

## Children's participative rights across Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Wales: What are we [not] telling our student teachers?

### Our Research

Post devolution, Wales has developed progressive law and policy on children's rights (Williams, 2013), with teachers positioned as 'duty bearers' (Murphy et al 2024). However, there has been a lack of an evidence demonstrating successful enactment of these rights in practice (Lewis et al, 2017).

Positioning ITE as a bridge between policy and practice, this research asks:

**'to what extent do ITE programmes support the Welsh Governments vision for pedagogic practice that embeds young children's participative rights?'**

### Methods & Data set

A survey was administered to the seven HEI providers of ITE across Wales asking them to detail **content of their ITE programmes**.

Responses included **n: 9 (of n: 11)** undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered across 7 HEIs in Wales.

Tibbetts (2017) **3 models of Human Rights Education** were used to code responses.



Programmes noted between 21-316 students each (2022-2023) reflecting 1666 student teachers.

### Findings

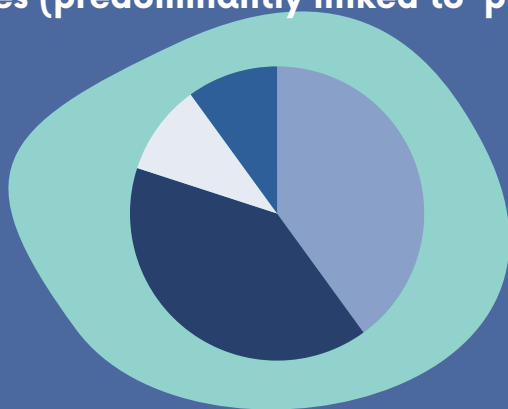
**Programme content predominantly sat across Tibbetts' (2017) 'Values and Awareness' and 'Accountability' models (one programme included some features of the 'activism / transformation' model).**

**Content predominantly foregrounded the transmission of information about general human rights (predominantly an understanding of the UNCRC) and the development of work roles and responsibilities (predominantly linked to 'pupil voice').**

0%

#### Aims & Learning Objectives

No explicit aims or learning objectives related to young children's participative rights included in programme documentation



#### Modular content

**Most prevalent:**  
Knowledge of UNCRC  
Participatory pedagogies

**Least prevalent:**  
Constructions of children and childhood  
Tensions between research and practice



#### Time spent considering Participative Rights

Of the 26 modules:  
13 spent one to three hours  
9 spent four to six hours  
2 spent 11 to 14 hours

### Support needed?

**All but one response** asked for support to embed young children's participative rights within their ITE programmes. This included:

- **guidance and resources to supplement delivery, curriculum design and implementation**
- **support related to students developing their critical discourse and reflection skills in the area of learners' rights**

### Moving forward

The project team will be taking a closer look at the lived experiences of student teachers and student teacher educators across one of the ITE partnerships to understand if they reflect the expectations placed on teachers across policy and legislation and the content included across ITE programmes in Wales.

### References

Lewis, A., Sarwar, S., Tyrie, J., Waters, J., & Williams, J. (2017). Exploring the extent of enactment of young children's rights in the education system in Wales. *Wales Journal of Education*, 19(2), 27-50. Murphy, A., Tyrie, J., Waters-Davies, J., Chicken, S., & Clement, J. (2022). Foundation phase teachers' understandings and enactment of participation in school settings in Wales. In C. Conn & A. Murphy (Eds.), *Inclusive pedagogies for early childhood education: Respecting and responding to differences in learning* (pp. 111-114). Taylor and Francis.

Tibbetts, F. L. (2017) "Revisiting 'Emerging Models of Human Rights Education'," *International Journal of Human Rights Education*, 1(1)

Williams, J., 2013. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 in the context of the international obligations of the United Kingdom. *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales* (pp. 49-64). Cardiff: University of Wales Press

**Find out more here**



Children's Participation in Schools

