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University  
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Sheffield.



# The School Of Education Alumni Newsletter 2010

We want to keep in touch with our alumni and so this newsletter has been produced in order to inform you about exciting new developments in the School and feature updates about our students. We hope you will enjoy reading the newsletter and we would like to encourage you to pass it onto friends and colleagues in your own networks who may be interested in opportunities to come and study with us here at Sheffield. You know how much you enjoyed your time with us, but don't keep it to yourself – why not tell others about the Sheffield experience!

# Welcome to the School of Education Alumni Newsletter 2010

I am delighted to welcome you to our 2010 alumni newsletter, which is now in its fourth year of production and goes from strength to strength, as I am sure you will agree. This is my first year as the Head of the School of Education and I have been immensely proud of the achievements of students, both past and present. The alumni newsletter provides us with an opportunity to celebrate these achievements and to keep past students informed about the School's developments. We have undertaken a range of exciting work this year, some of which is detailed in these pages. However, it has also been a year in which we have said goodbye to a number of valued colleagues who have retired from the University. First of all, Professor Peter Hannon, who was Head of School from 2006-2009. He has made a very significant contribution to the School over the years and we are pleased that he will remain involved in the life of the School as an Emeritus Professor. Second, two longstanding and valued members of staff retired from the Institute of Lifelong Learning, Dr Phil Sidebottom and Freda Chapple. Last, but of course not least, four members of our support staff retired this year: Chris Gaffney, Sue Hargreaves, Kath Wainwright and Carole Worboys. Many of you will have dealt with one or more of these staff members over the years and will agree with me that their service to students was outstanding. So, whilst we are very sorry to lose their contributions to the School, we know that they are moving on to a productive stage of their lives and wish them a long and happy retirement. For the rest of us, there are many exciting developments in the months and

years ahead in the fields of education and lifelong learning and we look forward to ensuring that the School's research and teaching continue to respond to these changes. In the meantime, do keep in touch with us in the year ahead and let us know what you are doing – we love to hear from past students and, of course, we would like to include your stories in next year's alumni newsletter!



**Professor Jackie Marsh**  
Head of School

# Achievements of our Past Students

Let us know about yours! Send stories and photographs to [edu-alumni@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:edu-alumni@sheffield.ac.uk)

## Winner of the inaugural Rutland Prize for Early Childhood Education

### Jackie Musgrave

#### MA in Early Childhood Education (Graduated 2010)

In January the inaugural Rutland Prize for Early Childhood Education – sponsored by The Rutland Hotel, Glossop Road, Sheffield – was presented to Jackie Musgrave, who was chosen from a shortlist of candidates studying for a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Jackie received an engraved paperweight, £100 cash and a certificate to mark her success – and celebrated with a complimentary stay at the Rutland Hotel. Jackie is now a student on the School's EdD in Early Childhood Education programme.

**Prizewinner Jackie** said: "I was delighted to receive the Rutland Prize. Just to know that I had won it would have been enough without the amazing generosity of the Rutland Hotel. I spent most of my prize on an important new book for my doctorate.

"Staying at the Rutland for the two years I was doing my MA was hugely enjoyable. The hospitality was homely and at the same time professional. I was especially grateful that the hotel always catered for my gluten free diet so imaginatively."

**Dr Jools Page, Programme Director for the MA in Early Childhood Education**, added: "The MA in Early

Childhood Education at the University of Sheffield draws students from all parts of the globe. It is testament to the quality of the programme and to the calibre of work produced by the students that a shortlist of six nominees was put forward."

**Professor Cathy Nutbrown, Director of Studies in Early Childhood Education**, said: "We are delighted that our established partnership with the Rutland Hotel has led to the sponsorship of this new prize. It recognises the quality of our MA in Early Childhood Education and demonstrates the way in which The Rutland values having our students as guests during their study school weekends in Sheffield."

