



# School of Education

# LEARNING STRANDS

ISSUE 7 SPRING/SUMMER 2022

## Welcome

to the 7th School of Education newsletter. The last Learning Strands (Autumn/Winter 2021 edition)<sup>1</sup> focused on COP-26, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and the threat of climate change. For several years now, we have faced another global threat: Covid-19. If some are to be believed, zoonotic diseases are likely to increase in the coming years.

Fast-forward but a few months and there is the intensified spectre of hunger, famine, and increasing levels of poverty. In Autumn/Winter 2021, the majority of us could likely name but one or two Ukrainian cities. Now, the horrors of war in Ukraine compound human suffering, far and wide, as a lust for empire seeks to re-draw borders with blood.

There is plenty of fuel...for despair.

It is easy to feel powerless in the face of overwhelming global events and powers. What difference can we make?

Critical pedagogy speaks to a context in which there is disempowerment and in which people are deprived of agency. In this context, students are encouraged 'to take risks, act on their sense of social responsibility, and engage the world as an object of both critical analysis and hopeful transformation.'<sup>2</sup>

When this edition of Learning Strands was conceived, its theme was post-pandemic futures. At the heart of this is an assumption: that our activity as



educators and researchers can speak to a different type of future; and beyond this, that it can contribute to its creation.

Education is so much more than the banking of knowledge; we are in the business of hopeful transformation – as those engaged with the world as it is, yet envisaging with others what it can be.

I am delighted that we will be informed in this edition by an international contribution from Jessica Charles at Bank Street College of Education, NYC, who informs our thinking by offering a US perspective.

This marks my last Learning Strands at the University of Aberdeen. It has been my privilege to be Head of School of Education and to work with such a wonderful group of people, within the School, the wider university, and beyond. Thank-you for your support and continued championing of Aberdeen's School of Education.

**Professor David Smith**  
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.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/documents/SoEd%20eNewsletter%20Issue%206%20FINALv2%20SC\\_1221.pdf](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/documents/SoEd%20eNewsletter%20Issue%206%20FINALv2%20SC_1221.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Giroux, On Critical Pedagogy, 2011, 14

# School News

## Guest Contributor - Jessica Charles PhD

Senior Director of Research, Effectiveness, and Innovation | Bank Street College of Education, Manhattan, NYC



Public schools in the United States are more recognizable at this stage in the pandemic than they have been in several years. Children and their teachers have returned unmasked, segregated by zip code (a proxy for race and class), state tests are once again a central focus of classroom instruction, teachers are again struggling to meet the demands of state curricula with far too few resources, and as parents have been able to return to work and schools have reopened, they have become less connected to, as they were before 2020, the day-to-day project of schooling in America.

Yet, in many ways the old problems are now overshadowed by the individual and collective trauma that losing over a million souls to COVID-19 has wrought on the American psyche. Children, their families, and their educators have returned sadder and more anxious, more isolated, and more uncertain of what the future holds and what their role in that future will be. And, unfortunately, this fragile moment is compounded by the school shootings and gun violence that are plaguing our country.

The recent shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas should remind us that too many of our young people are disconnected from and angry with their lives, our society, and our schools. It should also be a moral reckoning for our country; we are failing at even the most basic responsibility to protect our youngest and most vulnerable citizens at the schools we mandate them to attend.

As schools in the United States move into what we hope will be a post-pandemic future, we will be grappling with the loss and fear that characterize our school communities.

Attention to supporting the social-emotional learning of children, which was already a practice in ascendency, should become a central focus of educator preparation and professional development.

This will require not only a shift away from an emphasis on academic performance toward holistic, developmentally-informed practice in pre-K-12 settings, it will also demand far greater attention to the needs of educators whom we currently expect to nurture young people under adverse conditions with very little emotional and professional support.

Moreover, to meet the challenge that this moment presents us, we will need to draw on the lessons of the pandemic to reconsider the organizational arrangements in which children are asked to learn and their educators are asked to work. During the pandemic, we saw the integration of technology on a broad scale that enabled teachers and families to rethink the way that education happens across time and space.

This disruption is a chance for policymakers and educators to finally rethink the factory school model at scale, a relic of early 20th century America, which sorts and divides teachers, students, and communities from one another.

While digital technology in and of itself is not a panacea, rethinking where and how education can happen that might ensure a more relevant and expansive curriculum for our students, and knit our society together towards a more democratic and equitable future, could be an outcome of this moment. During the pandemic, parents were more connected to their children's school experience because of online teaching. Teachers became more aware of children's home lives.

If technology can be used to deepen family-school relationships in culturally sensitive and responsive ways, some of our learning from this digital learning experiment can be used to address one of education's most vexing challenges. Technology also gives us opportunities to build relationships with people outside of our community, our race, our social class, and our political ideology. The pandemic has shown us that this type of connection through technology is possible; our socially and politically diseased culture has revealed it is imperative.

Another disruption that has occurred which has deep implications for education is in the field of early childhood. Early childhood education and care in the United States is a patchwork of federal, state, and local policies that regulate and fund programs. While some families have access to subsidized child care, many do not.

