



# School of Education

# LEARNING STRANDS

ISSUE 3 SPRING 2020

## Welcome

to the third School of Education newsletter. Spring is here, and with it longer days and signs of growth. Discordant with this optimistic note is my writing these introductory words from 'lockdown'.

Our lives have been up-ended in a matter of weeks. Previously unthinkable restrictions have become 'the new normal', while a new vocabulary has been spawned: to 'zoom', to 'socially distance', and to imbibe of a 'quarantini', to name but a few. Talk of R-values, PPE, and 'experts' (in a welcome 'post-Truth' turn) fill the airwaves, along with stories of heartrending human tragedy from across the globe.

Yet, there are also stories of recovery; stories of hope; and inspiring accounts of heroism, against a backdrop of danger. Key Workers have again re-emerged in the popular imagination as many in the nation, and further afield, appreciate afresh, for example, the critical contribution that teachers make to our world. Home-schooling is not for the faint-hearted.

Within the School of Education, colleagues have been working hard to support students and to ensure that teaching and learning continues. Education's strength in digital learning pedagogies has greatly aided what has been a very rapid and successful shift to online learning over the course of a matter of days. Ultimately, this move is testament to the incredible commitment of Education's staff to students and the school.

As we shifted to online; the world shifted with us. The World Economic Forum (WEF) report that as of 29 April 2020, over 1.2 billion children are 'out of the classroom'.



What legacy, if any, will this leave? For the WEF author, 'it is clear that the pandemic has utterly disrupted an education system that many assert was already losing its relevance'. Putting aside the ideology of 'disruption' or the concept of 'relevance', the fact that a change has occurred is clear. But will it last? Time will tell. Personally, I suspect that this change will last and in a meaningful way.

Whatever the case, educational inclusion will continue to be a priority (See PP.2-3), as will health and wellbeing (See PP. 4,9). The Arts will continue to help us to define who we are (See P.5), as we remember where we have been (See P.4). Research and discovery will continue to be a hallmark of our endeavour.

Wherever in the world this newsletter finds you, stay safe. All good wishes from the staff and students of Aberdeen's School of Education.

**Dr David Smith**  
Head of School of Education

The WEF article can be accessed here: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning>

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This newsletter was created by the School Communications 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 contact Rosemond Cochrane, [✉ educationcomms@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:educationcomms@abdn.ac.uk)



# Scottish Attainment Challenge



## Pedagogies for Educational Inclusion of Pupils Living in Poverty

Dr Archie Graham and Dr Peter Mtika

In Scotland, almost one in four children are officially recognised as living in poverty. Where a child lives, and their family's circumstances can have a disproportionate impact on their chances of success at school. In relation to this societal issue, we are currently undertaking research linked to the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and the related Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) research agenda in teacher education. The SAC is a Scottish Government flagship policy aimed at addressing the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland's schools. Our three year project is supported with £50,000 of funding from the Scottish Government.

Seven other providers of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) across Scotland, have also been funded by the Scottish Government to research various issues in connection with improving educational outcomes for pupils growing up in poverty.

The SCDE research programme consists of a collaborative overarching project complemented by each of the eight participating universities contributing individual projects specific to their context. The overall project theme is "Developing pedagogies that work for pre-service and early career teachers to reduce the Attainment Gap in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing".

The aim of the programme is to collaboratively research how Schools of Education in Scotland might better prepare final year ITE students and Induction Year teachers to improve literacy and numeracy attainment, alongside health and wellbeing, in schools serving pupils from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1-40 backgrounds. The research team at the University of Aberdeen is represented by Dr Archie Graham, Dr Dean Robson, Dr Peter Mtika, Lindsay MacDougall, and Dr Kevin Stelfox. We have been supported on the project by Nejla Tugcem Sahin and Shahrzad Ardavani, both doctoral students in the School of Education.

The overarching research project centres on four research questions. The first question concerns an audit of current practice: What do we in teacher education institutions collectively do currently to support early career practitioners to work effectively with pupils from SIMD 1-40 backgrounds? The second research question is an evaluation of current practice. It considers what do we do well and what could we do better in teacher education in the preparation and support of early career practitioners.

