

Dr Clare Bohan | Dublin City University

General Biography

My name is Dr Clare Bohan, and I am currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Psychology in DCU. I have been working in the area of educational research for over 5 years and am passionate about application of the science of psychology to provide and inspire better learning and engagement opportunities in schools. My research journey began in September 2016, when I commenced my PhD studies under the supervision of Dr Sinéad Smyth in DCU. The focus of my research during this time was on positive behavioural interventions for improving academic engagement and decreasing disruptive behaviours in classrooms. The research involved testing and implementing interventions in primary and secondary school settings with diverse characteristics (e.g., DEIS/non- DEIS, single sex/mixed schools). Although my initial area of interest was around interventions for classroom management, my research interests have expanded and diversified, and I am fortunate in my current position to maintain the scope to further these interests. Currently, my focuses include the research-practice gap in education, positive interventions for fostering inclusive behaviour and contextual influences on observed engagement in classrooms. I work closely with colleagues and students in the School of Psychology in DCU and also maintain connections with researchers in other institutions (e.g., the School of Education in UCD). My interests relate to the Cosán learning areas of wellbeing, inclusion and supporting teachers' learning. Engagement is a core component of wellbeing according to psychological theory, and therefore my work on and interest in fostering engagement through behavioural intervention aligns with this strand. One of my roles at present is supervision (alongside primary supervisor Dr Sinéad Smyth) of a first year PhD student (Ms Ciara Brennan) who is in the initial stages of planning her research. Ciara's focus will be around the application of behavioural intervention to promote inclusive behaviour in students and teachers in classrooms. This links in the with the important learning area of inclusion. A whole classroom approach to fostering inclusive behaviour is so important in mainstream classrooms where the majority of children with special educational needs learn. Finally, I maintain an interest in the research-practice gap in education, specifically the gap between the scientific literature around evidence-based practices and real-world application of these practices in classrooms. This aligns with the Cosán area of supporting teachers' learning; in order to bridge the research-practice gap, supporting the learning of teachers around research practices and the scientific processes involved is essential. Overall, I am passionate about the idea that research should be conducted with schools, rather than for schools. In doing this we can go a long way in ensuring evidence-based practices are not just established but practiced in day-to-day classroom life. This passion underpins my reasoning behind wishing to serve on one or more panels as part of the RiRS.