A recent report by Childcare Aware America<sup>1</sup> estimates that an average American two-parent family will pay about 10% of their income for childcare for one child. This is unaffordable for many American families, and the pandemic has exacerbated the situation.

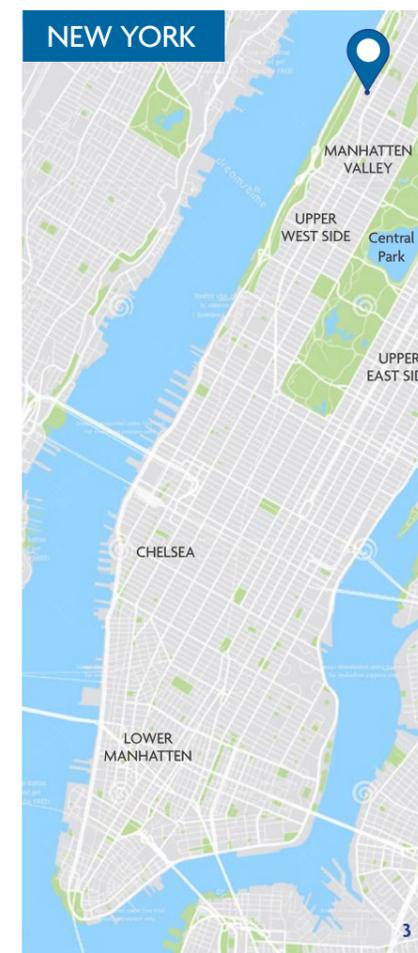
Early childhood care providers, who are some of the lowest paid workers in America, making on average just over \$11/hour, are leaving the field in large numbers. Additionally, the long closures due to the pandemic, combined with staff attrition, have caused many centers to close, making childcare even more inaccessible than it was before the pandemic.

The United States now has an opportunity to rethink the fractured early childhood education system, and to put in place policies that will stabilize the sector through adequate funding, better wages and working conditions, and workforce development strategies<sup>2</sup> such as access to free or subsidized education for currently employed caregivers and educators.

The pandemic appears to be becoming an endemic feature, rather than an anomaly, of our lives and of our schools in the United States. Whether we choose to learn from this disaster is yet to be seen. Early findings of a study of teachers' experiences during the pandemic indicate we may not be learning much.

Bartlett and colleagues' early data analysis<sup>3</sup> suggests that while teachers were granted great flexibility (although little support) in responding to the needs of their students and families in the early stages of the pandemic, schools quickly snapped back into their pre-pandemic shape. By the fall of 2020, expectations for attendance, curriculum coverage, standardized testing, and grading were back in place in many districts, and the routines of school, even when online, mirrored the structures that we have known for decades do not support learning.

However, as we respond to the emotional and mental health needs of our students, work to retain what we have learned about teaching with technology, and rethink how we provide quality, affordable childcare for families, we have a once-in-a-century opportunity to make sustainable, systemic change.



Bank Street Graduate School of Education

### IMAGE CREDITS

1. Jessica Charles - Senior Director of Research, Effectiveness, and Innovation - <https://graduate.bankstreet.edu/academics/faculty-profile/jessica-charles/>; 2. Bank Street College of Education, Manhattan, NYC; 3. Main Campus Location: 610 West 112th Street New York, NY 10025-1898. Map illustration courtesy of Dreamstime [www.dreamstime.com](http://www.dreamstime.com), ID84711180 © Max776

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.childcareaware.org/demanding-change-repairing-our-child-care-system>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.capita.org/rebuilding-early-care-and-education>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sites.google.com/ucsc.edu/suddenlydistant/publications?authuser=0>

## PGDE Drama Course Students attend the Dorothy Heathcote Now Conference in Birmingham

Dr William Barlow | Senior Lecturer; Lead Tutor: Drama

It is always a special moment when students and tutors meet for the first time. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, my students and I were unable to meet in person at the University of Aberdeen, and like many, were learning online – a task rather difficult for a practical subject that requires the creation of a fictional context. This is an important point, as not all practical subjects can easily transfer to online teaching.

For example, drama enables students to, create, enact, and reflect on fictional worlds. These fictional worlds are often based on students' understandings of the real world through the adoption of role. When in role, pupils adopt different perspectives and attitudes which result in a lived emotional experience (Vygotsky termed this as *perezhivanie*).

This involvement enables students to rework their understandings of the real world within the safety net of the fictional world. Consequently, students can test out their real-world experiences within the fiction without ever living with the consequences of their actions as they would do within the real world (Vygotsky labelled this as the dual affect). This, as one might imagine, is a delicate and complicated negotiation between teacher and students when in a classroom, and near enough impossible online.

As such, learning in the usually practical PGDE Drama course has largely been theoretical during the pandemic. Therefore, when an opportunity to attend the **Dorothy Heathcote Now** conference in Birmingham arose in October 2021, my students and I were keen to experience and develop our theoretical understanding by developing our drama praxis. Dr Dorothy Heathcote was a pioneer of drama education and of education in general. Her theories are practiced in schools around the world and have influenced drama and educational theorists since the 1960s.