Thirdly, the research considers whether there are other practices or research which might assist teacher education in the

preparation and support of early career practitioners, with a focus on resources. The fourth question investigates approaches to further improving or reforming teacher education, so our early career teachers are more effective in improving the engagement and attainment of all pupils. These are important questions whose answers will have implications for teacher educators, critical aspects of teacher education programmes, and the support mechanisms available to early career practitioners.

Our specific project focuses on 'Pedagogies for Educational Inclusion of Pupils Living in Poverty'. The project is underpinned by three key aims to:

- (i) surface what probationer teachers' focus on during their Induction Year as they strive to enact inclusive pedagogy in high poverty context schools;
- (ii) surface the enablers and barriers to Induction Year teachers' enactment of Inclusive Pedagogy in high poverty context schools; and
- (iii) highlight strengths and potential areas for future development in terms of current ITE provision to support the enactment of inclusive pedagogy.

Inclusive Pedagogy is concerned with achieving positive educational outcomes for all and is underpinned by a commitment to addressing learner differences without marginalising or stigmatising learners (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). It is argued that enacting inclusive pedagogy involves teachers responding to individual differences by extending what is ordinarily available in the classroom to include all learners and working with others to remove intersecting barriers to inclusion.

In our project, we adopt a mixed methods research design and use the Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) Framework (Florian 2014) to frame our data analysis. The IPPA Framework addresses the problem of judgements about what inclusion is, and whether it has occurred, by enabling an exploration of the extent to which a principled stance is enacted. Importantly, the IPPA Framework enables us as researchers to move beyond a description of observable actions toward a deeper understanding of the ways in which teachers enact inclusive pedagogy.

Initial qualitative data from observations, interviews, focus groups, and reflective diaries sourced from Probationer Teachers who have graduated from our ITE Programmes and are placed in partner schools, located in high poverty contexts, for their Induction Year have been collected and analysed.

Our initial findings show that the Probationer Teachers focused on two key principles from IPPA Framework for inclusive pedagogy. The first principle, **Difference is accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning**, was illustrated by all of the Probationer Teachers identifying examples of when they created environments for learning where opportunities were made available for all their pupils to participate in the life of the classroom. The second principle, **Teachers must believe they are qualified/capable of teaching all children**, was also illustrated by all of the Probationer Teachers identifying examples of when they engaged in strategic reflection to elicit responses to support difficulties which children in their classes encountered in their learning.

However, the third IPPA principle, **Teachers continually develop creative new ways of working with others**, was less evident in the data collected. This can perhaps be explained by different school priorities that place emphasis elsewhere. This insight suggests a possible area for further exploration to support student teachers.

This research is timely in view of the recent GTCS accreditation of our initial teacher education programmes in the School of Education. It encapsulates our desire to ensure that our programmes remain committed to social justice and responsive to national policy, with the help of research evidence.

#### References

Florian, L. (2014). What counts as evidence of inclusive education?, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, Vol. 29(3), pp286-294

Florian, L. & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy, *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 37(5), pp813-828



## KINDINMI Learning Conversations

The School of Education was delighted to host a series of learning conversations based on the KINDINMI project on 14 September 2019.

**The KINDINMI project is a collaborative and comparative research project concerning the inclusion of young migrants aged 6 months to 7 years in kindergarten/preschool education as a means to encouraging better opportunities for them as well as their families for social orientation and inclusion in the host country.**

Staff from the School of Education are working with researchers from Austria, Sweden and the Czech Republic to:

- Develop a pedagogical toolkit which can be accessed by practitioners in all partner countries and which will support practice in the inclusion of migrant children
- Develop an agreed curriculum in supporting migrant children and families which can be shared across all partner and used as the basis for course content in individual partner countries

Guest speakers Dr Thomas Bak, Lucinda Geoghegan and Alison Forbes led the day with presentations from current BA Childhood Practice and Early Years students. Dr Bak, who researches the impact of multilingualism on cognitive functions across the whole lifespan and in brain diseases such as dementia and stroke, noted the contagious enthusiasm of the delegates on the day. Tweeting after the event, Dr Bak noted the “great examples of appreciation and support for multilingual children in the nurseries. And the importance of encouraging children’s natural curiosity and problem solving. Multilingualism as an opportunity and not a burden”.

