



MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION & UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON



# ANNUAL POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2022



Professional Learning and Development  
through Research Conversations

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

CONFERENCE DAY 1, 01 December 2022

**MA Ed Paper Presentation**

**Title:** An investigation into the learning of 'Electricity and Electronics': A case study for exploring engagement of educators at teacher education level.

**Name:** Aartee Jodheea

**Affiliation:** Mauritius Institute of Education

**Email:** a.jodheea@mie.ac.mu

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## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore how student teachers following a Bachelor of Education course engaged with Electricity and Electronics (EE) module at teacher education level. Student teachers showed signs of apprehension and anxiety during the learning of EE. Based on this issue, the focus of this study was to investigate the factors that contributed to the engagement of the student teachers while learning EE. In line with an interpretive paradigm, an exploratory case study was employed as methodology to respond to the research questions. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview were used as data collecting tools which privileged giving voice participants. Five participants selected were those who had completed at least one module of EE. The research was conducted in the prevailing Covid pandemic situation which influenced the application of the research design. A thematic analysis revealed that student teachers' perceptions and previous learning experiences with similar topics impacted their engagement with EE. However, this perception was modified and appraised with the experiences they had in classroom environment, both face-to-face and virtual. The study also found that peer support and independent learning fostered deep engagement with EE. It showed that the three dimensions of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement operated collectively. The Covid pandemic and lock down situation somehow triggered the student teachers' engagement. A fourth dimension of engagement namely, agentic engagement also emerged from the data. This paper will focus mainly on the fourth dimension of engagement with EE.

**MA Ed Paper Presentation****Title: A Generic Approach towards English teachers' experiences and perception of Teacher Efficacy: A Case Study in a Mauritian Private Secondary School.****Name:** Diya Bhaugeerutty**Email:** d.bhaugeerutty1@uni.brighton.ac.uk**Abstract**

It is fundamental that every child receives nine years' basic compulsory educational opportunities and demonstrate learning outcomes in conformity to educational norms. However, in the local school context, results reveal constant decline in learners' academic success. Therefore, this study is meaningful so as to understand teachers' perspective of the phenomenon and the barriers influencing teacher efficacy. A qualitative case study approach was adopted to understand English teachers' perception of teacher efficacy. A two-tier online data collection method was implemented therein, notably a focused interview (n=1) with the Head of Department and focused-group interview (n=5) with the teachers of the English department. The methodology consisted of a generic approach basic details, a thematic analysis was conducted. The study revealed that educators believed that the use of appropriate instructional tools and techniques, varied assessment strategies and feedback along with resource availability play major role in the effectiveness of teaching and learning and subsequently attainment of teacher efficacy. However, the major obstruction revealed are lack of technological resource availability, classroom management issues, the suppression of teacher voice and involvement and lack of reinforcement in leadership skills.

## EdD Paper Presentation

**Title:** Student Engagement in Mathematics Lessons and Tasks during Transition from Primary to Secondary School**Name:** Sooryadev Purdasseea**Affiliation:** Mauritius Institute of Education**Email:** s.purdaseea@mie.ac.mu

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**Abstract**

This Hermeneutic phenomenological study focuses on students' experience on transition and its perceived effects on engagement in Mathematics lessons and tasks during their first year of secondary schooling in Mauritius. As students transit from primary to secondary school, they are required to extend and transform their mathematical knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of secondary Mathematics learning. Following an earlier study conducted in Stage 1 of the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD), it was found that some students who excelled in Mathematics in their end of primary school examination achieved lower test results than expected by teachers during their first year at secondary school. Teachers reported that these students displayed a loss in motivation and low levels of engagement in Mathematics. These findings prompted this current study which aims to understand the factors influencing students' engagement in Mathematics as they transit to secondary school. A socio-constructionist approach was adopted, which enabled an in-depth exploration of student's perspectives their experiences relating to their engagement in Mathematics lessons and tasks. Data were collected from semi-structured individual and group interviews. Participants were purposefully selected to include students obtaining 75% or above in their end of primary education Mathematics examination, but who experienced a substantial decline in their in-class test performances in the subject during their first year at secondary school. Data were analysed using a thematic approach. One key contribution of this study is that the type of students selected have high self-concept and high expectations about their secondary schooling. The findings suggest that these students were unanimously disappointed and frustrated about their school allocation which indicates that they started secondary school with low school belonging. The latter is found to be a key factor in mediating their (dis)engagement in mathematics.