A central aspect of Heathcote's pedagogical philosophy was a 'living through drama' approach, where she supported pupils and teachers to co-create together. However, this 'living through' approach did not reject the theatrical tradition as she drew upon the work of theatre practitioners such as Brecht and Stanislavski to help create and reflect upon the drama.

This is, in part, what made Heathcote's work unique. For example, she struck a middle ground between those practitioners who viewed drama as 'child development' (Way, 1967) and those that focused on drama as a product to be performed to an audience (Hornbrook, 1989). In turn, her work encouraged the use of theatrical constructs or elements without the need for an external audience to enable pupils to learn by doing (Heathcote, 1984).

Learning by doing was central to this conference as the students and I were able to work with artefacts from the Heathcote library. It was a privilege to work with these artefacts and contribute, in some way, to our shared understanding of her work. Additionally, it was a pleasure to work with the drama education scholar - Professor Cecily O'Neill.



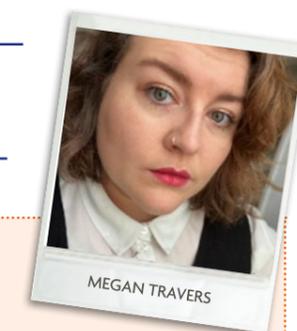
Professor O'Neill's workshops enabled the students and I to develop our understanding of teacher artistry (and co-artistry) within the classroom. For example, working from a pre-text, Professor O'Neill reflected on how we create areas of learning that question dominant modes of teacher led communication (instructions) with our young people.

In turn, Professor O'Neill suggested the importance of sharing, guiding, and creating alongside our learners to jointly shape the aesthetic experience. To create this shared aesthetic experience, Professor O'Neill reminded us of the importance in treating everybody's contributions as gifts which are to be shared and cherished.

Meeting, learning, and reflecting with my students during this conference will be something that I cherish as I develop my own praxis as a teacher, lecturer, researcher, and artist.

### IMAGE CREDITS

1. Our group of PGDE Drama students at the archive workshop; 2. Our first workshop working with Tim Taylor, learning about teaching voices; 3. Dr Will Barlow and Shannon Fraser in discussion with Professor Cecily O'Neill



### STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE DOROTHY HEATHCOTE NOW CONFERENCE Megan Travers | PGDE Drama Student 2021-2022

With the pandemic stopping us from meeting together as a full cohort, and getting to do practical workshops, being able to go to the Dorothy Heathcote Now conference was of great benefit to us. We attended workshops that looked at Dorothy's methods, hosted by those who had studied directly under her, a rare opportunity.

On the Saturday, we attended two different workshops. The first workshop was for the Dorothy Heathcote archive, we explored some of the methods Dorothy had used, and about the materials she would have used for creating Bronze Age People project. From this we started to understand reasoning behind the methods, and how we could try to incorporate these into our own teacher practice. The second workshop, hosted by Tim Taylor, was about exploring the Mantle of the Expert, and using the different teaching voices; Teacher in Role, Teacher Facilitator, Teacher Narrator. Tim Taylor really made this work created by Dorothy accessible and gave us more something to consider in terms of our own application in practice. The keynote speech at the end of the first day was by Luke Abbott, who studied directly under Dorothy. Luke Abbott took much credit for the development of the methods Dorothy created, citing that Dorothy gave the power into her student's hands, to in turn empower their pupils.

The second day consisted of a workshop by Cecily O'Neill who further explored the MoE (see pictures). She gave us a stimulus of a picture which we depicted to be an old burial ground, and we created myths and legends surrounding it – a bride left at the altar on that land, a queen's tomb, a place of sacrifice and so on. We became archaeologists whose job it was to find out from the locals about this piece of land with the potential burial ground. We then produced a story, through the myths we had created, that there was a buried queen there and to enter the tomb you would have to give gifts to the stone guards. Our lecturer (Dr Will Barlow) and one of our classmates, Shannon, played the parts of the stone guards, and after each gift we gave them, they changed form, so the 'gate' was always changing.

In the last workshop we got to work with Tim Taylor again where he let us be the pupils to help further our understanding of MoE. We then discussed how we experienced the MoE through his allowance of letting us create this world. This was the most beneficial part of the whole weekend, as we truly got to experience and then discuss the practical methods, we could apply to our own teacher practice. It led to many discussions amongst us as students on how we could see the practical application of Dorothy Heathcote's work, and its significance. Overall, it was a terrific opportunity to be able to see how methods and practitioner work that we have only been able to access in a theoretical way, can work when practically applied and used to engage and encourage pupil development.

### Dual Teaching Faye Hendry | Programme Director PGDE Secondary

Having made the shift from on-campus teaching to online teaching at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of us found ourselves in a new position again this academic year, as we expanded our use of dual teaching, with students both online and with us in the room. Teaching three of the MA Education first year courses in a dual format this year, I had lots of opportunities to try out different pedagogical approaches to facilitating learning and engaging students.

