



School of Education

LEARNING STRANDS

ISSUE 9 SUMMER 2023

Welcome

I have the pleasure of introducing this latest Summer edition of Learning Strands in my role as the newly appointed Head of School, having been interim Head for six months.

It is my absolute pleasure to serve the School of Education and look forward to continuing to work with all my colleagues to ensure that the School offers a supportive environment for staff and students where people feel appreciated, empowered and supported, and are able to develop and progress in their career.

I believe it is important that we continue to deliver excellent teaching and student experience to our UG, PGT and PGR students while conducting high quality research that has an impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

It was my joy to attend the latest School of Education Graduation ceremony on the 27th of June at TECA. Our ceremony was a record breaker having over 400 students graduate on the day, the largest ceremony on record.

This is my first experience in 15 years of having all our students together at the same ceremony and it was enjoyable to have a joint celebration. We had graduands from all four departments as well as some PhD students participating on the day.



This gave everyone the opportunity to see all the range of work that we do in the School of Education. What a great response there was from the gathered family, friends, and colleagues that afternoon to all those who were graduating as they crossed the stage!

This latest edition will give a snapshot of some of the variety of activities and research that has been happening over the last few months. We have also said goodbye to some colleagues, and hello to new colleagues who have joined us.

I would particularly like to welcome Professor Kate Smith to the School as she has taken up her post as the Head of the Department of Counselling, Wellbeing and Educational Psychology. The Bounds offer a free counselling service to the community, something as a School we are very proud of. You can read more inside this volume.

Catriona MacDonald
Head of School of Education

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This newsletter was created by the School Communication Team. We would like to extend our thanks to all our contributors.

If you would like to contribute to our next issue or have any questions, please email: rcochrane@abdn.ac.uk



School News

The Bounds... Update

Janet Watson | Interim Programme Director, PG Counselling

THE BOUNDS – named for its address at 19 College Bounds - has now been open and running successfully since spring 2021 and during that time students and staff at the centre have worked therapeutically with more than 1,000 clients and received positive feedback about their work and the service as a whole. Just this year, 2023, students have completed over 1,000 client sessions.



It seems like only yesterday that I was writing a piece for Learning Strands in Autumn 2020 looking forward to the opening of the Counselling discipline's new counselling and research centre the following year.

We are always looking for new clients and open to anyone locally who would like to see a person-centred student counsellor free of charge.

Despite lots of changes recently, with the retirement from academia of the PG Programme Director of Counselling, Anne Smith, and Professor Peter McGeorge, former Head of Discipline, the Bounds continues to flourish and grow. We are delighted to have welcomed our new head of discipline, Professor Kate Smith.

The centre is open – we currently have 54 students working there - and have plenty of availability for prospective clients. We accept self-referrals and referrals from GPs in the local community.

We have also been taking referrals of younger clients from Barnardo's who have been sending children and young people to see our students in training on the specialist Certificate in Counselling Children and Young People which is now going into its third delivery.

If you know anyone who is thinking of seeking therapy, or who may be on a waiting list elsewhere but looking for something more immediate, then please pass on information about The Bounds...

FEEDBACK FROM CLIENTS...

"This service has saved my life..."

"I just wanted to share with you how thankful I am for this service, and for A, my counsellor..."

"The service you offer is unique and important. I was so fortunate to happen upon it..."

CONTACT THE BOUNDS

Email: thebounds@abdn.ac.uk



A very warm welcome...

PROFESSOR KATE SMITH | Head of Counselling, Wellbeing and Educational Psychology

I am very pleased to have been welcomed to the School of Education in June as a Professor in Counselling and Head of Department for Counselling, Wellbeing, and Educational Psychology. Having started out in the biological sciences (researching behavioural ecology!) I retrained as a therapist in my thirties, and I've now been an academic in the field of counselling and psychotherapy for many years, my focus is on Pluralistic Therapy – a way of working which engages clients and therapists in building a therapeutic approach that works for them drawing on a range of therapeutic methods and resources. My ambition for the department is that we grow and develop our courses in mental health, our research, and raise awareness of the need to integrate a mental health perspective in all that we do. I'm particularly keen to establish a research interest group on Mental Health in Education and will be looking forward to talking to you about this.