The Rutland's contribution was also recognised by **Professor Jackie Marsh, Head of School of Education**. "The School of Education is delighted to work in partnership with the Rutland Hotel in the development of the Rutland Prize for Early Childhood Education. The prize recognises the outstanding nature of the work of our students."

**Katey Dent, Sales Manager at the Rutland**, added: "Our hotel enjoys a long-standing relationship with the University and we were very keen to get involved in this new award, which demonstrates our continued support for one another."



Left to right: Katey Dent, Cathy Nutbrown, Jackie Marsh and seated, Jackie Musgrave



Helen Perkins (centre)

### Helen Perkins MA in Early Childhood Education (Graduated 2009)

Our Foundation Degree students' experiences were the focus of my dissertation; I have been able to use my findings to reassure new undergraduates that they can achieve, to secure a contract for funding and to inform my work with the Life Long Learning Network (LLN). I have had the privilege to work with another Sheffield Alumnus, Danielle Carey. With Danielle and other LLN colleagues, researching why early years practitioners are not participating in higher education (*'Facilitating progression: towards a 'fit for purpose' progression model for early years practitioners'* (Carey et al 2009).

I have long been an advocate of professionalising the children's workforce; I have a mantra that I unashamedly stole from Honorary Emeritus Professor Tricia David:

'If we regard children as brilliant, capable, strong and clever, then we must show that the people who work with them are also brilliant, capable, strong and clever' (David 2004 p.27)

Not satisfied with giving our students the bare minimum, we have stretched and challenged our students and staff. Improving teaching and learning has been a critical factor in raising the achievement of our students. I have worked with QIA to develop resources for Teaching and Learning as well as carrying out research exploring *'learners as researchers'* in which students asked *'What does good learning look like?'* I was invited to present the findings at a National Conference (The resources and video clips are on the QIA Excellence Gateway).

Current challenges in FE and Early Years surround the introduction of new CWDC and TDA qualifications and the challenge regarding reduced HEFCE places at a time when we are to increase the number of graduates in ECE. My MA has empowered me to challenge when I see things that are not right for the profession and for children. I now have the confidence and ability to stand up and be counted, thank you.

Carey, D. Cramp, A. Kendall, A. Perkins, H. (2009) *Facilitating progression: towards a 'fit for purpose' progression model for early years practitioners. Final report of the Barriers and Solutions project to the Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull Lifelong Learning Network Progression Agreement subgroup.*

<http://www.bbcstiln.ac.uk/summary/hsceye/outcome/HSCEYE3.pd>

*Developing the Expert Learner (2008) Learners as Researchers Quality Improvement Agency. Excellence Gateway <http://tlp.excellencegateway.org.uk/tlp/xcurricula/el/learninghowto/learnersasresea/index.html>*

### Lee Sullivan MA in Early Childhood Education (Graduated 2008)

Early one morning back in the spring of 2005, an advertisement caught my eye. It read something like, 'an opportunity for professional educators to continue with their academic studies through long-distance learning balanced around the obstacles of modern day life'. It was an advertisement posted by the University of Sheffield for the chance to study an MA in Early Childhood Education.

For the last 2 years, I had worked as a Year 1 practitioner in a primary school in the historic town of Hastings. Although I loved every minute of my job working with young children, ever since BA graduation, it had been my dream to continue my academic studies and further my knowledge. However, my circumstances (i.e. personal relationships, mortgage, full-time job, etc) led me to question whether it was really possible to make such a sacrifice and commitment.

After careful consideration and summoning up the courage, I successfully applied and gained a place on the course. Once in Sheffield, I realised many of my peers initially shared the same concerns as I did. Some with even more testing circumstances than mine!

Instantly, the cohort bonded and a widespread belief was instilled into us. For all their talent, expertise and experience, Professor Cathy Nutbrown, Dr Jools Page and the rest of the early years team provided an almost family-based unit. Looking back I am incredibly grateful for this, as this gave me the confidence and self-belief to approach my research with an open mind and enthusiasm. For all their achievements, it has always stayed with me how humble, approachable and friendly the early-years team remained.