Following on from this highly successful day, the team hope to run KINDINMI Learning Conversations in partnership with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in June 2020.

Find out more at:

[www.edu.uu.se/collaboration/kindinmi](http://www.edu.uu.se/collaboration/kindinmi)

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/research/projects-1020.php#panel1059>

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# Community Collaborations

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## Mindful Nation Scotland

On 17 September Mindful Nation Scotland, a collaboration of Scottish Mindfulness training and research organisations including the University of Aberdeen, delivered A Scottish Mindfulness Event at the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood. The event was hosted by Maurice Corry (Scottish Conservative and Unionist MSP).

Colette Savage and Dr Graeme Nixon represented the university. Attended by several MSPs, the event was to highlight the significant levels of mindfulness training currently taking place in the public, private and third-sector of Scotland and to present evidence illustrating the impact of mindfulness-based interventions for health, well-being and leadership. It was also the launch for mindfulness training to be given to MSPs in early October.

This is part of a wider programme following on from the Mindful Nation report, which has seen the mindfulness initiative deliver training at over 40 parliaments worldwide.

MSPs heard about the range and interests of graduates from University of Aberdeen and the work of other providers within Scotland, many of whom were graduates of University of Aberdeen.

Chris Ruane (Labour Party) and Jamie Bristow (Director of The Mindfulness Initiative, Secretariat to the UK Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group) travelled from Wales and Sheffield respectively, to speak about their experience of mindfulness at Westminster Parliament and other parliaments across the world.



**A very successful evening with over 50 people in attendance and a great opportunity to highlight the MSc in Mindfulness course, offered by the School of Education, which is now in its 10th year and the biggest MSc programme in the university.**

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## Helping Pupils Understand the Impact of World War One



Neil McLennan is among the experts who have helped Poppy Scotland develop new educational packs to help school pupils understand the impact of the First World War.

Mr McLennan said “it is really important that the next generation continue to learn the lessons of World War One, but this is more than simply teaching them about the conflict and cooperation. The Poppy Scotland learning initiative is fantastic

because its remit goes much deeper than that. Teachers and pupils are guided through the experience of life in the trenches; military tactics and the technology of war but the resources also focus on commemoration and remembrance.”

In the run up to Remembrance Sunday, Mr McLennan visited Lathallan School near Johnshaven, Aberdeenshire, where he worked with teachers and children using the resources.



“Neil McLennan’s research on shell-shock, the war poets and commemoration ensures students across Scotland are well equipped to learn about the importance of Remembrance in the future.”

Mark Bibbey, Chief Executive of Poppy Scotland

# Aberdeen Performing Arts Music Hall Babies Project

Liz Curtis and Pauline Black

Imagine dancing in a community workshop with the Scottish Ballet in the Lemon Tree in Aberdeen or being part of a musical workshop run by Scottish Opera, and you probably don't imagine that the key participants are babies between 4 and 6 months old. The babies with their adult partners are in conversation with their bodies, stretching, vocalising, watching ephemeral scarves flutter in the air and listening and echoing the sounds of singers and instruments.

During the year between the closure of Aberdeen Music Hall in December 2017 and its reopening a year later, around 50 babies and their parents participated in a year-long programme of arts-based workshops organised by Aberdeen Performing Arts Creative Learning Team. During this project Liz Curtis and Pauline Black worked with the project organisers to explore the experiences of participating families and the role of arts organisations in developing creativity and relationships between babies and their parents.

Ellison et al (2011) argue that for some adults perceived barriers result in the impression that performing arts are elitist and that prior experience is an important and 'necessary prerequisite' for attendance as an adult. Our research showed that around 40% of parents had regularly engaged in musical activities, dancing lessons and drama classes as children and several of the parents had continued these activities into adulthood. Despite this, many perceived that some areas of performing arts as not for them and definitely not for very young children.