PGDE Secondary Students' Final Day on Campus

Faye Hendry | Programme Director PGDE Secondary

PGDE Secondary Education students spent an enjoyable and interesting final day on campus presenting the findings of their recent practitioner enquiries. Students presented eloquently on a variety of topics ranging from retrieval practice and oracy to Socratic questioning in the classroom and use of flexible grouping. Following on from this, students were able to enjoy a drink together and a chance to celebrate the end of their programme, before hearing from external speakers Emily Neilly (class of 2022) and Anne Watson, Deputy Head at Robert Gordon's College, both of whom wished the students well for probation and beyond. Tutors were delighted to be able to celebrate the hard work and dedication of their students at the end of a busy and highly successful year.



SoEd at the University of Aberdeen's 14th Annual Academic Development Symposium

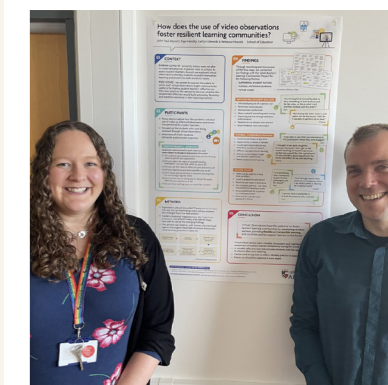
Dr John Paul Mynott & Faye Hendry | SoEd Initial Teacher Education Department

John and Faye were involved in presenting two projects at the University's recent Academic Symposium. Both projects were funded by the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Project Fund, aiming to enhance the learning and experience of students across our programmes.

The first project, which also involved student interns Rebecca Hossick and Kaitlyn Edwards, explored the experiences of Primary Education students who used video as an assessment tool on school placement. This project was presented as a poster, eliciting interesting discussions about the role of digital technologies in both formative and summative assessment.

The second project was presented by student interns Iona Berube and Georgie Smith. This action research project involved the evaluation and enhancement of work done with first year Primary Education students to build their academic skills. The interns gathered feedback from students and, using this, created new activities which will be used with first year students next year, aiding their transition into Higher Education. The interns were able to strike up important discussions with their audience about how we can support first year students academically and socially.

John and Faye aim to follow up on these projects by further exploring how student interns can engage fruitfully in teacher education research in future. The Symposium was a fantastic opportunity to hear about all the great work being undertaken across the University, and it was excellent that the School of Education were able to contribute in this and other ways; we look forward to attending again next year.



School News

Stavanger Links

Dr John Paul Mynott | Head of Initial Teacher Education

I travelled to Universitetet i Stavanger, Norway, on an ERASMUS grant in April this year. The purpose of my trip was to explore teacher education and Lesson Study work in Norway.



Universitetet i Stavanger



DR JOHN PAUL MYNOTT



Teacher Education in Norway is a Master Level qualification with students taking a 5-year programme to become teachers.

The University works alongside partner schools. Some of the schools are practice schools which work closely with different lecturers linking to their specific research projects.

I visited primary and lower secondary schools as part of my visit, and it was interesting to see how the school day was structured and speak to teachers about their work.

I was able to share some of my work on collaboration and facilitation in Lesson Study with the schools.

There are so many parallels between the work of the two universities, with us both being engaged in building stronger links with partnership schools, developing our research and encouraging new students into teaching as a profession.

I hope that my trip is a starting point for a closer relationship between Aberdeen and Stavanger, making the most of the short travel time between the two campuses.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Teacher Education Department, University of Stavanger; 2. Riska, Lower Secondary School

Professor Catherine Lee

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION WERE DELIGHTED TO HOST PROFESSOR CATHERINE LEE FROM ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY ON MARCH 30TH

Professor Lee presented: **Pretended Learning Lessons from Section 28/ 2A.** Which shared her experiences as a Lesbian Physical Education teacher under Section 28/ 2A a local government act that prevented the discussion of LGBT individuals in schools.

The presentation was exceptional, showing the pain and challenges of being a teacher working under this act, and the impact it has on individuals to this day.

Professor Lee's story has been made into an award-winning film: **Blue Jean.** A film based on the diary entries Professor Lee kept during her time teaching under Section 28/ 2A.



Centre for Global Development Event: Fast fashion ten years' on from the Rana Plaza disaster

Professor Pamela Abbott | Chair in Education



IMPACT OF GLOBAL CLOTHING RETAILERS' UNFAIR PRACTICES ON BANGLADESHI SUPPLIERS DURING COVID-19



Authors: Muhammad Azizul Islam | Pamela Abbott | Shamima Haque | Fiona Gooch



On Monday 24th April, the Centre for Global Development in partnership with the University of Aberdeen Business School ran an in-person event to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza disaster and present findings from the research into the 'impact of global clothing retailers' unfair practices on Bangladeshi suppliers during COVID-19'.