Support from eLearning, the MyAberdeen User Group and colleagues in the School of Education was excellent, and informal conversations with other tutors teaching in a dual format provided much food for thought and great ideas for running workshops in this way. Using the enhanced ICT set-up in MR051 enabled us to ensure learners at home could see both us and their on-campus peers using the multiple camera viewpoints, and the sound system enabled learners at home to feed back their ideas in a way that learners in the room could hear, and vice versa. This created genuine dialogue between learners who were hundreds of miles apart from one another.

We were able to ensure all students were engaged and involved by using a mixture of online break-out groups and on-campus groups; a mixture of electronic mindmaps, Padlets and surveys and on-campus posters, mindmaps and notes; and a mixture of pre-recorded, live and in-person presentations. Overall, this experience has been both challenging and highly rewarding, providing flexibility for learners at a difficult time whilst building tutors' skills in different modes of teaching. Whilst we will very much welcome a return to full on-campus learning next academic year, the lessons learnt through dual learning will certainly enhance our in-person provision.



# School News

## The European Universities Association's Learning and Teaching Forum 2022

Laura Puhalak | PhD Student

The European Universities Association's 2022 Learning and Teaching Forum was held virtually due to international travel restrictions in place in late February. Aligning with the University's ongoing strategic work regarding education delivery, a member of staff attended this event.

The Forum rallied a number of international experts and key figures as well as innovative practitioners.

The event outlined the positions and plans of our neighbouring and far-away institutions, and it also included lots of practical ideas and initiatives on how to move forward with the delivery of education...

> One brief presentation outlined a Polish private university's experiences and lessons learnt from the development and implementation of hyflex learning environments.

> A different view of transitioning to online and blended learning was provided by a Greek university whose student population mostly studies at a distance.

> Another session, presenting an international perspective, centred on approaches to evaluating the state of learning delivery and digital capabilities, as well as developing corresponding organisational strategies for their enhancement.

> Additionally, Spanish colleagues showcased a project aiming to encourage the sharing of pedagogical practice and enhancement of community by organising teaching teams and teacher retreats.

> Focusing on student communities, staff members of an Irish university outlined their experience of moving their campus into the virtual world through a popular game, Minecraft.

> The CEO of Jisc discussed trends in education technology and a representative of a student union called for increased attention to the digital skills of staff and students alike. The list of interesting sessions could go on.



Overall, however, the Forum's main messages can be organised into three statements.

**Firstly** - digitally enhanced learning appears to be the future, but it has to be driven by active pedagogical approaches.

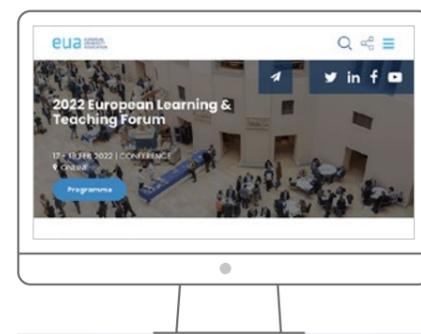
**Secondly** - a variety of professional learning development initiatives supported by ample resources (i.e., time and funding) can drive culture change in terms of the adoption of active blended learning.

**Finally** - listening to and acting on student feedback are becoming increasingly important.

These messages, as well as the projects and initiatives presented during the event, may inspire ways to complement our own university practice relating to education delivery. The Forum's and the Association's resources can be found on their websites.

2022 EUROPEAN LEARNING & TEACHING FORUM  
[www.eua.eu/events/198-2022-european-learning-teaching-forum.html](http://www.eua.eu/events/198-2022-european-learning-teaching-forum.html)

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION WEBSITE  
[www.eua.eu](http://www.eua.eu)



There were representatives from universities from Greece through Finland to Spain as well as from Iceland and Ireland to Australia.

They gathered to share experiences of their respective institutions with a desire to look beyond the pandemic. In particular, the discussed topics included presentations of and reflections on:

- institutional pandemic experiences
- strategy and organisational culture relating to implementing and encouraging long-term changes in the post-pandemic higher education scene
- the future of education technology
- the importance of digital skills and partnerships with students
- and fostering community, wellbeing, innovation and quality amongst educators.

## SoEd Hosts Icelandic Colleagues for Networking and Idea Exchange Visit

Kirsty Shand | School Support Coordinator



On 2nd and 3rd March, the School of Education welcomed four visitors - Bryndís Garðarsdóttir, Elín Jóna Þórsdóttir, Guðrún Svava Guðmundsdóttir and Sigríður Pétursdóttir - from the School of Education, University of Iceland. The group were keen to learn about administrative functions and processes of another School of Education, and a colleague had recommended the University of Aberdeen to them.

The group were hosted by the School Administration team, and a comprehensive two day schedule was prepared for them, which included presentations and discussions on timetabling, MyAberdeen, online assessments, UG, PGT and PGR admissions and fee evaluation delivered by our colleagues from E Learning, Registry and Admissions. The group also learnt about how the School of Education dealt with the COVID pandemic from John Mynott, with discussions about how each School of Education handles their students' school placements drawing some interesting comparisons.

Day 2 started with a tour of the campus and in typical Scottish fashion, the weather was awful for this outside activity. Wind and rain thankfully didn't seem to dampen the spirits of our visitors though and lead by our two wonderful tour guides; Kirsty Shand and Joyce Michie, they found the tour very informative and interesting. Overall, the tour was a great success.