**EdD Paper Presentation****Title:** A skin not a sweater: Methodological choices? Paradigms, beliefs and the research endeavour**Name:** Lis Bundock**Affiliation:** University of Brighton**Email:** e.bundock@brighton.ac.uk**Abstract**

A multitude of challenges present themselves when making sense of the interrelationship between ontology, epistemology, theory, methodology and methods. The wide assortment of methodologies and methods and the inconsistency in terminology assigned to all strands of the research process can often cause a sense of bewilderment to the new researcher. Marsh and Furlong (2002) recognise these challenges but emphasise that these are important issues that we cannot ignore, they are “a skin, not a sweater” (p. 17), they may not be taken off or put on whenever the researcher pleases.

This presentation explores the notion of methodological ‘choice’ within a Master’s in Research dissertation study. It argues that if we are to stay true to ourselves and the research endeavour as a whole, then our methodological underpinnings are ostensibly inevitable consequences of who we are. It argues that through adopting a ‘bricolage’ approach to research design, the researcher is able to create a blend of methodological positionings that are flexible and responsive and offer a means of maintaining integrity in addressing inequalities and engaging in co-constructed research.

## EdD Paper Presentation

**Title:** Diabetes specialist nurses' lived experiences and perceptions of their current approaches to educating patients with type 2 diabetes: An Interpretative Phenomenological analysis**Name:** Bagooaduth Kallooa**Email:** bagooaduth.kallooa@gmail.com

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**Abstract**

Nurses faced significant challenge to educating diabetic patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research was timely because it explored Diabetes Specialist Nurses' (DSNs) lived experiences and perceptions of their current approaches to educating patients with type 2 diabetes (T2D). It also explored DSNs' perceptions of the affordances and limitations of their current approaches and their learning needs. Three DSNs were purposively recruited and each of them participated in two face-to-face dialogic interviews, which were conducted in Creole. Audio recordings were translated and transcribed verbatim in English and faithfulness of transcripts were rigorously checked. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used because it was coherent with the theoretical positions of this research and appropriate to answer the research questions and achieve the aims. Findings indicate that participants: (i) ignored the complexities of the environment in which patients transacted and develop unhealthy habits and T2D (ii) fear and anxiety of getting infected with the COVID-19 and the lockdown disrupted diabetes education (iii) briefly engaged only with patients whose diabetes were really high because of time constraints and heavy workloads and (iv) perceived the wearing of masks, noise and the lack of privacy as limiting effective education. Participants perceived that their approaches afforded them to convey the key messages about COVID-19 and to keep diabetes under control. One participant perceived that studying management would enable her to manage patients' stress and their diabetes-related changes whilst the other two were unsure how learning about leadership would improve their current approaches.

This research provided new insights into why DSNs' current approaches is less likely to promote patients' health literacy and agency. These insights could enable DSNs to co-construct knowledge that empowers them to adopt a holistic approach, which enable patients to effectively manage their diabetes. To have a broader perspective of the phenomenon, future research could include other nurses who are involved in diabetes education. DSNs should consider further studies in education to build their capacity. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and Wellness should consider the implementation of virtual means to maintain patients' education especially in situation like the COVID-19 pandemic.