Once my dissertation was completed in the summer of 2007, I resigned from my teaching position and decided to go backpacking, in need of reflection on my time and achievements in Sheffield. Regrettably I was unable to attend the MA graduation ceremony, as I had accepted a

Lee Sullivan in Kenya



teaching post in an international school in Cairo, Egypt during my travels.

As a result of my MA qualification, I was soon promoted to Year 2 Leader, leading a team of British teachers and support staff, responsible for the delivery and implementation of the British Primary Curriculum to Egyptian and expatriate children.

Studying at Sheffield has given me a deeper insight and appreciation of the amazing difference I, as well as other early-years educators, can make in young children's lives. Whenever employers look at my CV, they are always curious about my time spent studying at the University of Sheffield. It has opened so many doors for me and I have been fortunate enough to have met some amazing people along the way. My work internationally includes many charity projects in schools ranging from Kenya to Palestine. I now look forward to taking up my new teaching post in Kazakhstan in September 2010.

I would recommend studying at the University of Sheffield so much so, that I am seriously considering continuing my studies in the near future on the School of Education EdD programme.

#### **Kate Banfield and Angela Sugden** **MA in Early Childhood Education (Graduated 2004)**

Over the last 4 years Kate and Angela have worked together in Kirklees writing and developing The Kirklees Child's Journey Framework. The framework will be launched on 7 June.

The Child's Journey Framework puts parents at the heart of partnership working. It values them as experts in their own and their children's lives and enables them to be more confident carers and educators. The metaphor of the journey was chosen as it best expresses the adventure of childhood and our experience of life.

It is a journey not made alone, but with parents and others who are also discovering and learning and it is they who face the challenge and have the responsibility for shaping and guiding their child's journey. We wish to excite parents and carers about the miraculous journey that their child makes in the early years of life and show them how Children's Centres can support them.

To achieve this we have developed the concept and framework of the Child's Journey. This is based on four areas of development that are crucial to all children. We have called these areas components and they are attachment, communication and language, developmental movement and play. There is nothing in this framework that is new or untested. In fact, most of the messages and information are well researched and understood. The Child's Journey has a very clear child development, health, education and social perspective. It springs directly from the Every Child Matters agenda and the Sure Start Children's Centres Core offer.

The innovation is perhaps in combining the four components in a framework of concepts and activities and having the ambition to develop a common language, joint training and resources that brings agencies together.

The Child's Journey Resources include:

- A booklet for parents including a DVD to be given to every family with a new baby in Kirklees that outlines the 4 components and the support that Children's Centres can offer.
- Activity plans and resources for parents to participate in that support the 4 components.
- Child's Journey Loan Bags linked to the components with a range of resources including suggested activities for parents to use at home.
- A Child's Journey Booklet for professionals outlining the framework.
- A multi-agency training programme delivered on a rolling programme so that a skill base is developed and maintained.
- 4 Training handbooks and toolkits for professionals to support each component.

#### **Melanie Pearson** **MA Working with Communities: Identities, Regeneration and Change (Graduated 2010)**

Graduation day in January was an exciting day for several reasons: slithering through ice and snow in high heels early that morning to get to the graduate dress hire in time – seeing my classmates looking so smart in their gowns and mortar boards, and our tutors in all their gowned and tasseled finery – walking across the stage to a huge noisy cheer from my family in the audience – the moving experience of being surrounded by so many students from so many different places in the world, with such an extraordinary range of talent – and to cap it all, arriving home later that afternoon to the offer of a job!

Studying for my degree (Working with Communities: Identity, Regeneration and Change) really was life-changing in that I started out as a community development worker interested in learning more about good practice, and ended up deciding to make a career change and take my community knowledge into work in research and social policy.

The course had emphasized a person-centred, action-research approach, and opened my eyes to the idea of research as a future career – certainly something I wanted to do more of.

