Researching, teaching and learning across disciplinary frontiers

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International Visitors Week 2019

Welcome

1 Welcome

2 Housekeeping

3 Introduction to our theme of interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity 1

Interdisciplinarity remains a high priority in much funded work and through research recognition schemes such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

The UK definition of impact as stated in the Research Excellent Framework (REF2014/2021) is "… An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia."

Presumably we want our work to have impact in any case.

Interdisciplinarity 2

Yet it is also poorly understood and theorised. We rarely spend time reflecting on the implications of this.

How do we ensure that our work does not have negative impact?

We believe that this theme has both local relevance and wider salience given its importance to our research, teaching and learning.

Interdisciplinarity 3

Interdisciplinarity 4

How do we ensure that we do not 'parachute in' to other disciplines and risk potentially undermining important developments there, particularly those hard won by researcher/activists?

Interdisciplinarity 5

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Example, **Disability Studies**

- Over 30 years since disabled academics and activists emphasised "disability" as the consequence of the social, economic and political systems that impact disabled people's (Oliver, 1996).

- Yet, much research does not engage with these perspectives.

- Difficult to know why but one possible assumption is that people do not have the time or space to do interdisciplinary work well!

- How do we manage this in our own academic practice?

Interdisciplinarity 6

Exciting research - boundaries where different traditions of thought intersect and challenge traditional thinking

More than an organisational principle - notion of critical and emancipatory engagement with diverse and complex knowledge systems.

Interdisciplinarity can be linked to a prevailing neoliberal agenda of breaking down complex knowledge systems to create commodified trans-disciplinary spaces.

In contrast, we suggest critical interdisciplinarity has a different character that needs to be understood, defended and celebrated in light of this prevailing culture.
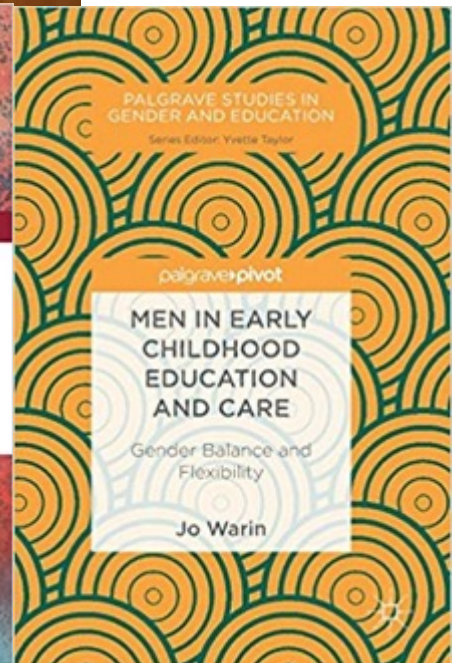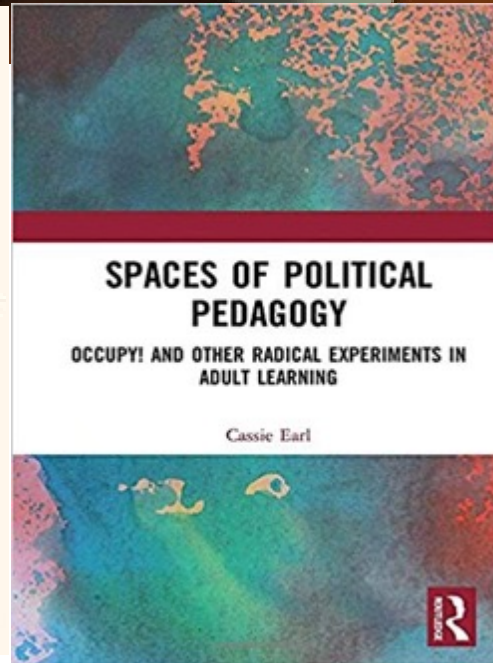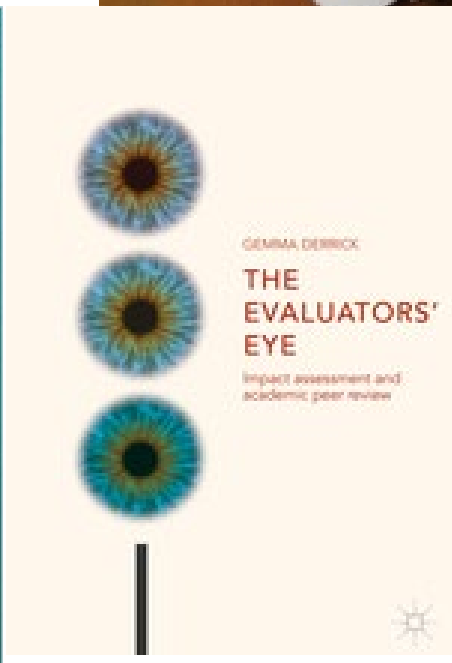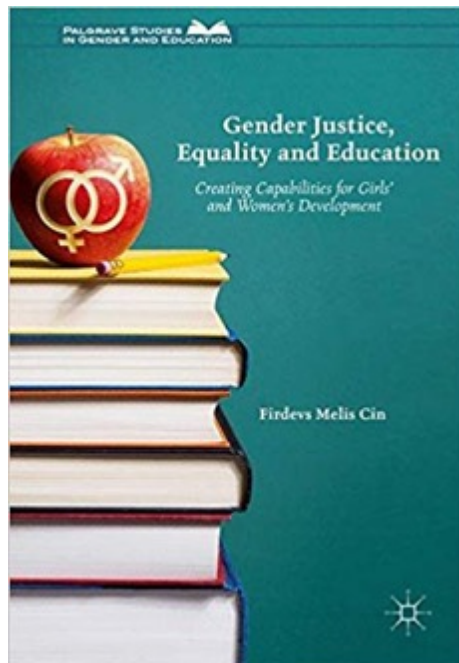
Interdisciplinarity 7

Rowland (2006) a critical form of interdisciplinarity is consistent with emancipatory change and broader social justice concerns.

Can we solve social justice issues without crossing disciplinary boundaries?

Interdisciplinarity 8

Interdisciplinarity 9

Its ultimate aim is the philosophical interpretation of the vicissitudes of human fate – the fate of humans not as mere individuals, however, but as members of a community. It is thus above all concerned with phenomena that can only be understood in the context of human social life: with the state, law, economy, religion – in short, with the entire material and intellectual culture of humanity,

(Horkheimer, 1993, p 1)

Interdisciplinarity 10

Research in technology-enhanced learning is inherently inter- or multi-disciplinary, encompassing a range of teaching and learning perspectives drawn from education, psychology, computer science, information sciences, etc.

Growing interest in exploring
interdisciplinary academic
practices within TEL,
both in relation to policy
and research.

Interdisciplinarity 11

We believe that this theme promises an important and useful event for reflecting on our own academic practice.

After the event, we will frame the topic and bring together the main strands of the events this week to share on the departmental website.