

**Bristol Inter-disciplinary Group for Education Research (BRIDGE)** invites you to a lunchtime seminar on **Monday, 4th March 2019 — 12noon-1pm — Room 2S603**. We are pleased to have **Jade Parnell**, the Centre for Appearance Research, the University of the West of England, and **Dr Maryam Almohammad and Dr Jane Andrews**, the Department of Education and Childhood, the University of the West of England.

### **Promoting Acceptance of Socially Stigmatised Appearances in Young Children in Primary School**

**Jade Parnell, the Centre for Appearance Research, the Department of Health and Social Sciences, the University of the West of England**

In this talk I will discuss my PhD, which aims to promote acceptance towards various socially stigmatised appearances in young children. Appearance-based stereotyping and prejudice emerges in early childhood, and can exist by the age of 4 years. Children from negatively stereotyped or stigmatised groups (e.g., higher weight, visible difference) are at increased risk of experiencing stigmatisation from other children, resulting in negative outcomes such as poorer psychological adjustment and quality of life.

The talk will focus on a recent study, where children aged 4-9 years, from various Primary Schools in the South West of England viewed, in a randomised order, five digitally designed, realistic child characters. The images included a character; with no stigmatised appearance, wearing glasses, of higher weight, with a facial burn and in a wheelchair. All characters had similar features (e.g., face shape, height, race and eyes), but varied slightly according to the stigmatised appearance. Children were asked open ended questions and quantitative measures assessing their attitudes and possible subsequent behaviours towards the individual characters. Discussion will consider the possible findings in relation to the literature; along with implications for researchers and education professionals regarding strategies for promoting acceptance of socially stigmatised appearances in young children.

### **Artmaking, Materialism, and Multilingualism in Welcoming Environments for EAL Learners**

**Maryam Almohammad and Jane Andrews,  
University of the West of England.**

The Creating Welcoming Learning Environments project, known as CWLE, (AHRC-funded, AH/R004781/1) is a follow-on project from the large grant Researching Multilingually at the Borders of Language, the Body, the Law and the State (AH/AH/L006936/1). The project involved a “creative collaboration”, using Vera John Steiner’s conceptualisation (2000), between creative artists, school-based teachers and teaching assistants, local authority advisory teachers and university researchers. The project operated on a co-operative development model of teacher development as articulated by Edge (1992) so that, through a series of

workshops, teachers participated in arts-based practices, assembled artefacts and interpreted them to reflect on their identities, bodies, languages and cultures. This was prior to teachers engaging in a process of transformation of their first-hand experiences of creative techniques into activities for their own learners in the different school contexts they work in, including primary, secondary and special schools in England.

In this paper, we approach the data generated in the workshops and in interviews, using Bennett's concepts of "thing-power" and "discursive agency" (2010). Bennett (2010) uses the term "thing-power" to describe the qualities that objects have that in many ways are indescribable and intangible. Power is among all material bodies, both human and more-than-human, and therefore does not belong to bodies independently, but rather happens because material bodies are always dependent on one another. This is known as distributive agency (Bennett, 2010). In the CWLE series of workshops, teachers worked with materials: cardboard, maps, colours, stones, textiles, dyes and symbols. Working with art materials teachers engaged with the role of objects in art and meaning-making and reflected on the potential of material transformation in EAL contexts. Materials constructed during our workshops serve as reflective tools on the body experience and materials surrounding the body. Teachers transformed the art practices in their school spaces, such as the use of the identity suitcase box. The artmaking of suitcase/boxes offered teachers and learners an opportunity to engage with the taken for granted value of both human-human and human-non-human relationships. Through a co-creative process and collective action between animate and inanimate things, teachers and learners could be seen to no longer separate human from non-human. In this sense, humans are no more valuable than materials and objects with which they interact. In our paper we analyse one example of educational practice in a specific secondary school in England. Therefore, not only the divide between human and non-human ceases to exist, and new ways for knowing the self and the object as interbeings emerge (Anderson & Guyas, 2012), but also the divide between the 'us and them' can be seen to finish. Distributive agency of materials may be seen to help humans cooperate with each other in the art-and-language classrooms.