# Participatory approaches in literacy research

Exploring collaborative approaches to carrying out literacy research alongside children, young people, teachers and other professionals

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# Welcome!

## PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN LITERACY RESEARCH UKLA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

**CONVENERS**

**CRITICAL FRIENDS**

Sarah McGeown
University of Edinburgh

Melanie Ramdarshan Bold
University of Glasgow

Charlotte Webber
University of Edinburgh

Theresa Cremin
The Open University &
Literacy and Social Justice
Centre

Rachael Levy
UCL Institute of Education

# SIG objectives & activities (1)

Bring together researchers, teachers and allied professionals from different disciplinary background who have a shared interest in exploring participatory approaches for literacy research.

Foster new, and strengthen existing, collaborative partnerships to conduct and communicate literacy research.

Promote, innovate, and advance rigour within participatory literacy research approaches.

**SIG MEETINGS**

**CONFERENCES**

**INVITATIONS**

**TEAMS**

**PUBLICATIONS**

**RECORDED TALKS**

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# SIG objectives & activities (2)

Contribute to our emerging understanding of methodological challenges and ethical considerations associated with participatory research approaches, particularly within literacy research

Provide an inclusive context for individuals from different backgrounds and career stages to learn about and contribute towards the development of participatory research approaches

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# Defining participatory research

## What does participatory research mean to you?

Go to www.menti.com and use the code: 5170 0712

# What does participatory research mean to you?

Listening to own voices

New insights into research questions

An inclusive approach to research, where contributions from all stakeholders are equally important and valued.

Working and learning in collaboration with service users

Research designed, implemented and interpreted in collaboration with participants (eg pupils, teachers, families)

Ways of engaging a range of participants at different points in the research cycle in shaping the direction of the research and its outcomes

Research partners involved in design of projects

All members involved in the research participating and actioning together.

A collection of perspectives that allows a variety of contributions, to respond to research

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# What does participatory research mean to you?

Working collaboratively with people from different groups to support their own research interests

Working with and learning from specific communities

Discovering the systems that allow research and practice to inform each other and impact the classroom

Aligning research priorities with 'on the ground' practice priorities and empowering all partners to have a shared role in shaping the research.

Listening to children's voices

The people affected by the issue being researched are involved in various activities around design, analysis etc. - they are not just providing 'data'.

arranging educational practices based on collaborative research by practitioners and researchers

Involving those who have direct experience of the topic you are investigating in the research process from the outset and throughout to ensure that the study is relevant and applicable to practice.

# Defining participatory research

**01** "PR can be defined as an umbrella term for research designs, methods, and frameworks that use systematic inquiry in direct collaboration with those affected by the issue being studied for the purpose of action or change"

**02** "PR prioritizes co-constructing research through partnerships between researchers and stakeholders, community members, or others with insider knowledge and lived expertise"

Vaughn, L. M., & Jacquez, F. (2020). Participatory Research Methods – Choice Points in the Research Process. Journal of Participatory Research Methods, 1(1)

# Aims of participatory research

| SHARING POWER & DEMOCRATISING RESEARCH | → | AMPLIFYING DISPRIVILEDGED SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE | → | PRODUCING RELEVANT OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Intrinsic power imbalance between "the researcher and the researched" (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008, p.121)

Amplified by social and cultural structures which position adults as holding more power than children and young people (Heath et al. 2009)

Users/beneficiaries (i.e., children, teachers) hold more knowledge about their own lives than external researchers do. This should be privileged within the research process (Cahill, 2007 ) .

Failing to include children and young people in research about their lives risks producing outcomes which reinforce adult perceptions of their experiences and needs (Webber et al. 2022)

Cahill, C. (2007). Repositioning ethical commitments: Participatory action research as a relational praxis of social change. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 6(3), 360-373.
Heath, S., Brooks, R., Cleaver, E., & Ireland, E. (2009). Researching Young People's Lives. Sage
Schäfer, N., & Yarwood, R. (2008). Involving young people as researchers: Uncovering multiple power relations among youths. Children's geographies, 6(2), 121-135.)
Webber, C., Wilkinson, K., Andries, V., & McGeown, S. (2022). A reflective account of using child-led interviews as a means to promote discussions about reading. Literacy, 56(2), 120-129.

