Postgraduate Course Proposal

Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People

Continuing Professional Development Course
Level 11, Postgraduate

To be considered by the MSc in Childhood Studies Exam Board

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Context
At the last Board of Studies (Oct 2010), the Board approved a CPD course ‘Using Digital Media in Research with Children and Young People’ at 10 credits. We are seeking to accredit a similar course model (2 days face-to-face, plus e-learning) for ‘Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People’ (this paper) and ‘Involving Children and Young People in Research and Consultation’.

We have applied to the ESRC for a Knowledge Exchange Small Grant to provide development funding for this initial year and will hear about the outcome of this application in January 2011. The application has been short listed. If it is not successful, we intend to seek funding from other sources. We are not aware of a similar course elsewhere and believe there are opportunities to identify and access new resources across disciplines.

The aim of the ESRC grant application is to create opportunities for exchange of innovative practice in research by developing and running an advanced level Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course which will explore the use of creative methods in research with children and young people. Creative methods are defined in the application as arts based activities which include drama, music, visual arts, storytelling, film making, dance and online based arts activities. Key organisations with an interest in creative arts practice and research have already indicated their support to form an advisory group for this CPD course. These organisations are Imaginate (an organisation that promotes the performing arts in Scotland for children), the Children’s Parliament and the MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling.

Initial publicity about the course, provisionally to be run in June 2011, has already generated a lot of interest. We believe that having three accredited courses will provide a significant resource on research with children and young people and attract a wide range of participants. This course, along with the others, builds on the substantial success of the 20 credit course, ‘Listening
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to Children’ which has run for several years. This course has been re-designed to be a shorter course, ‘Involving Children and Young People in Research and Consultation’. With the current market conditions we think it would be desirable to be able to offer packages of 2 and 3 short courses, adding up to 20 and 30 credits respectively.

We have consulted with Tess Ridge, the current external examiner for the MSc in Childhood Studies, and the social policy group here, on this proposal. The proposal reflects suggestions that have been made and the proposal is supported.

The combined hours of learning (online and face to face) and assessment are 100 hours. This equates to 10 credits in the Scottish Qualifications Framework.

Eligibility

Applicants are self-selected. Applicants are made aware that the course is at postgraduate level and does presume some knowledge of research methods and design. Supplementary reading in this regard is available in advance.

Resources

The CPD will be self-funding after the pilot year, with all costs part of the budget from staff to technical resources. This is administered through CRFR.

There are no claims made on the library. Most resources are available free on-line; other resources are recommended to participants but not provided by the course.

Course aims and objectives

To explore the use of creative methods in engaging children and young people in research and consultation, at an advanced level

By the end of the course, learners should:

- Be aware of different creative art based approaches used to engage children and young people in the UK

- Be able to evaluate critically, and in detail, a range of different creative art based approaches used to undertake research and/or consultation with children and young people
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- Be at the forefront of knowledge of ethical issues in using such creative art based approaches, including informed consent, child protection, internet safety and dissemination.

- Be able to consider the ramifications of the above in an informed and effective way to address research and/or consultation aims

The above meets the following SCQF descriptors:
- Critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline
- Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are at the forefront or informed by forefront developments
- Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry
- Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices
- Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues

Organisation and Teaching

The course will be offered as ‘blended learning’, with 2 days face to face, and an active social network website for communication before and after the 2 days. This is in line with the approaches of the other 2 CPD courses on research with children.

The course will be administered, other than the MSc in Childhood Studies Exam board, through CRFR.

Assessment

Three forms of assessment will be required:

1. Two contributions to the course’s social network website blog: one is an initiating contribution, with a critical evaluation of a creative methods resource relevant to the course’s aim; one is a reply to a posting by another course participant. Approximately 300 words would be expected for each contribution (5%).

2. An annotated ‘bibliography’ of 5 resources, relevant to the course and not already available on the course’s social network website. (5%).

1 and 2 are on a trial basis for this first year of accreditation. This is on the basis that we will not provide face-to-face training on 1 and 2 but rather provide advice on the network website. Based on our experience of Listening to Children CPD, multiple assessments can be problematic for busy professionals, and we are suggesting that time be dedicated to the outline proposal as it is a difficult assignment for those not embedded in academia. We will evaluate the success of 1 and 2, from participants as
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well as the course convenors and consider whether these merit additional proportions of credit in future years. If so, a revision will be submitted to the appropriate Board of Studies.

3. A 2000 word essay or equivalent (90%). We propose a critical discussion of using a particular creative arts based approach within a research or consultative project on: how well it will meet the project aim; the practicalities of using it within a particular context and with particular children; ethical and analytical issues. We propose to give one or two set options for students (i.e. a particular research aim, with a particular group of children, timeframe and resources) as well as given an option for participants to negotiate their own example.

The standard University and Graduate School criteria will be used, as adapted to the above assignments.

Using Creative Methods in Research with Children & Young People

Provisional Programme

Day 1
9.30am Registration, tea and coffee

Morning Session

Introduction

- Using Creative Methods in Research with Children and Young People and implications of different methods
- Ethics of undertaking research with Children

12.30pm Lunch

Afternoon Session

- Case study examples: Potential ways of using creative methods in research with children and young people (i.e. drama, visual approaches or storytelling)
- Evaluating the practical and conceptual advantages and disadvantages of creative methods in research with children and young people in research

4.30pm Finish
Day 2
9.30am Tea and coffee

Morning Session

Using creative methods in research with children and young people:

- A hands-on session, where participants try out various common ‘creative’ methods and are asked to evaluate critically
- Discussion of the claims of ‘creative’ methods and they fit with more standards approaches to research, how they fit into research design from inception, to analysis to dissemination

1.00pm Lunch

Afternoon Session

Using creative methods with different children and young people

- An interactive session, which will explore issues when using creative methods and involving the diversity of children and young people. Particular attention will be paid to age.
- How to anticipate and be flexible to such diversity
- Exploring the impact (if any) of diversity on what creative methods are used and how they can be adapted.

3.30pm Summing Up and Evaluation
4.00pm Finish

Indicative resources

As in the other CPD courses, we will recommend participants buy the following text in order to have a grounding in research with children and young people:

The following are samples of the texts we will be using:
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Resources and Tools

Creativity Portal, Learning Teaching Scotland http://www.creativityportal.org.uk/

DigiStories UK http://www.digistories.co.uk/links.htm

Digistories (John Pearce) http://digistories.pbworks.com/


Scottish Storytelling Centre
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http://www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk/

Scottish Poetry Library

Also ‘How To’ guides on the Participation Works website
http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources?filter1=HowtoGuide

These ‘How To’ Guides offer How to involve children and young people in research offers an introduction to the merits of involving children and young people in research and ideas on what needs to be considered before carrying out this work.