

Spring 2023



UNIVERSITY OF
GREENWICH

Early Years Newsletter

Welcome to our latest addition. The academic year is in full swing and the campus at Greenwich Maritime is busy with Teaching and Learning as well as extracurricular events for students. It's the time of year when it feels like there is so much to do and so little time to do it! The First years (level 4) are settling well, and most are now out in placement. It's wonderful to be able to hear tales of what has happened in settings and see students make the links between what they are learning in lectures and what they are seeing in practice. Making the transition into Higher Education is a big step for a learner and dealing with the liminal state of knowing there is so much more to know can be disconcerting and exciting by equal measure.

Our level 5 students (second years) are rising to the challenge of juggling paid employment. More than 70% of our students are employed part time in childcare settings, and getting to grips with a thought-provoking programme of modules, which explore the early years curriculum and consider how adults can support babies, toddlers and young children to discover the joys of creativity, science, language, maths, and outdoor play as well as considering the role of the pedagogue in social policy. We are still looking for settings who want to be part of our Lead Early Years placements (LEYP). If you have an area of practice which you feel could inspire and inform our students, then please do let us know.

The third years and BA top ups (level 6) are in the last term of our programme and they're feeling that sensation of acceleration, the deadline is looming and the end point is in sight. This level of our degree has a focus on leadership in all its forms and helps students to make the transition into the workplace where they can become a model of good practice and share the skills and knowledge with the wider team. The culmination of students' studies is undertaking their own research project and getting to grips with the intricacies and complexities of the research process. Students have the opportunity for a deep dive into their chosen topic, exploring a passion and highlighting an area for development within Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). As part of our preparation for this undertaking we have been hosting an online event for the last three years with our partner colleges in Malaysia; a full report of our 3rd international research discussion panel follows in this newsletter.



Also, in this issue we catch up with our Early Years Teachers, learning about how to champion outdoor play and learning together with practitioners and mentors.

Whatever you have planned for the coming term go boldly, enjoy the lengthening days and the good weather to come, hopeful we will see you soon maybe on campus or perhaps down in the woods ...

University of Greenwich and SEGI Colleges Malaysia: Joint Online Event 3rd Annual Research Discussion Panel

7th of February 2023 9.00am (London) 5.00pm (KL)

We delighted to have the opportunity to offer our students both in the UK and those studying at our SEGi college partnerships in Malaysia an opportunity to hear experienced researchers talk about their work, the processes that they devised, and exploring the joys and pitfalls of the research activity. We were joined by a distinguished panel.



The event was opened by **Dr Amanda Henshall** who started her career as a secondary school teacher of English, before achieving a Masters in Women's Studies and Educational Research and a PhD in Educational Research from Lancaster University. After her PhD, Amanda worked as a researcher for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and a children's charity, the National Children's Bureau, before joining the University of Greenwich as a Research Fellow in 2012 where she worked closely with the Early Years Team. She has worked as a Senior Lecturer in education at Greenwich, followed by similar roles at the University of Cumbria in London, and Edge Hill University, Lancashire. Since September 2022, she has been teaching on the master's in education at the University of the West of Scotland's London campus.

She shared her ongoing research project into the role of police officers based in secondary schools and she told us "Concerns about youth violence and the radicalisation of pupils have contributed to the deployment of onsite police officers in schools in England. Little is known about the work these officers do." She explored some of the tensions and ethical dilemmas that face both research and participants as well as sharing her top tips for a successful project.

Our next speaker was **Poh Wanyi** who is Lecturer Early Childhood Education at SEGi College Penang, who describes herself as a proactive and passionate educator in Early Childhood Education with a specialism in Special Education. She has been involved in her own research as well as being part of a team of investigators to coordinate qualitative research into the effectiveness of preschool teachers in delivering oral health education to young children in Malaysia.

She shared her methodology and process from her most recent research project considering the role of play based activities to effectively supporting science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) in the early years. Her findings are shared in more detail in her paper 'The Use of STEAM 'The Magical Touch of STEAM upon Children's Holistic Development' Approach in Preschool for Children's Holistic Development'





Our next speaker was **Kavitha Soundararajan** who works and teaches at SEGi College, Kuala Lumpur, leading the Early Years Program. Her areas of interest in Early Years are the importance of the role of adults in supporting and guiding children, The role of language development and how it can affect a human's personality and on Structured and Unstructured Outdoor Play in shaping children's personal, social, and emotional development. Her prime research area is on the importance of outdoor play in Early Years. She expanded on a case study that she had conducted in a suburban preschool in Klang the setting catered for around 110 children and had 10 practitioners. She told us "The case study was conducted to study the effectiveness of introducing outdoor kitchen and how this may impact on children's Social and emotional development (SED). She considers benefits to both children and practitioners.

Our event was brought to a close by **Claire Donovan** who is a Research Professor of Higher Education here at the University of Greenwich, and Associate Head (Research & Knowledge Exchange) in the School of Education. She has published extensively in the field of 'research on research' including Higher Education policy and governance (UK and comparative); She has evaluated the quality and impact of higher education and explored the impact of gender on Higher Education careers as well as considering the role of the university in society.

For our event she considered the concept that **Research is a journey where you Need to Keep an Open Mind: Top tips for a successful research project.**

- Start Early
- Be passionate
- Keep an open mind
- Navigate uncertainly
- Be organized



Final year BA early years University of Greenwich students both here in the UK and at our SEGI partner colleges are embarking on an individual research project, as the final assessment for their honours degree, an exciting and perhaps a little daunting mission. Thanks so much to all our contributors who ensured this event supported deep thinking about the research process and open discussion of the drive needed to pursue research with a purpose.

If you go down to the woods today ...

The early years teachers, their mentors and some colleagues from our partnership settings spent the day at Peabody's Tump 53 in Thamesmead. They participated in den-building activities, risky play and even got to eat toasted marshmallows on the fire they built. All these activities gave everyone opportunities to reflect on their own outdoor practice and leadership skills.



They worked collaboratively to make an overhead tent that would protect them from the weather, using tarpooling and ropes. They worked independently to create dens for some woodland creatures, see if you can spot them inside!

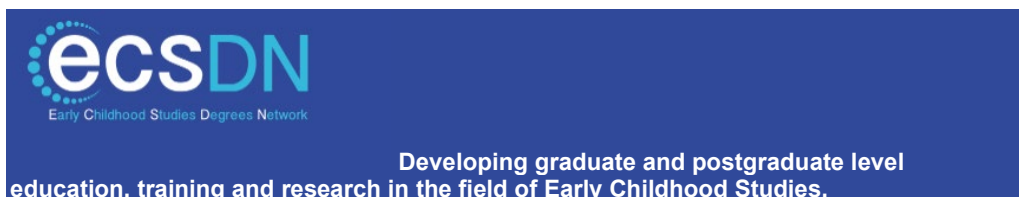


As a whole group, they learnt fire-making skills and safety.



Marshmallows were the perfect end to a day outside (Lauren Whale)

Useful websites : <https://www.ecsdn.org/>



<https://earlymath.erikson.edu/why-early-math-everyday-math/big-ideas-learning-early-mathematics/> Our set of Big Ideas map the key math concepts young children need to explore between the ages of 3 and 6.

Save the date

For the
University of
Greenwich Early
Years Partnership
Event

Friday 9th of June
more information
to follow soon.

[Book your place
here](#)

Comments, questions, or articles for inclusion in the newsletter can be sent to the editor Heather Munn

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