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Building pathways to impact together: benefits and examples of close to practice research

Professor Sarah Parsons

University of Southampton, UK

Abstract

Collaborative working between research and practice can happen in a range of ways, but a shared aim is always to improve practice, experiences and outcomes for children and young people. Sarah co-directs the Autism Community Research Network @ Southampton [ACoRNS] which is a research-practice partnership that aims to improve the lives of autistic children and young people within education and other services through addressing the marginalisation and underrepresentation of their views and experiences. ACoRNS works closely with schools, community services and other settings to identify research questions that matter to practice, and applies creative methods to support autistic children, young people and adults to share their views and experiences to improve outcomes. Sarah will share insights from her experiences of close to practice research to highlight the strengths and benefits of involving teachers as co-producers of research knowledge that makes a difference to their settings. Sarah will share examples of close to practice research where practitioners and young people have taken the lead, with important impacts for practice and for personal and professional development.

Bio

Sarah Parsons is Professor of Autism and Inclusion in Southampton Education School at the University of Southampton, UK. Sarah has longstanding research interests in the educational experiences of autistic children, young people and adults and their families. Sarah's work is participatory and inclusive with an emphasis on knowledge co-construction between research and practice. Sarah co-directs the Autism Community Research Network @ Southampton [ACoRNS] with Professor Hanna Kovshoff. ACoRNS is a research-practice partnership between the University and local and national education providers. At the heart of this work is a commitment to social and epistemic justice through the development and application of creative methodologies for enabling the voices and participation of autistic children and young people. Her research is values-led and takes strengths-based, participatory, and co-constructed approaches to knowledge production and building the evidence base.