Surname (Family Name)	First Name(s)
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Project Title (no more than 150 characters including spaces and returns)

Developing new classroom approaches for learners with ADHD: mobilising film for change

Character Count:86

Project Description (Maximum of 10,000 characters, including spaces and returns)

This PhD will use a collaborative arts-based approach, with a specific focus on film participation (watching, making and sharing) in order to co-create a body of knowledge concerning those who have direct lived-experiences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the context of mainstream schools in the UK.

Film's latent potentiality as an agent for pedagogical change amongst neurodivergent secondary school-aged youths is yet to be examined. This is despite the fact that other bodies of research are supportive of the pedagogical benefits of film (Marsh,2006; Parry, 2013), and it's credible power to stimulate meaningful findings relating to neurodiverse learners' sensory encounters (Alper,2018). Previous studies have highlighted that film participation (watching, making and sharing) can create a useful 'open-ended' dialogue amongst 'hard to reach' groupings and families (Powell, 2010; Yazici,Esra et al., 2014).

Filmmaking processes have been recognised as giving 'hands-on' time for 'mutually meaningful' reflections in social research (Gauntlett,2014, 2018). Film has also been used by youth activists when operating across virtual and physical boundaries in pursuits of social reform and social inclusion (Jenkins, 2018; Notley, 2009).

By locating itself around film using participatory practices and adopting an affirmative approach to ADHD, the study will involve two under-represented groups: the young people (YP) aged 10-14 with an ADHD diagnosis, and the key adults in their lives (parents/carers, teachers, coaches and mentors).

The project aims to:

- Query and re-shape existing conceptualisation of the schoolchild with ADHD as unruly, disruptive, challenging and noncompliant
- Offer alternative classroom approaches using film and media to disrupt current pedagogical cycles which remain reliant upon normative ways of knowing and marginalise those with ADHD.

The study draws from education, disability studies and the arts. In order to support the project's interdisciplinarity, the researcher will actively engage with two particular partnerships during the doctoral study, *The ADHD Foundation* and *Into Film*. Both partnerships will be reciprocal. They will allow the sharing of knowledge, resources and facilities. Researcher and participants will attend roadshows, training, workshops and conferences as well as 'work shadowing' placements.

ADHD and School

ADHD is a highly complex neurodevelopmental condition with many associated comorbidities, with varying presentations and a greater prevalence amongst socially disadvantaged groups (Polanczyk, 2014). It has a worldwide prevalence of 3% to 5% amongst school-age children, and it is suggested that based on average UK class sizes, there could be at least two students with ADHD present in every UK classroom (Cooper, 2001). Furthermore, this number is likely to be higher as a result of recent policy developments (DFE, 2015).

The core symptoms of ADHD are: inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity. While these affect every area of an individual's life, they often come to the fore in the context of the classroom (Cooper, 2001; Kendall, 2012). The sensory aspects of ADHD are poorly understood and an area of emergent research interest (Panagiotidi et al., 2018). Young people with ADHD have been described as being 'hyper-responsive' to stimuli from auditory, tactile, taste, smell, and vision sensory domains (Lane, Reynolds, & Thacker, 2010). Sensory modulation

(one's ability to effectively regulate the degree to which one is influenced by various sensory inputs) can be more demanding for a child with ADHD (Ben-Sasson et al., 2009).

Research has found that those with ADHD presently face significantly higher rates of fixed-term school exclusions, peer rejection, bullying, and are far more likely to experience further emotional difficulties including: low self-esteem, anxiety and depression (Tarver, 2014). Adding to this, there remains a lack of ADHD specific training for teachers (Verbert, 2019). This has resulted in lower classroom expectations for those with an ADHD 'label' as teachers fail to understand the nuances and complexities of the condition.

Teachers often draw on a medical model of ADHD, framing the child as both lacking some essential capacity and simultaneously as too profuse (Bohlmann, 2017), in 'deficit'. This sustains the common stereotype of the hyper-active primary-school aged boy, who has an inherent 'inability to do what he is told' (Visser, 2020; Verbert, 2019).