After the tour, the group learned about student life, student committees, student support and how the university communicates with students from our colleagues in Student Experience, before joining members of our School Administration team to discuss SCEFs, the COVID pandemic, and school placement organisation. The afternoon was rounded off with a talk on staff development from colleagues from the University staff development team.

Overall, the visit was a positive experience for all, and gave our administration team an opportunity to engage in conversation with the Icelandic group, both informally over lunch and at timetabled discussion sessions. We were grateful for the contributions from our colleagues from other university departments and John Mynott.

The group were extremely complimentary about their visit throughout their entire time with us. They had found the discussions over the two days informative and interesting, enjoyed engaging with our admin staff and others from across the university, and were appreciative of the time given to them. They said they had learnt how to make people feel welcome, based on their own experience with us.

We hope to see them again in the future, and we look forward to similar opportunities to network and engage with representatives from Schools of Education in other UK/International universities.

# School Awards

## AUSA AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022

Each year the Principal's Excellence Awards are held in order to publicly recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of University staff and academics. This year we are very proud to announce that the following members of SoEd staff were nominated:



### BEST NON-ACADEMIC TEAM OR SERVICE AWARD

> Joyce Michie | School of Education Administration Team  
\*SHORTLISTED\*

### BEST POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT LECTURER AWARD

> Terry Ashton > Colin Christie > Neil McLennan  
> Graeme Nixon > Anne Smith > Lorna Stewart

### BEST SUPERVISOR (POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH) AWARD

> Rachel Shanks

### BEST SUPPORT STAFF (INDIVIDUAL AWARD)

> Tracy Collier > Katherine Cross

### BEST UNDERGRADUATE LECTURER AWARD

> Terpsichori Kaltsouni > Lindsay Macdougall > Aloyse Mulligan  
> Ingrid Stanyer > Lorna Stewart > Mel Whitter

### MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION AWARD

> Faye Hendry

### MOST ACCESSIBLE LECTURER AWARD

> Katrina Foy

### MOST INSPIRING AWARD

> Alan Grieve \*SHORTLISTED\*

### OUTSTANDING INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE TEAM AWARD

> Joy Perkins & Stuart Durkin for Employability ED3536 course  
\*SHORTLISTED AND WON\*

### PERSONAL TUTOR OF THE YEAR

> Colin Christie > Katrina Foy > Faye Hendry  
> Terpsichori Kaltsouni > Ingrid Stanyer > Lorna Stewart  
> Yvonne Yule > Kirsten Darling-McQuistan \*SHORTLISTED\*

## PRINCIPALS AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

### EXCELLENCE IN CONTRIBUTION TO A TEAM OR ROLE AWARD

> Tracy Collier > Ingrid Stanyer

### EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

> Joyce Michie

### EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

> Catriona MacDonald

### OUTSTANDING TEAM AWARD

> School of Education Administration Team

### RISING STAR AWARD

> Catriona MacDonald  
> Catherine Simpson

## PRINCIPALS PRIZES FOR RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

### THE OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PROJECT – COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY AWARD

> Muhammad Islam and Pamela Abbott \*SHORTLISTED AND WON\*

### OUTSTANDING POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISORS AWARD

> David Johnston

## PRINCIPAL'S SCHOLAR AWARD FOR EDUCATION 2022

I am a MA Primary Education 2nd Year Student and last semester I was lucky enough to be awarded the Principal's Scholar Award for Education. I have lived in Aberdeen all my life, in a small village about 20 minutes south of the city. Most of my spare time outside of university is spent either out with my friends enjoying all of Aberdeen's nightlife or performing as part of my local theatre group which I have been part of since I was a child. I have a massive interest in all things popular culture whether that be music, TV or films and as a result I also spend a lot of my time enjoying them.

My dream growing up was always to go into acting until I studied a Foundation Apprenticeship in Children and Young People in S6 at the recommendation of my guidance teacher. As part of this course I got to spend two afternoons a week on work experience in a local primary school and I was nominated as one of the Foundation Apprentices of the Year. From here I knew that teaching was the profession that I wanted to pursue. Turns out there are quite a few similarities between performing and teaching!

Over the past two years I have absolutely loved my time at Aberdeen University. It's safe to say it certainly didn't start the way I expected, spending most of my time learning from home rather than on campus. However, I have been lucky enough to have made some great friends on the course and get involved with as much as possible as part of my university experience. I have already learnt so much that I can take with me into practice and look forward to what the rest of the course brings as we move towards a more normal university experience!



ROSS HENDRY

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN IN THE BANGLADESH GARMENT INDUSTRY

Our research collaborated with the trade justice charity Traidcraft Exchange UK<sup>1</sup> and explored conditions of women workers working in UK fashion retailers' supply factories based in Bangladesh during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our full research report<sup>2</sup> released on 26th of January 2022 provides specific recommendations for the UK Government, Bangladesh government and stakeholders to eliminate exploitation of women from the global clothing supply chains.

