Scottish Educational Research Association

Annual Conference 2024

University of Dundee, Dalhousie Building

27 to 29 November 2024

Call for submissions

Education in a Fragile World: Past, Present, Future

We invite researchers and practitioners working in Scottish, UK and international contexts to share their insights under the theme of *Education in a Fragile World: Past, Present, Future.*

With rising inequality, geopolitical conflict, shifts in health and wellbeing, environmental threats, concerns about artificial intelligence, and the Covid-19 pandemic, the opening decades of the 21st century have been marked by signs that the world is becoming increasingly complex, unstable and unpredictable.

Education, however, is frequently presented as a process that can help the world avoid or escape from this fragility. While education may be under-funded in many contexts, there is a commitment to offer future initiatives that can lead the world away from fragility. There is also a vast reservoir of potential to (re)apply educational knowledge and understanding

from the past to inspire new and regenerative futures in a culture of inclusion and social justice.

Celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2024 signifies SERA's remarkable journey of dedication and impact in the field of education. The anniversary celebrations are set to honour SERA's legacy while looking ahead to future opportunities and challenges in the realm of educational research and practice. The 2024 SERA annual conference will be part of this year's celebrations. Therefore, the conference theme has been specifically designed to provide delegates with an opportunity to reflect on past, present, and possible futures, and discuss how education has the potential to thrive in circumstances of instability and global insecurity. The following guiding questions from practical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives offer a starting point for all potential delegates:

- How do we assess and challenge the proposition that the world is fragile?
- What role or purpose should education adopt in circumstances of instability and global insecurity?
- What historical and philosophical perspectives can inform contemporary and future educational thinking and practice?
- How can citizenship, community education, insights about lifelong learning, and sustainability be part of current and future solutions?
- What role is there for shared knowledge, distribution of resources, interdisciplinarity, and partnership working?
- What impact can digital learning, and advances in technology, have on learning within and beyond formal education settings?
- How can research contribute to educational change and stimulate action towards a better world?
- What forms of research methodologies, (un)orthodox methods, and ethical insights help address challenges and offer solutions?
- What types of practices can support adaptability and resilience in young people?

SERA 2024 CONFERENCE STRANDS

Key organizing strands for this year's SERA conference will include:

- **Social Justice and Inclusion:** How might education reach out to all? How might education respond to the challenge of competition, distribution, and access to educational services supporting our communities? How do we embrace diversity? How do we acknowledge specific examples of marginalisation evidenced by gender divides and hate crimes? How might education foster awareness that our lives depend on the natural environments and that ecology can only be achieved through equity? How might we learn to live peacefully with one another within the limits of the Earth supporting us?

- **Professional and Vocational Learning (including teacher education and higher education):** What new challenges in workspaces and practices are impacting on professional and vocational learning? How is knowledge generated and shared in occupational and professional contexts and across professional boundaries? How might professional education and development be reconceptualised? How are interprofessional work practices shaping new demands for pedagogical responses? What new possibilities could be explored around leadership education?

- **Community education and learning:** What are the existing opportunities and initiatives within community education and learning? How do these opportunities foster inclusion, lifelong learning, and social cohesion of communities? What community-led education initiatives can (re)connect and empower the increasingly changing nature of community life?

- **Policy and Education:** How might policy at global, national, and local levels shape education and lifelong learning? How might educational actors (regardless of sector) respond to, and inform policy directions? How might new partnerships enhance or inhibit educational initiatives and the mobilization of research?

- **Curriculum:** How might curriculum engage with a constantly changing and increasingly fragile world? To what extent might the curriculum support interdisciplinary learning and reflection on key themes of human development? What insights might be gleaned from different theoretical perspectives on curriculum? How might educational practitioners engage with the process of curriculum reform?

- **Assessment and Evaluation:** In what ways might national testing/assessment evidence be used to improve educational attainment in the short term? What issues might arise from national and international testing/assessment regimes?

- **Digital Learning:** How might the infusion of new technologies impact learning experiences in/out of formal educational settings? What new spaces are emerging to enable more sustainable forms of pedagogy and learning? How might the open education movement support or inhibit inclusion/exclusion locally and globally?

- **Innovative Research Methods:** What challenges face educational researchers and how might new research methods innovate in response? What new questions need to be asked and examined? How might different theoretical perspectives and paradigms create openings for new questions, new forms of research, and offer critical insights? How might more innovative research methods contribute to supporting learning and change in challenging times and spaces?

The conference will accept individual papers, symposia, short presentations, poster and rapid thesis presentations, as well as suggestions for roundtable discussions, workshops and performance/arts-based sessions. See below for more detail on each of these different formats.

Individual papers

Individual papers require a 250-word abstract. Please note that authors must identify the strand (see above) that their abstract addresses. Abstracts should include:

- strand (best fit from the list above);

- title of paper;

- author name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address;

- 4 keywords.

The abstract should be structured to cover:

- aims;

- methods;

- main findings;

- conclusions.

Each paper will be allocated a 20-minute slot (Fifteen minutes to present with five minutes for questions). Please note: you are allowed to submit as many abstracts as practical but normally each person is limited to two presentations within the conference.