One of the biggest surprises to parents was the impact and enjoyment of Scottish Opera's performance shared by a parent here **'...I would never have thought to take my child before, but the BambinO performance had them all gripped.'**

We took a cultural and social capital approach, (Bourdieu, 1997) as a way of



understanding some of the wider impacts of the project and used a mixed methods approach to data collection which included questionnaires, interviews, an online journal and photo elicitation.

Overall, our research reflects the success of MHB in building on the existing cultural capital of parents, (ibid.) and increasing their confidence to play creatively with their babies. Participation in workshops also changed parents' perceptions of the relevance and potential enjoyment that families could have from attending live performances of a range of arts. The importance of the improvisatory experience in underpinning the development of creativity was also much valued.

However, this also raised questions about how projects such as this can unwittingly widen the cultural and social capital gap between children growing up in different parts of the city. Aberdeen Performing Arts were committed to taking a social inclusion approach to recruitment and to widen access to their programme. They took positive steps to advertise the workshops throughout the city through a range of means. Despite this only two of the participating families came from regeneration areas of the city.

The participants with existing cultural capital were more likely to imagine themselves participating in the project so responded to advertising and shared it on existing social networks.

As one of the parents commented, **'...a lot of my antenatal class signed up for it and cos we were like, oh did you see at the registry office they had that poster? ...we kept mentioning it through our WhatsApp group and then everyone sort of started signing up for it.'**

Whereas people without or with limited cultural capital were unlikely to imagine themselves participating in the project so didn't 'see' the relevance of the invitation. Findings from our research indicated that parents who chose to participate already recognised MHB as being relevant to them as one reflected that participation would, **'give my child some form of, I don't know boost.'**

A positive result of this finding is that since the end of the original MHB project, Aberdeen Performing Arts have taken their workshops into regeneration communities in the city as the first step of widening the demographic reach of participation.

## References

- Bourdieu P (1997) The forms of capital. In: Halsey AH, Lauder H, Brown P, et al. (eds) *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*, pp. 46–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellison, D., Keys, W., Kukucka, S. Woodward, I, 2011. *Sustaining Culture & the Role of Performing Audiences*. <https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/71241/EllisonPUB12.pdf?sequen>

The full report can be accessed here: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336568473\\_MUSIC\\_HALL\\_BABIES\\_Evaluation\\_Report](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336568473_MUSIC_HALL_BABIES_Evaluation_Report)

# Winter 2019 Graduations



# Student & Alumni Spotlight

## CHLOE AUCHNIE

MA in Education, Year 3

I have always known I wanted to be a Primary Educator and have been determined to pursue a career in Primary Education. In Primary 3 I completed a 'what I want to be when I am older' worksheet and wrote 'a primary teacher' as my future career. I have never hesitated at any opportunities where I have been able to work with the younger generation and provide support. I have also further engaged in a vast range of opportunities, working abroad in Mexico at an orphanage, a school in India and at summer camp in American. This summer I am hoping to work abroad again at a creche.

I have had a few setbacks in my life, which have affected my academic studies and prevented me from meeting my conditional offer to transition to university after school. However, certain that my future lies in Primary education, I attended college for one academic year and I was offered an unconditional place on the MA in Education the following year. I have been passionate and committed to my studies in the MA Primary Education course. I received two awards in my first year on the course; The Principals Scholar Prize and The Jess Cutt Prize which is awarded to a first-year student who has shown commitment and effort in their chosen course of study. Both awards were a huge, and greatly appreciated, surprise. I am the first member in my family to attend university and due to this recognition of achievement it has made my family extremely proud. I now know and realise I can achieve my goal.

I have particularly enjoyed attending placement, getting the experience to apply my knowledge into practice, and have had many opportunities to be creative and plan and implement activities. I have built my confidence by frequently taking whole class lessons and attending staff meetings. My most recent placement especially has been exceptional. The staff and children are all so friendly. I have found it truly rewarding to be able to teach a range of different concepts across all of the curricular areas, be involved in daily routines and taking responsibility to ensure they are complete. I have also built good relationships with both the staff and pupils. I am apprehensive about moving up to the upper years (Primary 7) for my next placement, due to having only worked with Primary 4 and lower. That said, I am looking forward to the challenge and excited to learn and meet my new class.