Pamela Abbott, Professor in the School of Education and Director of the Centre for Global Development worked with Muhammed Azizul Islam, Professor in Sustainability Accounting and Transparency at the Business School and Project Lead, Professor Shamima Haque from the University of Dundee and Fiona Gooch from Transform Trade on this interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral project. Findings highlighted that more than half (50.7%) of the 1000 factories surveyed had experienced one or more of the following 'unfair practises':

1. Cancellation of orders by buyers in the Global North in March/April 2020
2. Buyers reducing the price paid for goods already contracted in March/April 2020
3. Buyers refusing to pay for goods dispatched/in production in March/April 2020
4. Delayed payment for goods already delivered in March 2020 by more than 3 months.

Muhammed Azizul Islam, Professor in Sustainability Accounting and Transparency at the Business School led attendees including academics, research staff, local charity leaders, local councillors, the Lord Provost, and consumers on a discussion, with key recommendations of support for a fashion watchdog and the need for community engagement. The research findings have been in the media spotlight recently, with 146 pieces of coverage over the world, reaching an audience of 2.6 billion. The event highlighted the importance of ensuring ethical trading remains at the forefront of the global agenda.

If you want to find out more about the CGD, hear about our upcoming events and seminars, then join our mailing list, follow us on Twitter @AbdnCGD or visit our website at www.abdn.ac.uk/cgd

REPORT

www.abdn.ac.uk/education/documents/Impact_of_Global_Clothing_Retailers_Unfair_Practices_on_Bangladeshi_Suppliers_During_COVID-19.pdf

School News

Promoting Child & Adolescent Mental Wellbeing in Sub-Saharan Africa

PAR TRAINING EXCHANGE 28-29TH APRIL 2023

NIHR Global Health Research Group | 29th April 2023, Kigali, Rwanda | Dr Lucia D'Ambruoso and Professor Pamela Abbott



The Participatory Action Research (PAR) Training Exchange was held at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at University of Rwanda (UR) 28-29th April 2023. The overall purpose was to build understanding of and skills in PAR and to explore adapting and progressing PAR as part of two research programmes:

(1) a trial of a school-based mindfulness intervention (SBMI) in Ethiopia and Rwanda funded by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), and

(2) a programme researching early childhood development (ECD) and women's unpaid care work in Rwanda, funded by the International Development Research Centre, Canada.

We were joined by colleagues from the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) Rwanda, the Colleges of Education, and Medicine and Health Sciences at UR, and from Addis Ababa University.

We spent the 2 days orienting to PAR theory and method, covering content on PAR theory, concepts, on issues related to practical applications and operations, and explored the ethical considerations through critical debate and exchange.

The sessions were further informed with talks and briefings from lead investigators Dr Kibur Engdawork from Addis Ababa University (AAU), and Professor Laetitia Nyirazinyoye (UR).

Prof. Nyirazinyoye and Dr Engdawork discussed application across diverse contexts for the NIHR SBMI programme, in which PAR will be progressed in a deprived neighbourhood in Addis Ababa (Addis Ketema), and in Rwanda, in a rural area in Butaro district in Northern Province. Finally, Ali Kaleeba Bakali (UR) oriented the group to mindfulness, its origins, practices and benefits. These talks greatly enriched the programme.

Throughout, we engaged in interactive sessions, drawing on colleagues' perspectives and experiences to build familiarity with and skills in key PAR processes. Content was consolidated through plenary review and exchange. We also worked on field plans in group work and break out spaces. We also engaged in a 'mindfulness dose', and took some time through a short guided exercise to breathe and practice connecting with an awareness of our feelings and sensations, in the moment, free of reaction of judgement. Finally, the group agreed to continue the exchange, and to continue to connect in future through web-platforms and in person where possible, to continue dialogue and cross-context learning on the application of PAR.