The research team comprised of Professor Muhammad Azizul Islam, Professor Pamela Abbott and Dr Shamima Haque of the UoA, Fiona Gooch of Traidcraft Exchange UK and Salma Akhter of Dhaka University.

<sup>1</sup> <https://traidcraftexchange.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.modernslaverypec.org/resources/bangladesh-garment>

# Archive Highlights

## A Short History of the School of Education

The story starts in 1872 with The Education Act which instituted free universal education and called for the formal training of teachers.

Professor Simon Laurie, Secretary of the General Assembly's Education Committee, was aware of a serious shortage of "good female teachers" in the northeast. ("T.C." A History of Aberdeen College of Education, p1).

Following the Education Act two teacher training colleges were set up: 1874 - Church of Scotland established a training college in George Street, Aberdeen. Dr Joseph Ogilvie was Principal from (1874-1907).



1875 - The Free Church, The Church of Scotland Training College, Charlotte Street, Aberdeen.



While welcoming a variety of women from an incredibly diverse background, i.e. daughters of farmers, teachers, and shipmasters it was not until 13/14 years later in 1887 that men were admitted to study there, being seen as more of a female career path.

1987 - The colleges evolved and developed throughout the years in the Northeast of Scotland. Until 1987 when the Dundee and Aberdeen Colleges merged to form the Northern College of Education.

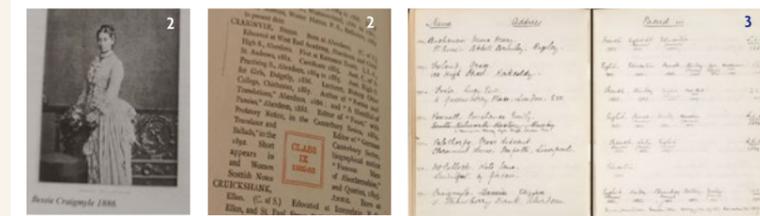
2001 - This changed again, when the Northern College merged with the University of Aberdeen to form the School of Education, University of Aberdeen.

## Our Graduates

Catherine Simpson | School Administration Assistant

While researching graduates from the Church of Scotland Training College there were a lot of interesting stories of individuals and how the outside world affected not only the university, but also that of its students.

### ELIZABETH (BESSIE) CRAIGMYLE | 4th September 1863 – 28th February 1933



Bessie Craigmyle came first in her entrance exams to Teacher Training College and attended Class IX of the Church of Scotland Training College. She Gained LLA (\* see image 3) in English, History, Physiology, Botany, Zoology, French, German, Geology and Education from St Andrews in 1882 (number 394 in the image 3 above). Bessie went on to gain a teaching certificate in 1885. In 1886 she became an assistant at the High School for girls Dolgelly earning £13 and 15 shillings a month.

She wrote and published poetry:

- "Poems and Translations" (Aberdeen, 1886)
- "Handful of Pansies" (Aberdeen, 1888) (Dedicated to former classmate Margaret Dale who died 1887),
- 1889 a translator and editor for "German Ballads" in the Canterbury Series.
- 1885 A short biographical series "Famous Men and Women of Aberdeenshire – Scottish Notes and Queries".

Bessie was also President of Aberdeen Girl's High School former pupils club from 1903-1904 and was a donor and designer of the chain of office. Bessie was also a member of the Women's Liberal Association.

### ANDREW MITCHELL BRUCE | 30th March 1877 – 23rd April 1917

Andrew Mitchell Bruce, was a Private with the 5th Battalion Gordon Highlanders. Andrew was born in New Deer, on the 30th March 1877 and was educated at New Deer Central School. He trained at the Church of Scotland Training College and was awarded a Bursary. He continued his studies until he graduated M.A. in 1908.



His first job after graduating was at Inverness Academy and later at the Central School, Inverness. Although beyond military age and suffering from poor health, he enlisted under the Derby Scheme and went into training at Ripon with the 3/5th Gordons in April 1916. He was transferred to the Signal Section, and went to France in March 1917. Sadly he was reported "missing" on the 23rd April 1917. A comrade reported that he had fallen in action at Roieux on that date and this was confirmed later.

Both as a teacher and friend Andrew was valued by all who came in contact with him. His keen interest in educational matters, his sincerity and conscientious thoroughness had much influence on his pupils. Andrew was given a brass tablet in the Hall of the School, and the "Bruce Medal" was founded in his memory. All testimony to the esteem in which he was held.

<sup>1</sup> <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/dr-joseph-ogilvie-18741907-rector-aberdeen-church-of-scotland-training-college-105070>

<sup>2</sup> Aberdeen School Board – Female Teachers 1872-1901: Biographical List. Alison T. McCall. Published by Aberdeen and North-East Scotland Family History Society, McKenzie Quality Print Ltd. October August 2007.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/roll-of-honour/172>

# Staff & Alumni Spotlight

## Tracy Collier SCHOOL TECHNICIAN

I was inspired to become a technician after working closely with one of the technicians at school when doing my CSYS Chemistry...and little did I know that I would literally end up following in her footsteps when I started working at St. Machar Academy in 2002 helping to inspire the next generation of scientists. After graduating from RGIT, I worked at Aberdeen Grammar School, 3 years later getting promoted and moving to Linkfield Academy where I spent 8 happy years before finally moving to St. Machar Academy.