## DR PRINCE ARMAGH

Alumnus, PhD in Mathematics Education

Dr Prince H. Armah is a Senior Lecturer, Researcher and Licensed Teacher (QTS & GTCS) of mathematics and mathematics teacher education, with teaching experience in UK and Ghana contexts, spanning a period of 16 years. His scholarship centres around intersections of education policy and practice, focusing on educational achievement, instruction and reform. He has trained at the Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) of the Universities of Nottingham, Edinburgh and Manchester with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom. He also has deep understanding of Ghana's education and socio-economic reforms, as well as a high knowledge of quality reporting on research and evaluation assignments covering education in Ghana.

In addition to his lectureship at the Institute for Distance & eLearning (IDeL) at the University of Education, Winneba (Ghana), Dr Armah works as a Numeracy Curriculum Consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Partnership for Education Project (2014-2019). He is also a Research Consultant to the World Bank funded Ghana Secondary Education Improvement Project (2014-2019), helping to deliver the Research Agenda component of the project. Additionally, he is a member of the Technical Committee assisting the development of Ghana's Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030.

Prior to these assignments, Dr Armah was part of the stakeholders engaged in the preparation of a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education in Ghana under the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) project (2014-2018). He also led a team to conduct stakeholders' consultations on alternative financing pathways for achieving equal educational opportunity for children, on behalf of the UN's Education Commission. He has delivered papers in a variety of settings, together with over 20 publications.

He is the immediate past Executive Director of the Institute for Education Studies (IFEST) think tank in Accra. He founded IFEST with the view to providing timely research to inform education and social policy decisions. He holds a PhD degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Aberdeen, UK, with specialization in Curriculum, Pedagogy and Educational Policy.



# Events

Our school community has been busy celebrating Christmas, with jumpers (in aid of Macmillan) and decs. Admin colleagues had a retro-celebration; we filled boxes of food for the homeless; and we said 'goodbye' to our colleague of many years, Liz Robertson, who retired.



## PROFILE Professor Peter McGeorge

My name is Peter McGeorge and while I am new to the School of Education, I have been with the University of Aberdeen for almost 30 years. During that time, I have undertaken many roles including spending 7 years as the Head of the School of Psychology and most recently, 9 years as the Vice-Principal Education I think this is a really exciting time to be joining the School and I am really looking forward to my new role as Head of Counselling, Well Being, and Educational Psychology and, see enormous potential to build on the excellent work already being done in this area to help meet a critical need in society today.

A brief foray into history - my background is in behavioural science and experimental psychology. I undertook my first degree in Behavioural Science (Psychology & Zoology) at the University of Nottingham before going on to complete my Doctoral training in experimental cognitive psychology – specifically in Implicit Learning – again in Nottingham. Soon after completing my Doctorate I moved to Aberdeen to work on a project on how doctors interpret of ECG heart traces before becoming a lecturer in the, then small Department of Psychology (shows how long I have been here!). I have published on many aspects of Psychology beyond my initial work on implicit learning, predominantly in perception and attention, but also on non-technical skills training in the medical field. I have always tried to ensure a balance between pure and applied work. I have undertaken research with many groups including, students, clinical populations, children, and various expert groups such as Clinicians (note this is ordering is entirely random).

My guiding principles are that both research and teaching need to be fun and a challenge. I am sure I will find both in School of Education. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone better and working with you.





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# Programme Focus

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## PGDip/MSc Person-Centred Counselling Programme

The School of Education's postgraduate person-centred counselling programme - leading students to a diploma or a masters qualification - provides trainees with an opportunity to learn about the theoretical model and philosophical ethos developed by Carl Rogers.

Delivered by a core teaching team of qualified and practising counsellors, the course combines a rigorous experiential learning environment with agency and GP-surgery placements out in the Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire community, leading to a rich but challenging time that has been described by some former students as 'like being turned inside out'!

The PGDip is designed to run part-time over two years, successful completion of which allows progression to the MSc. The masters stage of the programme allows students to develop their own course of research, culminating in a dissertation.

