

# ICSEI EXPRESS and DIGEST 2015 Volume 6 Issue 1



## ICSEI EXPRESS and DIGEST

### From the Editors:

Welcome to the first edition of the Express for 2015. The Express is now being co-edited by Paige Fisher and Susan Elliott-Johns, with the ongoing support of Jenny Lewis. With a new ICSEI President and new Board Members in place, we are excited to report on the new developments and directions that come with any change in leadership. Furthermore, with the addition of a student sub-committee of the Board, and the assignment of specific 'portfolios' to Board members, we are anticipating unprecedented growth and cohesion among ICSEI members, networks and initiatives in the months and years ahead.

The ICSEI networks are continuing to emerge as a strong 'ground-up' influence within the organization. As one indication of this growing movement, we are creating space in each issue of the Express for reports and perspectives from specific networks. This issue of the Express will feature the ECE and 3P networks as well as news and updates from Glasgow, 2016.

We also anticipate the creation of a separate Digest issue, which will feature abridged versions of academic papers and other work by ICSEI members from a wide range of contexts and perspectives, including submissions from network members and members at large. If you are interested in showcasing a short version of a work completed or work in-progress, please submit an expression of interest to the Editors by **August 1, 2015**.

We are very excited to announce the addition of an ICSEI Facebook page, which will offer enhanced opportunities to connect with ICSEI members, to post information on developments in the field of international educational effectiveness and improvement, and to comment on various announcements and ideas emerging from the Express and Digest.

We know that participants at the conference held in Cincinnati travelled from far and wide (always a challenge when flying around the globe in January!) and we appreciate the convoluted journeys many colleagues made to arrive in Cincinnati from Australia, Brazil, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Canada, Scotland, Brazil.... to name but a few. (Getting home again was yet another set of challenges for some). Nevertheless, we hope you found it was worth the trip, and we look forward to seeing you all again in Glasgow *next* year!

With warm regards

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In this edition you will find:

1. President's message
2. ICSEI News and Updates
3. Network Reports
4. The Next Edition

## 1.0 Message from the President



**Michael Schratz**  
University of Innsbruck,  
Austria

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

After returning home from the intense and diverse encounters at the ICSEI Conference in Cincinnati, most likely we were quickly immersed again in workplace challenges and all the demands involved. Nevertheless, professional gatherings are always special occasions. They not only validate everyday work life, but also offer unique opportunities to dive into unexpected experiences and new worlds of thinking.

In this way, the 28th Congress in Cincinnati offered numerous opportunities for both professional and personal learning, opening up our minds to innovative approaches from a comparative perspective. Allowing oneself to become challenged in one's genuine way of looking at the world is a prerequisite for real and sustainable change and development. This means not to just to advance from *good* practice to *best* practice, but rather becoming involved with *next* practice.

Thinking globally, acting locally, and educating all children to their full potential, not only coined the theme for Cincinnati, but earmarks the mandate for what we are to follow up from there. This most likely only works if all levels of the education systems within a given country or region align their policies with their strategies and activities along the desired path towards teaching and learning practices which create an environment enabling all children to learn, to learn better and to exceed their own and their teachers' expectations.

As a vibrant and influential professional community, ICSEI is a highly visible global player in this respect, since its members work on all levels of different education systems around the globe. Jointly we bring together a wealth of complementary expertise in school effectiveness and improvement. Therefore it is us, the members of this unique organization, who contribute to the overall aim of educating all children to their full potential – perhaps even further, as nobody really can know the limits or be aware of the depths and abundance of one's own or somebody else's potential! Potential is a capital that will grow and bear interest with the amount of trust, high expectations, and engagement invested in each child, and in each teacher.

I trust and have high expectations that ICSEI does not only clearly demonstrate its potential at the annual conferences, but keeps up the momentum gained through renewed enthusiasm and commitment from members – momentum which is mirrored in the thought provoking contributions to this issue of the ICSEI Express.

Best Wishes,  
Michael Schratz  
ICSEI President

## 1. ICSEI News and Updates

- Board Activities
- ICSEI at AERA

### 2.1 Board Activities

The 2015 – 2017 Board have quickly got to work and are focussing on the future growth of ICSEI. The Board has revisited the discussion of the future directions for ICSEI and it has been decided that Michael Schratz and Andy Hargreaves will speak to 15 members each asking the following questions:

- What makes ICSEI special and how is it different to other organisations?
- Why do participants come to conference?
- What would make ICSEI attractive to new members?
- What do members like about the name ICSEI? What would they keep, add, subtract, change about the name?

The Board is also going to field test the ICSEI vision, purpose, mission, business model and branding and the results will be tested in a town hall meeting prior to the AGM in Glasgow.