January 2022 saw me start my 16th year here in the School of Education and even after all this time, I still love coming to work in the mornings...as long as I can get a coffee! Over the years I have worked with some great colleagues and love seeing the students progress over the course of their studies to become teachers.

Outside of work I love my sport – I am an avid Dons fan, Scotland pass holder at Murrayfield and get up at stupid o'clock every weekend from March to September to watch Carlton play in the AFL. Some people know already, but I am an avid fan of Neighbours and will be sorry to see it end later on this year. In 2008 on our first trip to Australia, we (the other half under duress!) did the obligatory Neighbours tour and managed to visit Ramsay Street when they were actually filming, which was a great added bonus!

My other great love is travelling albeit not so much in the past couple of years due to Covid. I have probably been to more States in the USA than the average American has, such is our love for going there as well as north to Canada so I can stock up on Tim Horton's hot chocolate... and see the family too! We've been down under to both Australia and New Zealand and looking forward to going back to Dubai later on this year, hopefully minus the mask wearing as it's not so good for the tan!



# Student Spotlight

## Stephanie Inglis PGDE PRIMARY 2021/22 COHORT



**My name is Stephanie Inglis, and I am a former professional judo athlete, winning Scotland's first silver medal at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. This was certainly a career highlight.**

I had always wanted to be a primary school teacher however the love and commitment I had for my sport, meant I could not commit to the traditional 4-year teaching course. Therefore, I chose a more flexible degree, MA Management, knowing that the option to do a PGDE would be available when I could commit.

After having a knee reconstruction in 2015 which crushed my Olympic dreams, I decided to go to Vietnam for 5 months to teach English to underprivileged primary pupils and gain experience of teaching to make sure this is something I still wanted to do. Four months into my trip I was involved in a horrific motorcycle accident leaving me with a 1% chance of survival. As you can imagine my life has completely changed. I still have a long road to go in my recovery but thankfully I am making good progress. My doctors told me I could never do competitive judo again as another knock to my head could be fatal. This has taken me a long time to accept and I still haven't fully got over this, but I do feel so lucky to have come through what I have. Sadly my sporting career had to come to an end one day although I would have preferred to have made that decision myself!

Doctors also advised me that I would not be able to pursue a career in teaching due to the nature of my brain injury. I therefore went into Active Schools and was working in primary and high schools. I got on well with this work and proved to myself that I could work in a school environment, it also proved to me that a career in teaching was where my heart truly lay.

I am very determined and goal driven, some might say stubborn, so I set off to prove the doctors wrong again and applied for the PGDE programme and was more than delighted to be offered a place at Aberdeen.

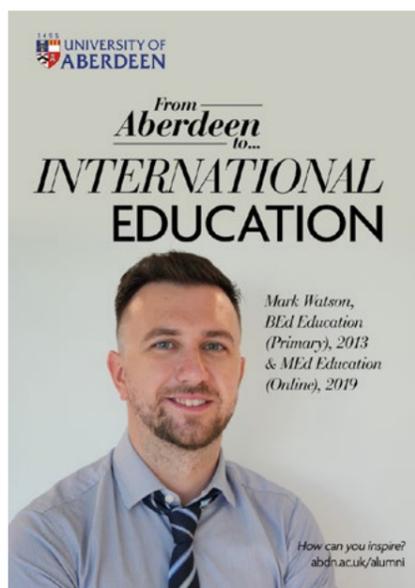
Although COVID has interfered and been a really difficult time, I feel it worked in my favour as it has allowed me to pursue this course from the comfort of my own home. As I have been diagnosed with epilepsy and sometimes have problems with this, living away from home alone was a worry, so I am thankful the course was delivered online (and wonderfully at that!!).

I have thoroughly enjoyed my year so far and although it has been a lot of hard work, I feel so lucky to be part of such a supportive community. Cathy (Cathy Francis, Head of PGDE Primary) and the PGDE team have been great and so helpful. My placements, support teachers and tutor groups have all equally been understanding and encouraging.

If I have any questions I post a wee message on our what's app group and any anxiety or concerns I have are quickly subsided. I really feel I am learning so much and I am excited about becoming a qualified primary teacher and making a difference to our future generations for years to come!

Moral of my story, don't let anyone tell you your limits! Go, try, experience it for yourself! Sure it might not work out, but then you'll know, and you will go on to something different. But what if they are wrong and you find the path that is for you and what you wanted all along. Good luck everyone where ever your future will leads!!

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



BEd Education (Primary), 2013 & MEd Education (Online), 2019 Graduate  
Mark Watson, told us why he chose to study at Aberdeen and what he has been up to since graduating!

**Why did you choose to study at Aberdeen?**  
Locality and flexibility of the course.

**Why did you choose your particular course?**  
I believed it could help progress my career when moving to International Teaching.

**What did you most enjoy about your time at Aberdeen? Did you have any particularly memorable student experiences?**  
I enjoyed the opportunities I received from the staff to experience and progress my career.

