

## **Methodological Issues in Intercultural, International and Comparative Research: Opportunities, Challenges, Approaches and Future Trends**

Invitation to Day Conference and Call for Papers

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, 9.30am-5.30pm

Hosted by Durham University, School of Education, Leazes Road, Durham, DH1 1TA  
(Rooms: BU102/3 and BU107)

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Globalisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation have led to an increase in mobility, migration and diversity in societies, educational institutions and workplaces, as people move to live, study and work abroad. Researchers of all disciplines are increasingly collaborating with 'cultural others' both within and across geographical borders, particularly through interdisciplinary project partnerships involving researchers and research participants from other countries, regions, contexts and languages. This presents new opportunities and challenges for researchers and methodologists as they try to understand people from other horizons, include and make sense of multiple perspectives and shifting identities, and design appropriate methodologies that produce credible research outcomes. Leading researchers in the fields of Intercultural Studies and International and Comparative Education have widely acknowledged the importance of developing intercultural competence in order to engage and work with others appropriately and effectively. Increasing attention is now being paid to reflecting on the theoretical, epistemological and methodological processes of conducting research interculturally and the implications of this on all stages of the research process.

This one-day conference seeks to build upon these important discussions and on the research of two particular research teams that are currently working on these themes and issues, namely the AHRC-funded 'Researching Multilingually' project and the BAICE Thematic Forum on Insider/Outsider Perspectives in International and Comparative Education. The keynote presentations from members of these research teams will provide a basis and structure for discussion amongst conference presenters and participants.

### Keynote 1: Professor Mike Byram

Professor Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has been hugely influential as it operationalises the notion of how ICC might be developed through foreign language teaching. It has been widely applied by researchers seeking to describe and measure intercultural competences and has been used to inform curriculum and policy developments in the areas of language and culture. More recently, scholars are discussing how the model can be adapted to various contexts, including the academic. Professor Byram will briefly consider the potential use of the ICC model for intercultural research and open this up for discussion amongst conference presenters and participants. He will also act as a discussant for the Researching Multilingually team's presentation, as he is a consultant on the project.

### Keynote 2: Dr Prue Holmes, Dr Richard Fay, Dr Jane Andrews, Dr Mariam Attia

The Researching Multilingually project (see: <http://researchingmultilingually.com/>) has focused upon developing a better understanding of how researchers working multilingually theorise and operationalise all aspects of their research design, including: the use of literatures, data collection tools, the analysis, interpretation and presentation of data. Researcher reflections have included the opportunities and challenges of researching multilingually, including the language choices made and dealing with power dynamics. The keynote presenters will discuss questions and issues arising from this project and outline areas that are in need of further research.

Keynote 3: Professor Michael Crossley, Dr Elizabeth McNess, Dr Lore Arthur

The BAICE Thematic Forum 'Revisiting Insider/Outsider Perspectives in International and Comparative Education' has brought together researchers interested in developing a more nuanced understanding of how these concepts can be theorised and applied, particularly in terms of better understanding the complex relationship between the researcher and the researched. Discussions and writing collaborations have focused on the opportunities, challenges and tensions researchers experience as insiders or outsiders to the research context and on the importance of designing methodologies that are both sensitive to and detached from the cultural contexts in which they are operating in order to remain systematic and rigorous. The keynote presenters will discuss questions and issues arising from this project and outline areas that are in need of further research.

**Key themes of interest include:**

- Theoretical, epistemological and methodological approaches and challenges in designing and conducting research in intercultural and multilingual contexts
- Issues and implications around being an Insider/Outsider during the research process
- Cultural and linguistic barriers/challenges to understanding 'cultural others' when engaged in intercultural research
- Issues of multiple and shifting identities, particularly of the researcher and the researched and how this impacts on the research process and outcomes
- Power dynamics, ethical issues, and the importance of reflexivity
- 'Western' and 'non-western' approaches in intercultural research and the significance of the dichotomy

**Call for Papers:** Please submit a 300 word abstract to [nicola.savvides@durham.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.savvides@durham.ac.uk) by **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013** with the subject line: intercultural conference abstract. Please include your name, title, institutional affiliation, and email address. Include a brief bio of 100 words. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed by a team of reviewers and notification sent out by **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013**.

**Publication of Papers:** Conference presenters of strong papers will be invited to submit their paper for publication in a special issue of an academic journal – further details to be announced.

**Conference Registration:** This event is free and includes lunch and refreshments. To register please send an email to: [nicola.savvides@durham.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.savvides@durham.ac.uk) with the subject line: intercultural conference registration. Please include your name, title, institutional affiliation, email address and specify if you have any dietary requirements. As attendance is limited, please register early to guarantee a place.

**Conference Website:** Coming soon.

For further enquiries, please email Dr Nicola Savvides, Convenor of the BERA SIG Comparative and International Education, School of Education, Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom, at: [nicola.savvides@durham.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.savvides@durham.ac.uk)