### Student subcommittee of ICSEI Board

**Message from Ariel Lindorff-Vijayendran: Department of Education, University of Oxford**

As the new student representative on the ICSEI Governing Board, my first priority has been to put together a student subcommittee so that our shared student leadership can represent the international aspect of the organisation. So far, we have a small but capable and energetic group.

At present, we are focusing our efforts on three main tasks.

1. The first of these involves building a stronger social networking presence for ICSEI as a whole, and creating an online forum for ICSEI graduate students in particular (with the help of the wonderful ICSEI webmaster, we have set up a Facebook page and groups that will soon be accessible).
2. The second, at the request of the Board, involves creating a format to trace the history and purpose of the organisation, in the interest of learning from the past to inform our collective future work.
3. The third task is to plan ways for graduate students to be actively involved in ICSEI meetings.

It has been my experience that ICSEI provides a uniquely welcoming and encouraging community for the next generation of researchers; the student subcommittee and I look forward to contributing our efforts to build upon this and to facilitate greater student participation going forward.

**ICSEI on Facebook and Twitter**

Have you joined ICSEI on Facebook and Twitter yet? Link through our website to join our growing, collaborative social media networks.

**ICSEI 2016 in Glasgow 6-9 January 2016**

The University of Glasgow, in partnership with GTCS, Education Scotland and Glasgow City Council is delighted to announce that Scotland will host the 2016 ICSEI conference which will take place in Glasgow from 6-9 January 2016.

With its theme of *'Connecting teachers, schools and systems: creating the conditions for effective learning'* the conference offers a unique forum for practitioners, academics, policy makers and researchers to engage through keynote sessions, symposia and individual papers.

A number of sub themes evolve from this overarching theme:

1. Teacher effectiveness, teacher quality and professional learning
2. Leadership development and practice to build sustained improvement
3. Partnerships and collaborations: schools, agencies, government, research
4. Policy translations and mistranslations
5. Researching the conditions for effective learning
6. Self-evaluation: schools and systems improvement.

An impressive list of speakers have already been confirmed for the 2016 event including;

- Pasi Salberg, visiting Professor of Practice, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, USA
- Professor Allan Walker, Professor of International Educational Leadership, Hong Kong Institute of Education
- Dr Rowena Arshad, University of Edinburgh
- Professor Graham Donaldson, University of Glasgow
- Marinieves Alba, Community School Director, New York

Please view the 2016 conference <http://www.icsei.net/2016> for further information and ongoing updates. Hope to see you there.

**2.2 ICSEI at AERA**

Join us at AERA in Chicago for the ICSEI Symposium

**Sunday, April 19, 4:05 to 5:35pm, Sheraton, Second Level, Ontario**

**Exploring High Performance: Comparing Systems, Sectors, and Schools**

This AERA/ICSEI symposium focuses on 'high performing' organizations and the way in which improvement, far beyond that expected, has been secured and sustained. It draws upon the school effectiveness and school improvement literature to examine and explore the realization of high performance in different education systems, sectors and schools.

**Objectives of the session:**

- To outline contemporary, empirically based findings about the way in which exceptional performance is secured and sustained
- To consider how this empirical evidence contributes to the school effectiveness and school

improvement (SESI) knowledge base about high performance

- To propose areas of empirical investigation that can offer new evidence about high performance for the SESI field

This session will include a combination of short, structured paper presentations based on three empirical studies. This will be followed by a facilitated discussion focused on firstly, making connections between the three empirical studies and secondly, answering the question *'what are the implications for our current understanding of improvement and high performance in different systems, sectors and schools?'*

Presenters will include Professor Andy Hargreaves, Boston College; Dr Michelle Suzette Jones, University of Malaya; Professor James P. Spillane, Northwestern University; Professor Sam Stringfield, University of Cincinnati; Professor Christopher James Chapman, University of Glasgow; Dr Karen E. Edge, UCL Institute of Education - London; Professor David Reynolds, University of Southampton; Professor Eugene Carl Schaffer, University of Maryland - Baltimore County; Professor Daniel R. Muijs, University of Southampton.

### **3. Network reports: ICSEI has five active networks: the Leadership Network, MoRE, Data use, 3P and Early Childhood Network**

#### **Featured Network: Early Childhood Education Network**

*Network Leader: Persille Schwartz - Danish Evaluation Institute*

**What is a network for Early Childhood Education doing at ICSEI? The ECEN focussed on the following important items at this year's Conference**

#### **Daycare facilities are a gold mine for society**

James Heckman received the Nobel Prize for his calculations showing that, although it pays to invest in schools, investing in daycare facilities reaps even greater economic rewards. In fact, they are much greater. Since then other economists have tried calculating the size of the rewards investments in Early Childhood provide. The interesting thing is that there are varying results for how much the investments pay off, however all calculations show that there are economic rewards, and in some cases even an incredibly high rewards.