The student cohort for the diploma and masters tends to be relatively small by University of Aberdeen standards. The professional body for Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland, COSCA, demands that students have a minimum of 400 hours tutor contact time (at a ratio of 1:14) and that they complete a total of 180 one-to-one client hours in their placements before they can qualify as a counselling practitioner.

Given the nature of the job the students are being trained to do, one of the key aspects of the training is developing a high

level of self-awareness. To foster greater development and self-knowing, theoretical workshops and lectures are balanced by experiential learning groups - some small, with maybe six-eight students and a core tutor facilitating, and some for the whole cohort with two or three tutor facilitators. These groups are naturally very demanding as they ask for a high level of presence and personal openness from the students - and tutors - and despite being in class just one day a week, trainees often report feeling pretty tired (and emotional!) after their weekly six and a half hours together.

As for the tutors, there's a good reason why our office - on the sixth floor of the MacRobert Building - has comfortable seating, as maintaining the boundaries between tutor and counsellor, while also teaching some quite intense theoretical concepts, takes it out of us too but can also be very rewarding.

During their two-three years with us, our PG students learn about the theory and philosophy of person-centredness - as mentioned above - as well as the therapeutic process of counselling, awareness of their professional development needs and how to use supervision. They develop a critical understanding of where the PC modality is placed in the field of counselling as well as where counselling sits with society as a whole. Add to these a need for a keen understanding of the ethical framework for the counselling professions and the aforementioned need for a high level of



awareness of themselves in relationship, and you get some idea of why the demands of the learning are high.

There are also very practical administrative aspects to the training as counsellors have to be accountable to themselves, their clients, agencies and professional bodies in terms of record keeping and notes as well as undertaking a considerable amount CPD annually. Our course sends new counsellors out into the world with a very clear idea of what practical tasks they need to accomplish in order to work within an organisation or run their own private practice. The tutors' experience of being 'out there' comes in very useful, and we're also not averse to giving students an insight into some of our past client work - albeit while protecting people's confidentiality and anonymity - and as you can imagine it can be good, bad and downright ugly, but all very useful learning for the counsellors of tomorrow.

For more information visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/person-counselling](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/person-counselling)

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## SUPPORT YOUR FUTURE TEACHING CAREER!

The Aberdeenshire Student Incentive Scheme for Teaching (ASIST) supports participants career financially, through mentorship and guarantees full-time teaching experience for 2 years after probation.

**APPLY TODAY > [www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/asist](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/asist)**



# Staff Spotlight

## ALYSON YOUNG

My name is Alyson Young and I am a very recent addition to the School of Education. I am delighted to be coming back to the University of Aberdeen, 16 years after graduating with a degree in Law and French Law. My journey into education started with a real love of learning, which has developed into a passion for creative approaches to teaching and learning in Primary education. I spent 14 years teaching in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils, with a year spent as Acting Depute Head.

For the last 8 years I have been working towards a career in HE, building as much experience as I could. I wanted to take my passion for teaching to the next level, making an impact on new teachers and hopefully growing their passion for education in line with my own. The opportunity to develop research skills also excites me as this is something I have wanted to do since my law degree days. Now that my children are a little older, it seemed like the time to start looking for jobs in HE and here I am!

My time is spent mostly working on PDGE (Primary) but I am also dipping my toes into Health and Wellbeing with the MA2 students and I am excited to be involved with the brand new iPDGE course out in Doha. I am constantly learning about how things work at the School of Education but it's so exciting and gives me a chance to really stretch myself and push the limits of my comfort zone!

I have a keen interest in Developing the Young Workforce and enterprise education, specifically what this looks like in a Primary classroom. Much of my latter teaching practice was focused on developing these skills for life in my learners and I feel like I have barely scratched the surface. The opportunity to carry out some research into this area excites me and a Masters is definitely in my sights. However, for the time being I am focused on learning as much as I can from my new colleagues and consequently working out where my interests really lie. I'm just taking it all in! So far, the school visits have been a highlight as has working with my PGDE LinC Group, including using Collaborate for our weekly online meetings. Everything is so new and so different from life in a classroom!