**Did you undertake any co-curricular activities while at Aberdeen, e.g. Aberdeen Internships, Career Mentoring, STAR Award?**  
I worked as a Tutor/Lecturer part time during the Masters Degree.

**If talking to a group of prospective students, what advice would you give them to help them make the most of their time at the University of Aberdeen?**  
Always talk to your teachers. Always be honest and open.

**Where did you first work after graduating?**  
Primary Teacher, employed by Aberdeenshire Council.

**What did your first role involve?**  
Class Teacher for Primary Aged Children.

**What is your current job title, your current employer, and your current location?**  
Class Teacher at Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen.

**Describe the journey from your first job after graduating to where you are now.**  
I have gone from Class Teacher to various levels of management in schools, in International Teaching, before returning to Scotland.

**Was your degree at Aberdeen essential for getting to where you are now? If so, in what way?**  
Yes - It allowed me to progress in International Education.

**One Top Tip -**  
Put in the effort. It makes a difference.

# Additional Research Activity

## Publications

**Barlow, W.** (2021). Primary-Secondary Transition – Building Hopes and Diminishing Fears Through Drama. *Frontiers in Education*, pp. 71-87. DOI: 10.3389/feduc.2020.546243

Cross, B., Manion, G., **Shanks, R.** (2021). Making Waves: a cross-study analysis of young people's participation arenas in Scotland's schools, *Childhood*, DOI: 10.1177/09075682211053972

Kiwan, N., **Shanks, R.**, Stack, T. (2021). Schooling in Citizenship and Political Community *Engaging Authority. Citizenship and Political Community*. Stack, T., Luminiello, R. (eds.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp.79-100.

**Shanks, R.** (2021). New Teachers' Experiences Of The Transition Into Teaching, *Educação em Revista*, vol. 37, e211725, DOI: 10.1590/0102-469833115

Teti, A., Gervasio, G., and **Abbott, P.** (2022). Perceptions of the EU: Activists and public opinion in the Middle East, in Bouris, D., Huber, D., and Pace, M. (eds.) *Handbook of EU-Middle East Relations*, London: Routledge.

## Conferences

### 3 DECEMBER 2021

**Shanks, R.** (2022) "Teacher Education in Scotland" in the series *Baku University Expert Talks* (online).

### 24 FEBRUARY 2022

Simms, M., **Shanks, R.**, Roy, G. and Miller, A. (2022) "Engaging Policymakers", Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) Hub Festival 2022, *Alternative Futures: Sustainability in Context*, 24th and 25th February 2022 (online).

### 24 MARCH 2022

**Darling McQuistan, K.** Presentation on "How we support inclusive approaches in practice in Scotland". *Spotlight on SEND: Curriculum Design and Practice*.

**Nutkins, S.** Presentation "Creative Approaches" (online). [www.ventureeducation.org](http://www.ventureeducation.org)

### 31 MARCH 2022

**Nixon, G., Smith, D.** and Fraser-Pearce, J. T. "The (ir)religious beliefs of Religious Education (RE) teachers and the sanitisation of religions in school" (online). <https://www.philosophy-of-education.org/events/strathclyde-glasgow-branch-seminar-3>

### 7 APRIL 2022

**Shanks, R.** and McSharry, M. (2022) "The gender of school uniform in post-primary schools in Ireland and Scotland", Educational Studies Association of Ireland Conference 2022 *'Reconstructing Education: what matters?'* 7-8 April, (online) hosted by Marino Institute of Education.

### 8 APRIL 2022

**Shanks, R.** and Carver, M. (2022) "Measuring the Quality of Initial Teacher Education: What matters?", Educational Studies Association of Ireland Conference 2022 *'Reconstructing Education: what matters?'* 7-8 April, (online) hosted by Marino Institute of Education.

### 11 - 13 APRIL 2022

Czerniawski, G., MacPhail, A., Oolbakkink-Marchand, H., Flores, M., Symeonidis, V., Guberman, A., and **Bain, Y.** Supporting School-Based Teacher Educators: Multi-national perspectives on an International Survey carried out by the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED). *Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) 2022*.

## Public Engagement

**Nixon, G., and Barlow, W.** (2021) "Is the Faculty System working in Scottish Schools?" *Times Educational Supplement* (Article). <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/faculty-system-working-scottish-schools>

**Nixon, G.** (2022) (Judge North East of Scotland). St Andrews University Ethics Cup (online). <https://ethicscup.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk>

**Nixon, G.** (2022) Board meeting of the European Forum of Teachers of Religious Education and launch of new website (online). <https://eftre.net/re-in-scotland>

**Shanks, R.** (2022) University of Aberdeen Café Connect podcast episode 16 'School uniforms: Taken for granted but are they fit for purpose?' <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/engage/podcasts/cafe-connect.php>

## Research Funding

### PAMELA ABBOTT AND PETER MTIKA

One-year funded extension (2022-2023) to a research grant, Fostering a Social Practice Approach to Adult Literacies for Improving People's Quality of Life in Western Rwanda, **Funder – Scottish Government, additional award £268, 629.**



Yvonne Bain (second from the right) attending the TEPE 2022 Conference, 11 - 13 April 2022