#### **Good kindergartens compensate for bad schools**

However, this is not only about the economy. This is also about lives - the lives of children which unfold in very different circumstances. And there seem to be much more than economic rewards from investing in kindergartens.

At the ICSEI EC-network meeting in Malaysia, Brenda Taggart demonstrated how the large British longitudinal EPPE/EPPSE study (the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education, <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html>) covering 3000 children showed that children who have attended daycare get considerably more out of school life. For the most disadvantaged children, this actually meant that they in relation to central achievements such as reading and writing, they performed better in school than the expected minimum. However, children from homes with parents in unskilled or semiskilled professions, who have not attended daycare were below the expected minimum. In other words – attending daycare seem to have an immense influence on the life of a child.

#### **Are children's childhoods at stake?**

This question has been debated in the ICSEI-EC network over the years. On the one hand is the question of whether it is ethically defensible that children attending daycare are disciplined from a very early age? In other words, do we risk taking away the innocence of childhood and the children's freedom to play? On the other hand, if children do not attend daycare, is it then ethically defensible that they are denied a unique opportunity to take charge of their own lives in the long term?

#### **What is a good daycare facility?**

Reflections from the EC network indicate that we organise our daycare facilities very differently. In some countries daycare facilities are developed as an earlier entrance to school whereby school didactics spread into the early years. Naturally, the concern of these countries is whether, in a very controlled learning context, children do not have room to play, for example. Other countries, such as in Scandinavia, have a long tradition of focusing on play at daycare facilities, and the daycare didactics are very different from those at schools. However, the concern of these countries is whether the children gain the full learning outcome from their years in daycare.

But perhaps the concerns about play in relation to learning rest on a false basis? What if we instead ask ourselves how we can take the best factors from the best of worlds and combine them?

### **The best of everything - for children!**

How can we create daycare facilities and schools in which learning is play and play is learning? Could relationships between child and adult at school be characterised by the same closeness/attentiveness as at daycare facilities? Could children be perceived as children and not only as pupils? And conversely, could professionals in an EC-setting also focus on children's learning and thereby better the children's ability to take charge of their own life?

Is it possible to imagine that we as practitioners, researchers and policy-makers organise daycare facilities as well as schools in ways that maintain children's desire to learn throughout life by viewing traditions from the outside and then focusing on all the good things we know from each system about supporting children and helping them prosper? Perhaps this might even be the most important outcome of them all?

EC Network members were invited to offer their reflections on either their experiences of the conference seen from an Early Childhood perspective? Or their experiences of the kindergarten visit (Arlit Centre)?

Joann Neaves from Trinidad Tobago wrote:

*Thanks for the invitation Persille*

*I really did enjoy being at the conference and think that the network groups is one of the best ideas I have experienced in a very long time. To meet and discuss ECCE with others in the field was one of the highlights of the conference for me. I was able to talk to other members who shared their experiences of how ECCE operates in their country. The centre visit added to this comparison and I was happy to realize that, while in Trinidad and Tobago we do things on a much smaller scale and do not have a lot of the resources and materials, at least we are implementing best practices in the majority of our centres.*

*I was really impressed with the entire organization of the Arlit Centre and the fact that teacher-students can observe the students unobtrusively. I was also really impressed with the amount of resources and the space available for teachers to prepare resources.*

*I look forward to partnering with others to carry out relevant research in this field.*

Best regards,  
Joann Neaves

Lisa K. Schalla, Mexico:

*As a first-time participant at the ICSEI Conference in Cincinnati, I enjoyed the opportunity to meet other practitioners, researchers and policy makers who are also interested in Early Childhood.*

*One presentation I particularly enjoyed was Persille's presentation on Knowledge Gained from Children, and evaluation experience from the perspective of the children in a preschool in Denmark. This method of evaluation focused on the "invisible" child in preschool - the one who is sometimes quieter or more reserved than the others. With the use of Smartphones, children took pictures of their favorite places in and around the preschool and were then asked why these were the places they liked the best. In this way, teachers could assess the physical surroundings and literally be able to map out their students' use of the area and feelings associated with each space. This was a wonderfully creative way of implementing participatory evaluation as it gave a voice to each child about his or her preschool experience. It is also a method that can be accommodated for diverse settings and resources.*

*I can see amazing potential in the ICSEI Early Childhood Network for continued dialogue and cooperation. One potential area for more sharing is in the role of families in Early Childhood learning, whether it be in strengthening the home literacy environments across cultures or encouraging parent engagement at the various types of early childhood institutions.*

*Lisa K. Schalla*  
EdD Educational Policy and Leadership  
Researcher and Teacher in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico