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# The Ladder of children's participation

(HART, 1992)

"DEGREES OF PARTICIPATION"

"NON-PARTICIPATION"

CHILD INITIATED, SHARED DECISIONS WITH ADULTS

CHILD LED AND DIRECTED

ADULT INITIATED, SHARED DECISIONS WITH CHILDREN

CHILDREN CONSULTED AND INFORMED

CHILDREN ASSIGNED BUT NOT INFORMED

TOKENISM

DECORATION

MANIPULATION

**UKLA SIG: PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN LITERACY RESEARCH**

Hart, R. A. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. Florence, Italy: United Nations Children's Fund International Child Development Centre.
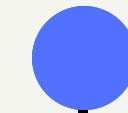
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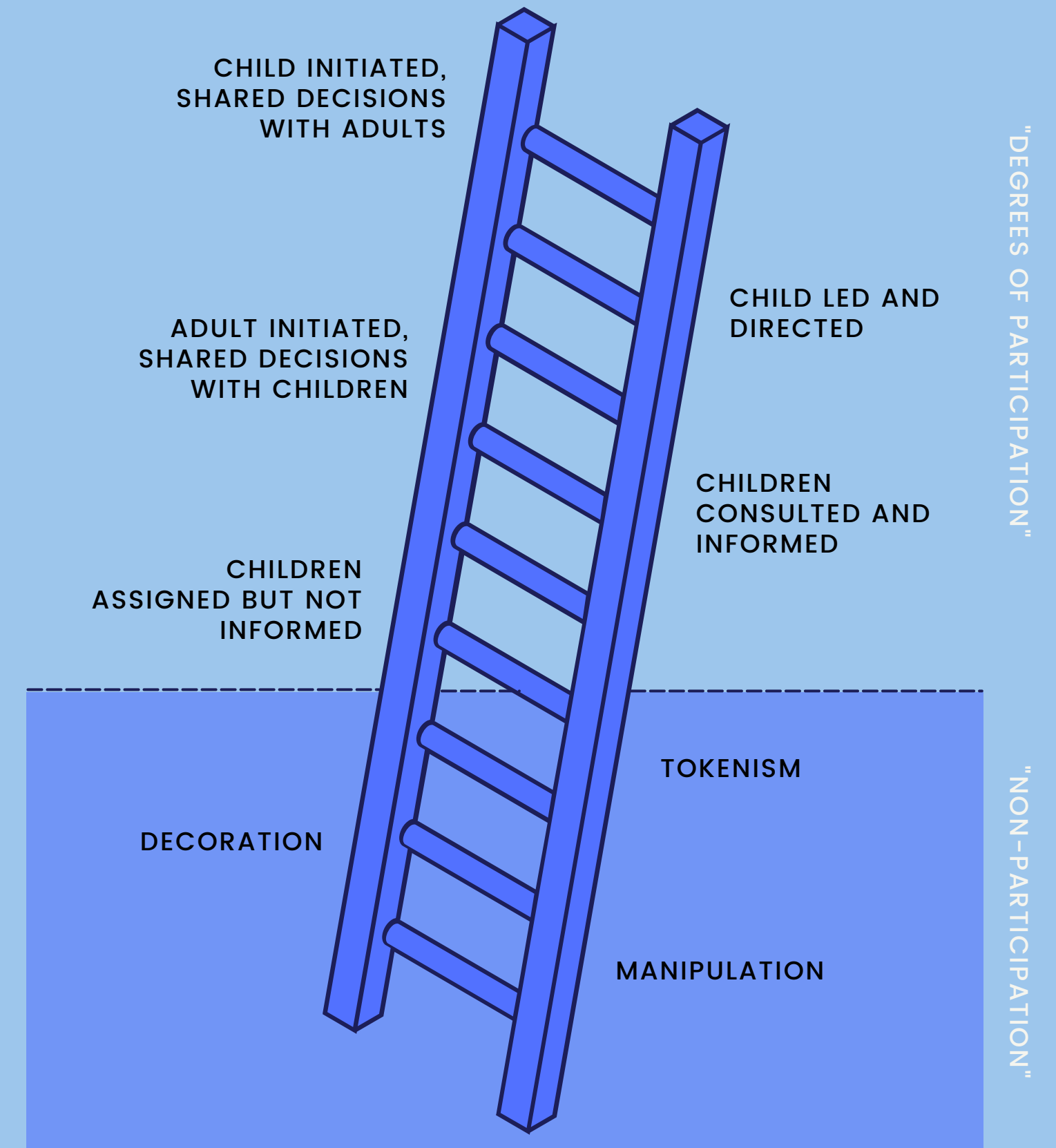
# How else might participatory research look?

**IS THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION APPROPRIATE?**

The Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992) presents a hierarchy for different ways of participatory working. However, different types of participation may be more appropriate for different projects.