The organisers extend warm thanks to participants for engaging and sharing during the 2 days. We look forward to continuing the conversation! We also look forward to receiving your feedback, which we will seek through a separate evaluation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Describe participation in health as a concept
2. Appreciate how contexts influence (constrain or enable) participation
3. Relate case examples building participation into local practice
4. Develop practical insights into PAR methods and tools including ethical considerations
5. Translate key PAR processes for application in context

LEARNING PRINCIPLES: The learning is values-based & supports equitable research partnerships

- a. We have a 'safe to fail' learning environment, promoting peer-learning and exchange
- b. We prioritise synergies between research teams working across diverse contexts
- c. We promote and advance South-South learning and exchange
- d. We foster equitable partnerships in global health research

1. Appraising participant selection and recruitment, including ethical considerations 2. Critical discussion on data collection and analysis, including ethical considerations 3. Role playing feedback (problem tree on ECD)

Dyslexia & ITE Partnerships

Alyson Young | PGDE Primary Programme Coordinator

The annual PGDE (Primary) Partnership Conference looks to connect our student teachers with some of the professional partners they are likely to work with during their careers. These connections are crucial both for the students' own professional development and for building communities of learning that will continue well beyond their ITE year.

Our partners this year included professionals working in Paediatric Occupational Therapy, Screen Education and Young Carers support. We were also joined by Sharon May Hall of Dyslexia Routes who has been partnering with the SoEd for a number of years and who always brings a very personal and practical touch to her sessions.

Sharon is a former Royal Navy Training Officer, with over 20 years of experience in supporting families, children, educators and international corporate companies on their dyslexia journeys. Sharon believes that change starts with ITE. Empowering

and educating student teachers opens doors to a new and innovative way of support and a diverse and exciting way of thinking. She writes, "We are in a world of change, difference and acceptance and the impact of a class teacher on a student with dyslexia cannot be underestimated."

Building understanding of learning differences such as dyslexia allows students to have a better grounding in the support they can provide when entering into the classroom. For some students, it is also an opportunity to see their own learning differences reflected in the programme.

We are grateful to Sharon and all our local partners for their involvement in the education of our future teachers. And we are grateful for the honest and reflective feedback from our students which drives the programme forward. Learning from the experiences of our own students can bring a richer learning experience for everyone.

We want to celebrate the differences in our student population and acknowledge that often students have challenges in their own learning. This was particularly important for one of our students, Jillian, who writes...

"As I sat in the MacRobert lecture theatre and Sharon began to talk about Dyslexia, I felt seen, heard and understood for the first time. I had only just been diagnosed with Dyslexia and knew very little about it. The information that she gave us in 2 hours was so detailed and insightful. This lecture has been lifechanging for me, both personally and as a student teacher. Not only has it helped me to understand myself better, but I have also been able to now spot things in a classroom that I may not have linked to Dyslexia beforehand. This in turn, has the power to change children's lives in a positive way, to make sure that they do not go unnoticed."



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Events



EASTER BAKE OFF 2023
Our annual event once again showcased our fantastic SoEd Bakers!



ABBY SMITH & the AUCS Elite
all girl team division winner 2023 at Future Cheer in Manchester.



OPEN DAY EVENT
We were delighted to welcome Primary Education Offer Holders on Campus at our Open Day Event! It was great to see academics and attendees enjoying the sunshine!



PGDE RMPS STUDENTS VISIT ABERDEEN MOSQUE & ISLAMIC CENTRE
PGDE Secondary RMPS tutor, Fiona McWilliam, took the RMPS student teachers to visit the centre and meet the Imam.



TERRY ASHTON, LECTURER,
gave the school a beautiful photograph of the 'Foot of Don'. Terry has been a member of the education team for over 40 years and worked with many members of staff both past and present. We wish Terry a long and happy retirement!



ANNE SMITH DINNER
The Counselling Team said a sad farewell to Anne Smith, Programme Coordinator. We wish Anne well!

Staff Spotlight



David Johnston SENIOR LECTURER

It's official. I am old. On a recent visit to my wife's P3 class, she asked them if they knew who their visitor was. A little girl put up her hand and said, 'Is it your dad?' No-one laughed, other than my wife obviously, who likes to remind me of the incident from time to time. June 2023 will mark my 40th year as a teacher. I taught O Grade English, remember Scotvec modules, marched down Union Street during the last strike action in 1984 and watched a colleague issue 6 of the belt to two of my Christmas leavers for scrapping in the corridor.