**EdD Paper Presentation****Title: Understanding the Construction of Teacher Professional Identity of a Holistic Education Teacher****Name:** Joann Davenia Permall**Affiliation:** Mauritius Institute of Education**Email:** j.permal@mie.ac.mu**Abstract**

The 2016 Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reform and the advent of the Holistic Education Programme (HEP) in Mauritius necessitated the formation of a corpus of educators to teach a new curriculum in primary schools. The philosophical and pedagogical implications of this new curricular reform were that educators, employed under the HEP, were mandated to transform the traditional schooling landscape into one that integrated the personal, the social, the creative and expressive development of the learner (MoETEST, 2016). Using narrative inquiry, this small-scale study seeks to understand how a HEP educator constructs his/her understanding of his/her role and identity within the context this shift in paradigm. The construction of one's professional role and identity is embedded in the navigation s/he makes between his/her personal biographies, and his/her involvement in his/her professional context (Assen et al. 2018, Avidor-Ungar, 2016. This construction is coined as Teacher Professional Identity (TPI) (Assen et al. 2018, Avidor-Ungar, 2016). TPI is central to the understanding educators make of their role (Korthagen, 2004). It forges the attitudes which educators develop and enact towards policy and reforms, determines how they make sense of teaching in school, and continues to redefine itself throughout their career (Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate, 2016). This paper presentation focuses on the theoretical and conceptual framework employed in this study. It explores the interwovenness of the components, like experience and identity formation, that make the complexity of TPI, and it explicates how narrative inquiry (NI), which conceptualizes story-telling as a means of reconstructing and understanding the lived experience of individuals (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006), is congruent with the research intent and how it is employed in this study.

**EdD Paper Presentation**

**Title:**      **Professionalism Matters: Teacher professional development and learning and its impact on professional identity and personal growth.**

**Name:**       Lesley Hope

**Affiliation:** University of Brighton

**Email:**       l.g.hope@brighton.ac.uk

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## Abstract

The aims of teacher professional development and learning (TPDL) have been a source of debate over many decades within both research and policy. Whilst teacher well-being has been a recent concern, in England and globally, the focus has been on working conditions and the impact of diminishing professionalism and these are frequently viewed in terms of teacher recruitment and retention, rather than bolstering psychological wellness. This study sought to further understand a complex landscape and re-situate it with a fresh perspective in relation to factors that not only motivate teachers to take part in development through higher academia, but also contribute to their identity as a professional and their personal flourishing.

Findings revealed that conceptions of autonomy and competence are key contributing factors in both professional and personal growth, driving teacher identity, self-efficacy, motivation and agency. Models of teacher development focusing on the assimilation of tools and approaches to deep learning, rather than specific teacher knowledge, are proposed as a future way forward in facilitating teachers' intentional change to practice, teacher well-being and, ultimately, the retention of a skilled and adaptive workforce.

The complexity of language related to TPDL was a recurring theme in this study where limited notions of teachers' professional 'development' imply it is external factors that initiate change and this is also reflected in current English policy. In seeking to resituate professional learning in a context that acknowledges the value of change through personal flourishing, the findings of this study suggest that 'professional growth and learning' (TPGL), where 'growth' connotes the more personal, internal instigation of change, is a more appropriate term.

**CONFERENCE DAY 2**, 02 December 2022

## **Keynote Address by Professor (Dr) Andrew Hobson**

**Title:** Facilitating professional learning, development and well-being through ONSIDE Co-Mentoring: 'breaking down the last vestiges of hierarchy'

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### **Abstract**

Research has found that mentorship can be a powerful means of enhancing professional learning, development, well-being and retention, yet for various reasons does not always bring about its desired outcomes. One explanation for this is the prevalence of 'judgementoring' (Hobson & Malderez, 2013), a restrictive and excessively directive and evaluative form of mentoring – if it is mentoring at all. The ONSIDE mentoring framework (Hobson 2016) was designed as a research-informed antidote to judgementoring and has been found to leverage desirable outcomes. Yet its enactment as a uni-directional mentoring relationship might impede its positive impact and neglect the potential for reciprocal learning and growth (Mullen, 2016). In this seminar, Andy reports on the added value of the enactment of ONSIDE as a bi-directional, co-mentoring relationship.







**Mauritius Institute of Education**

Reduit, Republic of Mauritius

+230 4016555

[www.mie.ac.mu](http://www.mie.ac.mu)



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