## JOYCE MICHIE

I have worked for the School of Education since the age of 16. I started as an office junior in July 1974 at the former Aberdeen College of Education. We merged with Dundee Teacher Training College and then again with the University of Aberdeen where we were allocated a newly renovated building called the 'MacRobert Building' where I have been ever since. I initially supported the teacher training programme which has changed a great deal over the years.

I am now the School Support Assistant for a Sixth Century Course and the administrator for the UG COSCA Counselling part-time course. There is a huge intake from fee paying students who come from all walks of life to full time students who have picked the course to start their journey towards becoming a Counsellor. Over my forty years of work I have made so many great friends and had so many laughs, unfortunately also some real sadness too.

All my working life I have worked with students and this is, without a doubt, the best part of my job. I believe I was blessed with very good communication skills and a very good sense of humour (maybe not everyone agrees!). I love fixing things to make it right for the students and I endeavour to try and help them as much as I can. If I don't know the answer I have so many caring colleagues all over the University who I can ask for help. Funnily enough people use the word 'networking', I like to call it 'making new friends'. Without all my friends in all these different departments (you know who you are IT Services!) I would not be able to do my job.

Many years ago, from one of the final BEd classes I got a sweatshirt with 'Ask Joyce' written on the back. It was very humbling and so nice to be appreciated by the students. I have been lucky to be nominated for an Excellence Award in 2018 and was awarded a certificate for Excellence in Customer Service and Best Support Staff as a result. In 2014 I was the winner of the Universities Student Choice Award for Supporting Personal/Professional Development.

Out with my work I love to run and have been an active member of Jog Scotland for many years. I also enjoy spending time with my family who bring me the most joy. I enjoy reading fiction books and walking. My annual walking holiday is always a highlight of my year (Easy pleased!).



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# Research Update

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## Post Graduate Research Conference

Saturday 7 December 2019 | School of Education

This student led conference provides the opportunity for PhD students at all stages of study to present their on-going research to peers and members of staff through presentations and posters.

This year PhD Student Anna Teitz led the organising committee and together they created an interesting and varied programme of international educational research from Greece to the Caribbean.

Professor Donald Gray opened the day with a keynote presentation on his experience and identity as researcher and activist in education for sustainability, sharing his journey from zoology student to professor and how his interest in the arts has shaped his journey through academic life and public engagement.

The students' research spanned teachers' experiences and stories of inclusion and exclusion, relationships between belonging and behaviour as experienced by pre-schoolers in Greece, teachers' beliefs in relation to inquiry-based learning in science education in Trinidad and Tobago to choir conductors as vocal pedagogues in the UK.

In addition to the presentations, Dr David Johnston led a workshop on writing the Discussion Chapter of your thesis. Internationality is a strength of the School of Education's PGR community and the PGR Conference provides a great opportunity to gain insight to learning and teaching in a range of different contexts around the world.



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## SCOT: STEM Career Long Professional Online Training in Scotland

Dr Chrissy Mangafa and Dr Dean Robson from the School of Education are working with colleagues from Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition and Biology on a new project to address skill and knowledge gaps in STEM Education.

The team hope to create and deliver new innovative online career long professional learning modules which specifically

address the needs of STEM teachers and could contribute towards Masters level qualifications.

The University of Aberdeen has long term expertise in delivering education across remote and rural areas in teacher education. More recently the Institution has focussed on developing a wide range of innovative online and blended

educational courses across a range of disciplines using a CPD model which can be expanded progressively up to Master's degree level.

The team hope this project will lead to the development of inclusive, open and accessible online modules to all teachers in Scotland regardless of their geographical location.

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## Education in the Contemporary Society

Chiara Montà, visiting PhD student (University of Milano-Bicocca)

My name is Chiara Montà. I moved from Milan to Aberdeen in January to conduct my PhD field work, so I will be a visiting student till June.

I'm studying the phenomenon of child participation at a public, formal and institutional level from a pedagogical perspective. I came to Aberdeen to study the work Children's Parliament

Scotland is doing in the city, specifically in its schools, as it is an exemplary case.