### Featured Network: the 3P Network

*Network Leaders: Naomi Mertens (APS International) and Erica van Roosmalen (Charles Sturt University, Halton Catholic District School Board)*

The 3P network serves as a professional practice and research network for all those professionals engaged in the policy determination, planning and delivery of services to children and young people. Key to our collective discussions and our practice is building and sustaining capacity so that local educational and children's services policy is developed in such a way that:

- It really stimulates and facilitates school improvement
- School improvement becomes integrated into the broader construct of community and lifelong learning and the notion of "giving more children the opportunity to develop optima forma" (viz. "it takes a village to raise a child").
- Professional groups with different backgrounds (the 3P's) get to know each other, respect each other's ambitions and concerns, understand each other's day to day work and, through these interactions, develop a common culture which underpins the improvement of schools and other agencies involved.

To support these ongoing discussions, we will be inviting 3P network members to submit examples of local practices that demonstrate these characteristics. It is through the collection of our practice based stories, that we will be better able to pinpoint generic ideas from practice, policy and politics, which lead to a 'taxonomy' of work in the 3P-field. So look for the call for practice based stories coming in April.

Following the collection and compilation of stories we will coordinate an online meeting for all those in the field who are interested in exploring these case studies and effective practices. If you are interested in being part of our discussion and you haven't signed up for our mailing list already, please contact Naomi Mertens at [naomimertens@gmail.com](mailto:naomimertens@gmail.com)

### The Middle Tier: a Problematic Solution?

3P Network members Karen Seashore, Anton Florek and Boudewijn van Velzen are currently working on a monograph about the middle tier in education systems. Other 3P Network members will join in later in the process.

We may discern five levels in our systems: supra (*international*), macro (*national*), meso (*regional*), micro (*school, classroom*), nano (*teacher, student*). The meso level is seen as a kind of linking pin, crucial for the implementation of supra and macro level informed policies. Policies are mediated in complex ways by these implementing agents. But middle tier agents also may have their own agendas, their own interpretation of what their purpose is. That raises questions regarding their impact on leadership in schools. Also there may be a need to carefully look at the impact of middle tier agents on the legitimacy of public value that schools are supposed to produce.

During the upcoming School Leaders Symposium in Zug, Switzerland, September 2-4, 2015 ([www.educationsymposium.net](http://www.educationsymposium.net)) they will organize a workshop around this issue. The objectives of this workshop is to learn from an international expert audience about their experiences re the middle tier issue. More information: [boudewijnvanvelzen@kpnmail.nl](mailto:boudewijnvanvelzen@kpnmail.nl)

Those 3P Network members who plan to participate in the SLS event are invited to let us know.

Contact your Network Leaders for more network activities

- Leadership: Jacob Easley II ([drjeasleyii@gmail.com](mailto:drjeasleyii@gmail.com)) and Pierre Tulowitzki ([ptulowitzki@gmail.com](mailto:ptulowitzki@gmail.com))
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#### 4. The Next Edition

- ICSEI EXPRESS
- ICSEI DIGEST

##### 4.1 ICSEI EXPRESS

Expect another issue in August, 2015. At that time, we will share some more news and highlights of the Glasgow Congress, and feature updates and perspectives from the Educational Leadership network.

##### 4.2 ICSEI DIGEST

If you would like to submit a 'Digest' version of a paper or project ( 500-1000 words) that you are working on, we are accepting submissions between now and August 1<sup>st</sup> for release in September. If we receive sufficient submissions we will consider an additional Digest release this year as well. This can be a great way to highlight your work to the ICSEI membership, and to stir up interest in your ideas in advance of the next Congress.

All queries and submissions should be sent to Paige Fisher and Susan Elliott-Johns at [Paige.fisher@viu.ca](mailto:Paige.fisher@viu.ca) & [susanej@nipissingu.ca](mailto:susanej@nipissingu.ca)

#### OTHER NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS OF INTEREST

The International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT) will be holding its 17<sup>th</sup> biennial Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, July 13-17, 2015. Keynote Speakers include: Marlene Scardamalia (OISE/UT); John Loughran (Monash); Stuart McNaughton (Auckland) and Linda Tuhiwai Te Rina Smith (Waikato)

For more information check the Conference website at [isatt2015.com](http://isatt2015.com) and/or for information about ISATT check the Association website at [isatt.net](http://isatt.net).

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are interested in exploring the possibility of hosting an ICSEI conference in your country, the guidelines are posted on the ICSEI website [www.icsei.net](http://www.icsei.net) and you can contact Jenny Lewis at the ICSEI Secretariat [admin@icsei.net](mailto:admin@icsei.net) for additional information.

#### ICSEI 2015 – 2017 Board

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