In those days the Banda machine was the high tech tool of choice. You'd write out your master sheet in heavy handed black pen, clip it into the barrel, slot a pile of A4 underneath and make sure there was plenty of strong smelling chemical fluid in the little tank to keep the copies printing clearly. Then you'd turn the handle and churn out the worksheets. One day a lad from my fourth year class said, 'Mr Johnston we love coming to your class'. When I asked why, expecting a paean of praise for my wonderfully inclusive teaching methods and dialogic style, he said 'you get a right buzz when you sniff your worksheets'. In those days glue sniffing was popular but I hadn't realised that worksheet sniffing was a thing. I had visions of being sacked after scores of children were caught staggering out my classroom stoned. I fear I may be responsible for the only instances of worksheet addiction in the country.

I've been working in ITE for 24 years firstly at Northern College and subsequently here in the School of Education and I guess this makes me one of the longest serving academic members of staff. I remember when Northern College at Hilton was being built, running along planks of wood on the building site as a 6 year old playing pirates. My dad had just been appointed as Head of Music in 1966 and we'd moved from Glasgow in December of that year. He worked there at the start of the Hilton period and I was there at the end when the college was sold off for private housing in the early 2000s. Northern College has been in the family DNA for nearly half a century. So has Aberdeen University. I did my MA in English there, completed a Masters in the old Education department led by Leo Hendry and finally finished my PhD while teaching here in the School of Education.

Career-minded colleagues would probably see this as a spectacular absence of ambition but I had worked out from several moves as a school teacher that happiness is very much tied up in the achievement of belonging to people and place that is possible only occasionally. The bonds of friendship that I have forged with so many wonderful colleagues over the years have been at the heart of my desire to remain in the North-east and, as retirement beckons in the next couple of years, I have no regrets. Other than the great 1980s worksheet scandal, of course, which I'm hoping channel 4 will never get to hear of.

Beth McClure LECTURER & PHD STUDENT

A girl from the Midwest of America, Missouri to be exact, steps off the plane in Scotland for the first time ever with high hopes of obtaining a PhD and the next chapter of her life. I moved to Scotland in 2017 to start a PhD and become a university lecturer. It has been a bumpy and winding road, but I have finally landed where I know I am to be in this part of my life.

I joined the School of Education as a lecturer in September 2022, but before that I had joined as a full time PhD student in 2019. I am still currently working on my PhD with the dream of finishing next June. During this time, I have become a published author of a children's book titled "An American Corgi goes to Balmoral". I spent two summers after COVID lockdown working out at the Balmoral estate giving tours and taking tickets at the front gate. It has a special place in my heart and its magic is what I wanted to share with children all over the world.

The Scottish Highlands may have been the home of family ancestors before they migrated to the USA, but it is my home now. When I have free time from writing, I like to walk and swim in the highlands. Isla my highland pug is always one step behind or in front of me. It is my dream to add a highland coo, pony, lambs and chickens to that crew in a few years to come.

I continue to have a passion for educating young children as I have been an early childhood educator in the states for over 20 years prior to coming to the UK. But now the passion has shifted towards the next generation of great educators that are coming our way. With that I hope to continue my learning, finish my PhD, start new research, publish more children books and explore the world.



Student & Alumni Spotlight

Abby Smith MA EDUCATION, YEAR 3

My name is Abby Smith. I am currently in my third year of university studying Primary Education and am also part of the university's cheerleading team, AUCS Storms. The cheerleading team has been one of the most impactful experiences I have had. I have created lasting friendships through this sport, and I am incredibly grateful for the confidence and learning opportunities AUCS has provided me with.

During term time, the cheerleading team works exceptionally hard to balance University studies alongside practices to ensure we are ready to give our best performances when at competition. On the 19th of February 2023, the elite all girl small team, Rain, had the wonderful opportunity to represent the University at Future Cheer in Manchester. Future Cheer is a national competition for university cheer teams and AUCS has been incredibly successful in the past. For example, in 2019, the elite small team won first place, and even took home the grand champions' title. We were ecstatic to be going back.

Future cheer has been the highest point in my university experience, so far. At this competition, our team won first place, titling us National Champions in our division. The cheer team's success has been incredibly rewarding for all of us. Getting to perform on stage with my best friends from university was an unforgettable experience. Being a part of this team has helped my confidence grow, ultimately helping me in the classroom, enhancing my development into becoming a successful teacher.

This experience has taught me the importance of finding an extracurricular activity in which you are passionate. Not only does it provide a break from university studies, but it also helps develop valuable skills such as, teamwork, and dedication. I strongly encourage everyone to find their own "cheer team" and take advantage of the opportunities that come with being a part of something you love.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



TQFE Graduate Creag McCutcheon, told us why he chose to study at Aberdeen and what he has been up to since graduating!

