

*Seminar/workshop series: What does it mean to listen to young people?*

*This seminar series is being co-produced by young people and practitioners through the Collaborate project.*

## **Who cares what you think? Why children and young people's voice matters. Dr Tara Jones University of West Scotland**

***24 January 2018, UCLan Harrington Building - Room HA320, 5.30 to 6.30***

I grew up in a context where the voice of children and young people was not valued and as a child I regularly heard the saying 'children should be seen and not heard'. Years later I became a teacher. I noticed that in the compulsory education system in particular children and young people's voices were not considered valid. This was especially in comparison to the voices of powerful others such as teachers. I also noticed that those children and young people who were struggling or whose behaviour was challenging were even less likely to be heard, made ever more difficult by an authoritarian structural system. When my own child was born I made a vow that I would always make my best efforts to listen, but more importantly, take account of what he said, taking as democratic approach to family life as I could. I believe that this has been one of the most important factors in the excellent relationship I have with my son, his resilience and wellbeing and his clear sense of justice, fairness and willingness to stand up for his rights. Nevertheless, this has, on occasion, brought both him and me into direct opposition with the authoritarian values of schooling. My research, therefore, sought to explore more deeply, the extent of children and young people's rights to be heard in school and what influence this had on their perceptions and experiences of school education.

Dr Tara Jones is an Associate Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of West Scotland

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