



**RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES – 2011/2012
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

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Ann Phoenix is Co-Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London and joint head of the Department of Childhood, Families and Health. Her research is mainly about social identities and the links between psychological experiences and social processes. She is currently the PI on NOVELLA (Narratives of Varied Everyday Lives and Linked Analyses), an ESRC-Funded node of the National Centre for Research Methods. Her recent research is on 'Transforming experiences: Re-conceptualising identities and 'non-normative' childhoods' as an ESRC Professorial Fellow and (with Wendy Hollway and Heather Elliott) an ESRC-funded project on the transition to motherhood

Seminar Title: Adults looking back on childhood wellbeing and language brokering

Abstract

Around the world, many children interpret and translate for parents who have difficulty communicating in the local language. Their contribution to their families and society is often either unacknowledged or viewed as a major social problem where children are forced to be little adults or to parent their children. Yet, the few pieces of research done on children who are language brokers do not support such a simple story (e.g. Orellana, 2009). This paper uses accounts from a study of adults looking back on their childhood experiences of language brokering to explore children's agency & creativity in language & cultural 'brokering'; three ways in which childhood language brokering constitutes a social resource to families and society (and the social contexts in which language brokering arise. The paper examines how adults looking back on their experiences of language brokering consider it impacted on their wellbeing in childhood and how they feel about it and themselves as adults.