Symposia

Proposals for self-organised symposium are welcome. A symposium is a planned event lasting 60 minutes with between two and four individual contributions on a theme. Symposia organisers are free to decide on how their symposium is run. They should provide a chairperson who will introduce the session and highlight relationships amongst the contributions. Symposia organizers should also provide a discussant to offer a critique of the whole symposium. The contact person identified on the proposal must act as a link between the conference organizers and other contributors. Proposals should include:

- title of symposium;

- name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address of the symposium organiser;

- name of chairperson/discussant;

- an outline of 200 words describing the purpose of symposium and relationship between papers.

- symposium presenters;

- 250-word abstracts for each paper in the symposium, including: title of paper, name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address, 4 keywords.

Each abstract should be structured to cover

- aims;

- methods;

- main findings;

- conclusions.

Short presentations

A short presentation is an engaging and highly visual presentation of 15 slides for a maximum of 20 seconds each (300 seconds or five minutes in total). The format keeps presentations concise and fast-paced and is useful when wanting to highlight key points, pose questions, present evocative insights, and/or share research in-progress efficiently.

Short presentation proposals require a 250-word abstract. Please note that authors must identify the strand (see above) that their abstract addresses. Abstracts should include:

- strand (best fit from the list above);

- title of paper;

- name(s), affiliation(s), contact

- email address;

- 4 keywords.

The abstract should be structured to cover

- aims;

- methods;

- main findings;

- conclusions.

Please also note the following details if your abstract is accepted: Short Presentations will be held on the 27 November.

Poster Presentations

Submissions to the individual poster category require a 250-word abstract. Please note that authors/designers must identify the strand (see above) that their abstract addresses. Abstracts should include:

- strand (best fit from the list above);

- title of paper;

- author name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address;

- 4 keywords.

An indicative structure for the abstract might include:

- aims;
- methods;
- main findings;
- conclusions.

Please also note the following details if your abstract is accepted: posters should be prepared in advance and brought to the conference by the presenter/designer. Posters should be no larger than A0 paper size. Posters will be displayed in a public area during the conference and presenters will be invited to an interactive session on the 27 November to present their posters.

Rapid Thesis Presentations

Rapid Thesis Presentations provide the opportunity for people who are currently completing, or have recently completed, an undergraduate, Masters or doctoral level thesis, to share their research in a friendly and supportive environment. Presenters will be asked to present their dissertation or thesis verbally in three minutes to an audience with the help of one static PowerPoint slide

Submissions to the Rapid Thesis Presentation category require a 250-word abstract. Abstracts should include:

- strand (best fit from the list above);

- title of paper;

- author name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address;

- 4 keywords.

An indicative structure for the abstract might include:

- aims;
- methods;
- main findings;
- conclusions.

Please also note the following details if your abstract is accepted: Rapid Thesis Presentations will be held on the 27 November.

Workshops and Round tables

Workshops and round tables will be scheduled as 60-minute events. Proposals for workshops should include the design and delivery of a learning activity that engages participants directly both in experience and subsequent reflection. Workshop proposals can centre on the analysis of a research methodology/approach or a teaching and learning method. A descriptor of 250 words should include:

- strand (best fit from the list above);

- title;

- name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address for the organiser

- 4 keywords;

- rationale and/or theoretical background;

- aims and methods of the proposed activity.

Proposals for round tables will indicate the theme to be discussed by a range of stakeholders sharing a range of views and experiences. Cross-cutting themes that are of interest to a range of educational stakeholders are welcomed.

Performance/Arts-based Sessions

Performance/arts-based sessions will be scheduled as 60-minute events. A performance-based or arts-based session aims to involve participants to work experientially to explore and to reflect on a particular theme. All forms of activities are welcome: e.g., spoken word poetry, narratives or oral storytelling; art forms, including painting, drawing, sculpture; drama and dance; walking and fitness; digital multimedia presentations, and more. A descriptor of 250 words should include:

- strand (best fit from the list above);

- title;

- name(s); affiliation(s), contact email address for the organiser;

- 4 keywords;

- aims of the session and the proposed activity;

- indication about spaces, any special equipment that might be required and maximum number of participants.

Prizes and awards

Estelle Brisard Award. This award is presented on an annual basis to the best research paper written by an early career researcher based in Scotland. The cash prize of £250 is presented at the annual conference. Further details can be found on our webpages and through posts on our X account. To apply, please send your name, email address, area of research, course, university and title of your paper to sera.conference@gmail.com.

Best poster/rapid thesis/short presentation*.* Three prizes of fifty pounds are awarded at the SERA conference for the best poster, best rapid thesis and best short presentation. A panel composed of SERA executive members will review the entries and winning entries will be announced during the conference.

SERA Submission Dates

- Call for proposals opens Friday 22 March 2024

- All proposals to be sent to sera.conference@gmail.com by Friday 10 May 2024.

- Peer review of abstracts will be completed by the end of June 2024.

- Notification of acceptance will be given on or before week beginning 15 July 2024.

SERA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS

SERA Conference registration will open from early-May 2024 and will be available at https://www.sera.ac.uk/conference/how-to-book/