Everyone in Aberdeen has been so welcoming and, as I tell my family and friends in Italy, it is like living in a postcard here! I've been surprised by all the shades of blue I've seen.

The sky truly does melt into the sea...!

I still have three months to spend here and I hope to visit more of Scotland, enjoy its cuisine and typical music. Moreover, I hope, and the premises and initial work have been great, to be able to deepen my research meaningfully for all those who are taking part in it, for all those who are being passionate seekers with me.

# Research Update

## Conference Digest

### DR WILLIAM BARLOW

**13 December 2019** School of Education and Social Work Research and Scholarship Conference 2019. Paper: William Barlow, Divya Jindal-Snape, Jennifer Symonds, Beth Hannah; *Conceptualising primary to secondary school transitions: A systematic literature review*

**17 - 20 October 2020** The Third National Conference on Drama and Education Application. Keynote speaker, facilitated a three-day workshop on 'Education and life transitions - Applied Drama Forum'

### COLIN CHRISTIE

**9 November 2019** SALT Annual Conference, University of Stirling. 'Maximising the impact of MLA and PGDE time in Secondaries'

**11 November 2019** 'Making Languages Relevant' Aberdeenshire In-service Day (*Panel member, Panel Discussion*)

### DR ARCHIE GRAHAM

**20 - 22 November 2019** Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference 2019. Creative visions for Educational futures (*Presenting work*)

### PROFESSOR DONALD GRAY

**3 - 6 September 2019** European Conference on Educational research (*Presentation - From oil to soil. Learning for Sustainability transitions within the school garden: a project of cultural and social re-learning*)

### NEIL MCLENNAN

**1 - 2 September 2019** Current geopolitical challenges & their impact on leadership in a disruptive age. University of Aberdeen Centre for Global Security and Governance & Andr ssy University, Budapest; University of Aberdeen (*Invited delegate*)

### NEIL MCLENNAN (cont.)

**24 September 2019** Watson's Education Forum (*Invited delegate*)

**25 September 2019** Cooperative Leadership as a new leadership model, EduBlether as part of Scottish Learning Festival/Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative, University of Aberdeen Northern Alliance Hub (*Speaker*)

**27 September 2019** Creating a new leadership model- Cooperative Leadership. Explorathon, Lerwick, Shetland (*Speaker*)

**28 September 2019** Cooperative Leadership, ResearchEd Scotland, Dollar Academy (*Speaker*)

### DR GRAEME NIXON

**28 August - 1 September 2019** European Forum of Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE), Dublin City University. Paper: Graeme Nixon, David Smith and Jo Pearce: *Religious Education and the Sanitisation of Religion*

### DR RACHEL SHANKS

**2 - 6 September 2019** European Conference of Educational Research, Hamburg. 'School Uniforms in Scotland: Surveillance and Control of the School Body'

**24 October 2019** Advance HE Assessment Symposium, York. 'Using blogposts for peer to peer learning and summative assessment'

**20 - 22 November 2019** Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Edinburgh. 'Perspectives of head teachers on the Named Person policy in Scotland'

### STEPHANIE THOMSON

**2 - 6 September 2019** European Conference on Educational Research 2019 (*Presented a paper called 'Choice in Complex Education and Training Landscapes'*)

**10 - 12 September 2019** BERA 2019 'Choice' and Progression for GCSE Lower Attainers in England' (*Presenting a symposium called Going somewhere?*)

## Publications

**Bain, Y., Brosnan, K. & McGuigan, A. (2019).** 'Transforming practice, transforming practitioners: reflections on the TQFE in Scotland' *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, Education, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 83-101 [ONLINE] <https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2018.1526907>

**Bain, Y. & Gray, D. (2018).** 'The Professional Development of Teacher Educators in Scotland: researcherly dispositions and tensions' *Scottish Educational Review*, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 54-72

**Gray, D., Bain, Y. & Weir, D. (2019).** Scotland: it's schools and teachers. in KG Karras & CC Wolhuter (eds), *International Handbook of Teacher Education Worldwide: Revised and Augmented Edition*, vol. 3, H.M. Studies and Publishing, pp. 565-587



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