

Reimagining Educational Psychology: Listening to the Next Generation

This is the first of three special issues of Educational and Child Psychology featuring work from trainee educational psychologists (TEPs). These papers, that have been produced during doctoral training, reflect a profession that is grappling with questions of identity, equity, power, and partnership.

Fomicheva sets the tone by exploring how Community Psychology principles can be embedded in educational psychology practice. Fomicheva's "Head, Heart, and Hands" framework captures the intellectual, emotional, and practical tensions of working for community-led change inside systems that often prioritize individual fixes over collective empowerment.

Hayes continues this systemic critique with a Foucauldian analysis of the discourses EPs encounter (and sometimes reinforce) about children in schools. Hayes surfaces how notions of compliance, deviance, and conformity influence practice, and they call on EPs to reflect critically on the language they use and the structures they uphold.

Woods and Hayes pick up this thread by examining white privilege within the profession itself. Their findings highlight that while many EPs acknowledge its relevance, there remains discomfort and uncertainty about how to act.

This theme goes further in the paper by Andrae and colleagues, who explore the experiences of EPs working with culturally and linguistically diverse children in Northern Ireland. The study reveals gaps in confidence, training, and support. The authors assert that these are areas the profession must address to meet the needs of changing communities.

From systemic issues to individual voices, Ho Hui Jun offers a model for meaningfully including students with complex communication needs in research and decision-making. Using a Mosaic Approach, the study shows that with creativity and preparation, all students can express their views, if adults are willing to listen in new ways.

Khan and Atkinson then turn our attention to children's right to play. Their research reveals tensions between teachers' stated values and disciplinary practices, especially the use of lost playtime as punishment. It is a compelling reminder about the ways in which EPs can support schools in aligning policies with child-centred values.

Thompson-Kerr shifts the focus to teacher wellbeing by proposing a co-designed supervision model grounded in soft systems methodology. Rather than importing external structures, Thompson-Kerr suggests that EPs can help schools to create support systems that reflect their unique cultures and needs - a theme that is echoed across this issue.

Doyle and Browne close the issue with a compelling examination of peer supervision, by linking teacher wellbeing to broader questions of equity, identity, and professional support. This study challenges traditional hierarchies and urges educational psychologists to rethink how they engage with systemic change. This article brings the issue to a fitting and thought-provoking close.

As the first of three special issues by TEPs, this collection signals a new direction for the future of educational psychology.