Pedagogical Agent: Considering Contextual Relevance and Aesthetics. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 36(4), 373-377.