

Delegate's Report on FACE 2011

Dawn Mannay, PhD Student, Cardiff University

I am a doctoral student in my last year of an ESRC funded position studying at Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences. My research interests revolve around class, education, gender, geography, inequality and visual research methods and my current research, explores the gendered and classed processes of social and cultural reproduction, relationship cultures and identity formation through a focus on mothers and daughters in working-class families resident on a peripheral housing estate.

In December 2010 I entered an open competition run by the Higher Education Academy centre, ESCalate for a bursary to attend an education themed conference. I wrote my application with details of the conference I wanted to attend, the FACE 2011 Annual Conference, Lifelong Learning and Community Development, and the reasons for selecting this particular event. I was fortunate to be selected by the ESCalate panel as one of the winners receiving a full ESCalate bursary.

For me, FACE was the education conference that seemed most fitting, and I applied to attend this particular conference for a number of reasons. Firstly, the themes of the conference, particularly 'Higher education provision and its contribution to the community' and 'The future of outreach work and the Aimhigher legacy' were of academic interest and resonated with my own research. Secondly, I wanted to present a paper and hopefully get some feedback and ideas from other academics and practitioners. Lastly, as I teach part time for the Open University and for Newport University's Access programme, I also have an interest in FACE in terms of best practice in my own teaching and wider developments.

Arriving at FACE I was not disappointed and knew that I had made the right choice. The first day started with lunch, and chatting with other delegates I was impressed by their commitment to equality and education and their student centred approach. This was particularly refreshing in a climate that often emphasises research outputs above teaching and also the austerity of cuts. Over the three days of the conference, the keynote speakers and parallel sessions were also inspiring and I would like to write about them all, but in restricting my self to speak about one of each I was particularly

impressed by the first key note presentation and a paper given in the final set of parallel sessions.

Professor Keith Popple gave the opening keynote presentation, *'The Big Society: the implications for community development'* and I avidly wrote extensive notes trying to capture the opportunities and challenges presented by the policies of the new government, it was an interesting and thought provoking beginning. Among the exciting programme that followed I presented the paper, *'Aimhigher? Considering the emotional cost of aiming higher for marginalised, mature, mothers re-entering education'*, which was well received and opened up dialogues with new networks.

One of these new connections was made with Lindsay Hewitt, and it was her joint paper with Jonathan Sharpe that was a particularly inspiring parallel presentation. I was impressed with the paper in terms of the practical and educational benefits the project brought to refugee and asylum seekers in Glasgow. Academically, I was interested in the innovative way that Bhabba's (1994) notion of the third space was employed to think about learner identities in terms of 'in-betweeness', (Hewitt et al 2010) a hybridity that I have tried to grapple with in my own work (Mannay 2009). Attending the conference provided an opportunity to find out about this study, and the work of other delegates, which I would have missed in my ordinary milieu of publications.

This is the key strength of FACE; it is a coming together of academics from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines, but with a common interest in making education both accessible to all and of a high quality. I left FACE full of ideas and enthusiasm and I am planning to attend the 2012 conference at the University of Ulster. The conference was very well organised and Alan Foster and the team at CR&DALL, Glasgow University did an excellent job as hosts of FACE. Lastly, Glasgow was a fantastic city and the conference timings and Scottish 'sunny' weather engendered an opportunity to explore the urban treasures. So thank you, FACE, CR&DALL, ESCalate and all the speakers and delegates who taught me so many things in such a short time, a fantastic experience.

References:

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<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/resources/wp126.pdf>