MEMBER CHECKING

PEER INTERVIEWS

CO-PRODUCTION

ADVISORY GROUPS

CONSULTING

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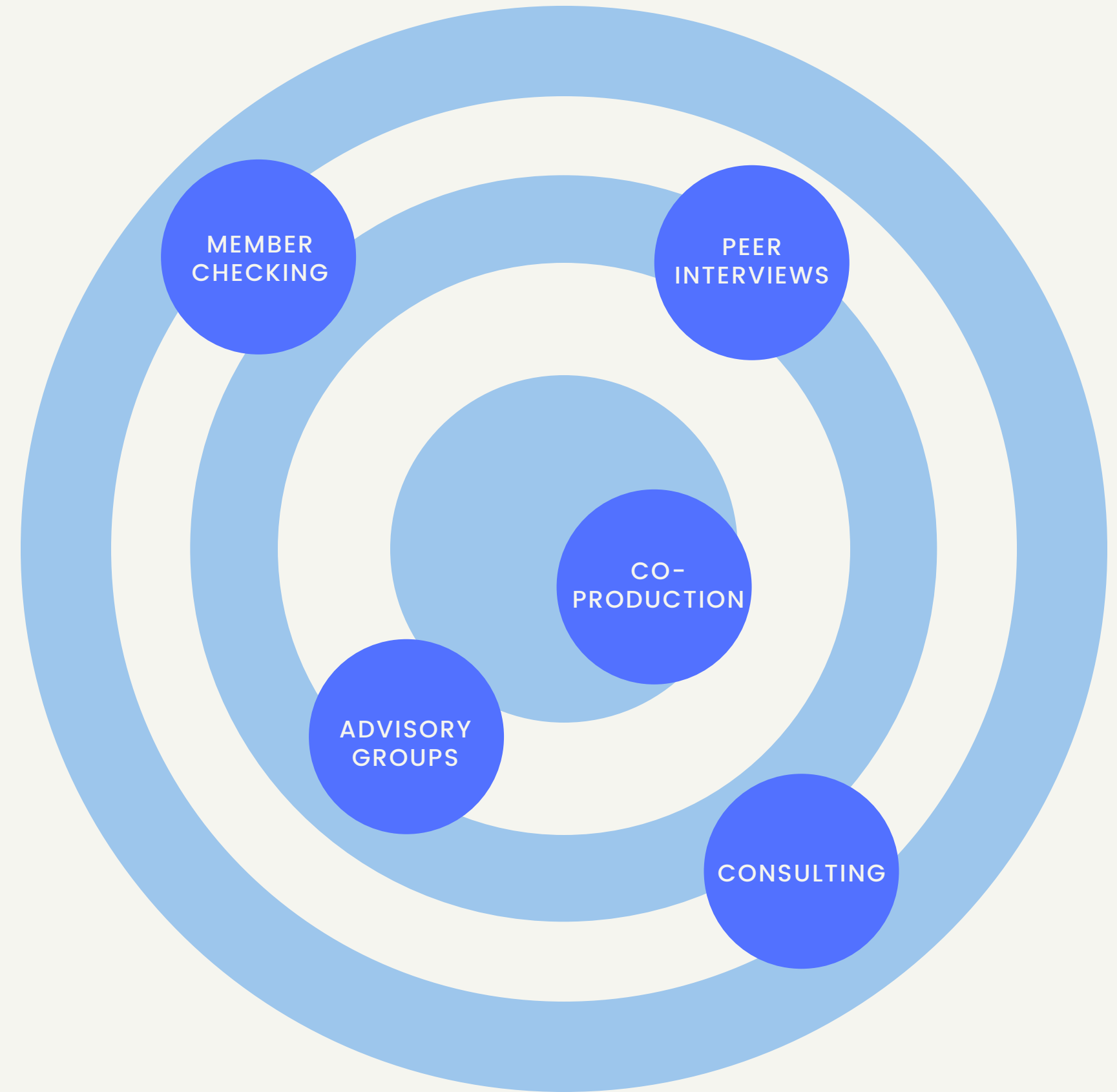
# Considerations

- **TIMELINE**
  Dedicating time and care to developing relationships with collaborative partners, building consensus on research aims, priorities and ways of working

- **SETTING EXPECTATIONS**
  Establishing what each member of the team hopes and expects from a participatory project, and emphasising any constraints on what can be achieved

- **INCLUDING DIVERSE VOICES**
  Considering who has access to the space and who doesn't and working to create spaces which privilege groups whose voices are overlooked

- **INCENTIVES**
  Appropriately reimbursing partners in ways which recognise the value of their contribution without being coercive or tokenistic

- **???**

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# Upcoming activities:

**WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL 2023, 9AM-3PM (BST)
ZOOM, HOSTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

We invite you to submit an abstract to present research and/or a project showcasing participatory methods. Your research/project can be completed, in progress, or at the first stages of development.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, CONTACT MELANIE RAMDARSHAN BOLD:
MELANIE.RAMDARSHANBOLD@GLASGOW.AC.UK**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MONDAY 19TH DECEMBER, 5PM (GMT)**

**UKLA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2023**

**SUMMER 2023
EXETER, UK**

We would like to showcase the work of the SIG and share knowledge of participatory methods at UKLA 2023. We propose submitting a symposium with SIG members and/or requesting that talks by SIG members be grouped together to form a session. If you plan to submit an abstract to UKLA 2023 and would like to link up, please get in touch.

**CONTACT SARAH MCGEOWN: S.MCGEOWN@ED.AC.UK**

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# Introductions

PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN LITERACY RESEARCH UKLA
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

- Introduce yourself
- Why were you interested in joining the SIG?
- What do you hope to get out of the SIG?
- Do you have any experience with participatory methods?

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# SIG objectives & activities

What else?

# What does participatory research mean to you?