It is at the secondary school that the longstanding, inflexible modes of teaching and learning continue to marginalise young people with an ADHD cognitive profile, resulting in cycles of 'rejection or reprimand' (Cooper, 2001: 32). Common cognitive variations associated with ADHD will remain highly individualised but can include 'significant impairments' in the domain of executive functioning. This area controls working memory (holding ideas in mind), regulation of attention, inhibition, reasoning as well as forward-planning (Barkley, 2010). This can result with those with ADHD having much slower reaction times and significantly lower performance scores on serial learning and memory tasks (Barkley, 2010).This is highly pertinent in the context of the present UK secondary school system with the recent return to traditional modes of teaching, including the use of 'rote' learning and 'sequential memory skills' (1-9 GCSEs); pedagogies that are reliant upon inflexible timetables and (mostly) sedentary teacher-led instruction; practices that privilege the neurotypical learner.

Methodology and Ethics

This will be a co-produced project with a group of young people with ADHD, examining the role and affordances of film as a vehicle for self-expression, as well as a methodological and pedagogical tool for questioning and rethinking ideas of identity and learning.

The methodology will be built around an 'Inclusive Sensory Ethnography' (ISE), a process of experiencing *with* neurodiverse participants, as well as key adults. ISE recognises the complexities and variations of both the human and ADHD experience, giving 'voice' to the 'individuals whose sensory systems and sensory ways of knowing are largely marginalized in society' (Alper,2018).
Film will be incorporated at all levels of the research in the following ways:

1. As a valuable 'mouth-piece' and means of self-expression for participants and researcher within the co-produced 'film labs'
2. As an integral methodological tool within an ISE (Alper,2018)
3. As an agent for pedagogical change.

Participants

- A 'core' group of 10-15 YP aged 10-14 and their relevant adult support networks. This group will be recruited from The Greater Manchester area.
- **10-15** educational professionals working across U.K mainstream primary and secondary schools. This group will take part in the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

Knowledge creation will take place through:

Co-produced film labs: With the 'core' group. These will take place on a consistent basis across a 12-month period. The 'labs' will encompass film participation and the ISE; a methodology whereby all parties 'sense' media texts with each other.

Semi-structured interviews: with teachers, adults and YP

Classroom observations: with a focus on dominant modes of teaching and how film/media is used and could be included in the future.

Recruitment of participants will be made via purposive sampling, utilising gatekeeper organisations. Ethical approval will be sought from The MMU Research Ethics Committee. Joint decision making will ensure that the participants have a choice in the ethical framework, activities and outcomes. Participation will be voluntary.

Ethical procedures will be stringent as this research surrounds the experiences of vulnerable populations. Information will be presented to all participants in a way that will ensure they are aware of what is being asked of them. All participants can choose whether or not to take part and may withdraw at any time without adverse consequences. All participants' confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. Informed consent from the carer/parent and from the young people will be sought.

Impact

The outputs of the study will include the co-creation and exhibition of a film-based virtual art instillation made by participants and researcher in 'film labs', exploring themes around ADHD and schooling. Participants will also co-produce an online ADHD 'toolkit' with an interactive online short course aimed at a teacher audience.

Into Film's work reaches over half the schools in the UK (Into Film, 2019). The organisation's Board of Directors have agreed to support the research in the following ways:

- By sharing the research on a dedicated page on their website (www.intofilm.org)
- By working with the researcher and participants to disseminate the research and other outputs amongst staff, teacher ambassadors and with their national network of 'Film Clubs'.

Pathway fit

This research is an excellent fit with the substantive issue of understanding inclusion in interdisciplinary ways. It also addresses the ongoing innovative methodological work of the ECY pathway. It will use arts-based methods for engaging with a mainstream secondary school community of young people with ADHD, working with them to produce living knowledge about their lives in school and exploring ways in which the school could otherwise conceptualise the notion of inclusion in relation to ADHD.

It will draw on innovative sensory and film-making methodologies, to respond to the complex challenges of difference, diversity and representations of 'otherness' in education.

Timeline
2020-2021- Immersion in MA Social Research Methods. Start recruitment
Year 1 Literature review, clarify methodology, ethical approval and secure recruitment of participants and pilot interviews
Year 2 Data collection and analysis
Year 3 Update literature review, evaluate, write-up discussion and conclusions.

Character Count: 9,973 (**Maximum of 10,000 characters, including spaces and returns**)