He is currently working at West College Scotland, Greenock Campus as a Plumbing Lecturer.

During my time attending Aberdeen University for my TQFE qualification, it has been a very enjoyable experience. Let me clarify the deadlines, the workload and assessments have given me sleepless nights however, it has been enjoyable overall and worth it.

The Staff in particular Stephanie Thompson and Gillian McInnes, have made my experience great. They always made themselves available as they could and were always quick to respond to my many queries. They have really helped me to advance in my own profession as well as steadily help me improve as an academic.

I have learnt many skills throughout this course, along with more professional teaching skills. It has helped me to learn and adapt to a wide variety of students and have seen this in practice and through observations. It has also opened a whole host of links to people

in education across many parts of the world and locally it has really opened up the educational network to me.

I have gained many friends who were only colleagues through this. Along with constant help and assistance from my tutors and lecturers. The experience I have gained has been invaluable. Many parts have challenged me academically, but I have been supported throughout my course and never felt alone. I have also really benefited from being able to work online as well as meet face to face.

I would advise anyone wishing to take up courses at Aberdeen University to go for it. It will be hard work but in every facet of the university, there are many who are there and willing to help you. And it's challenging but the sense of satisfaction upon completion is totally worth all the hard work. Also, make use of all the provisions, even the ones you think might not help, will

Research Activity

Presentations

5 FEBRUARY 2023

Abbott, P. (2023) Presentation to the Bangladesh All-Party Parliamentary Group: 'The Impact of Covid-19 on the Readymade Garment Industry in Bangladesh' [Presentation], 5th February 2023.

21 MARCH 2023

Abbott, P. (2023) Presentation to NIHR Global Health Safeguarding, Ethics, Intellectual Property and Assurance workshop; 'Lessons learned and challenges faced when developing a Safeguarding Policy. 21st March 2023

6 APRIL 2023

Abbott, P. (2023) Presentation to Royal University & Northern Club; 'Rwanda', 6th April 2023

12 APRIL 2023

Abbott, P. (2023) 'Using the Social Quality Model to Measure Quality of Life' For Economics of Wellbeing and Public Organizations: From Rescuing to Leading Wellbeing [Presentation], 12th April 2023.

12 APRIL 2023

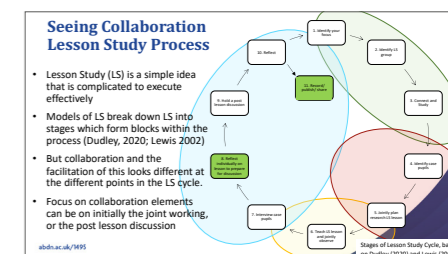
Bevern PV., Czerniawski, G. & **Mynott, J.P.**, 'Findings from the Teacher Educator Living Library Project'. Platform Samen Opleiden & Professionalisering (Workplace learning & School-University Partnerships) Online Conference, The Netherlands, 12th April 2023.

19 APRIL 2023

Mynott, J.P. 'Analysing collaboration in Lesson Study', *Lesson Study Research Group University of Stavanger*, Norway, 19th April 2023

24 APRIL 2023

Abbott, P. (2023) 10 Years' On From Rana Plaza Tragedy event at University of Aberdeen "Fashion Retailers' Unfair Practices During the COVID-19 Crisis": 24th April 2023



Slides from Dr John Paul Mynott's presentation 'Analysing Collaboration in Lesson Study' to the Lesson Study Research Group, University of Stavanger.



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For more details visit abdn.ac.uk/bapd



Research Activity

Publications

Abbott, P. (2023). Can mindfulness training in primary schools promote mental wellbeing in Sub-Saharan Africa? Open Access Government, January 2023, pp.158-159. www.researchgate.net/publication/367043597_Can_mindfulness_training_in_primary_schools_promote_mental_wellbeing_in_Sub-Saharan_Africa

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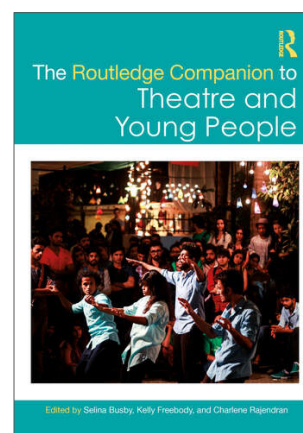
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