

Society for Applied Philosophy Short-term Postdoctoral Fellowship Report

During my 6 month fellowship, I completed and submitted two papers to conferences and peer-reviewed journals. I also applied for British Academy funding and visited the University of Helsinki as a visiting scholar. The funding provided me with both the means to do this work, and also the motivation provided by having both a deadline, and some affirmation of my value as a scholar. I am very grateful to the society for this.

The first paper I worked on is about the value of analytic philosophy of education to educational research. Drawing on Haslanger's model of ameliorative analysis, I argue that analytic philosophy of education ought to serve social ends, helping to shape education according to normative standards. I gave three talks on this paper over zoom at the University of Helsinki, University of Malmo and with a group of Finnish philosophers of education. It was well received, and I used the feedback to develop the paper further. It has now been submitted to the Philosophy of Education Society conference in the US, and to the journal Theory and Research in Education where it is under review.

The second paper is about cultural capital in education. I framed this paper using the case of teaching Latin in English state schools. I argue that cultural capital ought not to shape curriculum policy. The paper draws on work by Jennifer Morton about the ethics of teaching for markers of social advantage. This paper links to a broader project that I am undertaking about the value of knowledge, and although the paper is not framed in this way, it contributes to the question of why schools might want to teach for knowledge. One of the reasons is that some forms of knowledge are associated with social advantage, and so help students to get ahead in life. This is an appeal to cultural capital. In my broader project, this is just one of the ways that we might understand the value of knowledge in the social world. This paper has now been submitted to the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, and the British Educational Review Journal where it is under review.

Finally, I used my postdoctoral fellowship to visit the University of Helsinki's Centre for Philosophy of Social Science (TiNT) for one month in September. It was here that I developed the paper about ameliorative analysis and philosophy of education. I also made valuable connections with the philosophy of education community in Finland, and I got an insight into the Finnish university system. Through attending weekly seminars, I broadened my knowledge and understanding of philosophy of social research.

I have now started a one-year ESRC postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Birmingham. I believe that my time as a Society for Applied Philosophy fellow will help me as I continue my job search for next year.