Then again, I was a woman of a certain age with no research experience outside the department, and the employment prospects for new graduates were looking pretty grim.

So it was a wonderful surprise to be offered a graduate internship at the DWP, and an auspicious finale to the ceremony itself.

After what seemed an interminable wait for security checks, here I am in the civil service (still blinking at that, as for people who know me it would possibly be the most unlikely occupation imaginable) and as a fairly novice researcher, working on an evaluation strategy for a £12m national outreach programme investigating intergenerational worklessness amongst social housing tenants in deprived areas.

Apparently what swung it for me at the interview was my interest in community oriented research principles and enthusiasm for connecting the gaps between people and policy.

I owe this entirely to the Working with Communities course, the lively group discussions in my class, and my tutors **Dr Michele Moore** and **Dr Kate Pahl**, with their passion for the subject and for encouraging their students to think deeply, ethically and rigorously but if necessary, outside the academic box...

I'm still scared (can I really do this? do they realise I'm just making it up as I go along?) and learning all the time but doing my MA (and getting a distinction) was a massive boost to my confidence and belief in myself and it helps to remember that. As for the research work, it's invigorating to think that even in small ways, I can potentially use knowledge and values developed on the course to make a difference to the way a national organization responds to its customers.

## Achievements of our Current Students

Let us know about yours! Send stories and photographs to [edu-alumni@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:edu-alumni@sheffield.ac.uk)

### **Dylan Yamada-Rice** Current PhD Student

Dylan has been awarded the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) Student Research Prize 2010 for the dissertation she completed as part of the MA Educational Research.

### **Bill Esmond** Current EdD Student

Like others on the EdD, I found it something of a struggle at first, and wondered if I had the necessary academic background. As a relative newcomer to education, I had joined the EdD to catch up on the kind of things others had been reading about whilst I'd been working in industry. I work in HE in an FE College, an area that I suspected had been neglected by research because of its marginal status in higher education and its minority status in colleges. But tutors at Sheffield encouraged me to start a thesis in a largely untouched area: the part-time, adult student majority in 'HE in FE'. This was serious Outsider Research!

I carried out some interviews that produced what I thought were quite powerful accounts: others on the course seemed to find it interesting too. To help me make sense of it all, I started to look for feedback from others and put a few papers in to conferences. **Professor Gareth Parry** pointed me towards conferences where I was likely to get a response, rather than grander events where my contribution wouldn't attract much notice. This strategy worked: I've been taken aback by the kindness of people who have put aside time to read through my work and send me comments: it's been really helpful.

Gareth suggested the LSRN conference: I thought I'd missed it but Gareth went to the trouble of checking

with the organisers, so I had to do it. They asked for full 7000 word papers and I only got to work on it the day of the deadline: then I lost my WinScp connection to work and had to throw it together on the afternoon. But the data's really interesting, so I suspect this counted for a lot with the judges.

Jill Jameson announced the prizes, describing the winning entry as work about the problems of adults, carried out with adults. She said, 'The winner will by now probably know who they are,' but I certainly didn't! And I didn't expect the congratulatory emails from Sheffield staff; or to be asked to contribute to this and other publications. But all these things have given me much-needed encouragement to carry on with my work. And there are still plenty of times when I need it!

### **Owen Barden – Go with the Floe** Current EdD student

At the last weekend, our new editor Brendan approached me to write a reflective piece on how the EdD has influenced my professional practice. Other people got assignments like photographing the Kenwood Hall ducks or compiling fashion tips, but there you go. Anyway, to put things into context, I have completed the first two years of the course, and my professional practice centres on my role as dyslexia tutor at Oldham Sixth Form College.

Apart from that first "Value-Free" assignment, all of my work for the course so far has been themed around the College, though with a different focus each time – from a case study of an individual student to a cross-college survey of student and staff dispositions towards education (no, there really is no escaping Bordieu). As a result the EdD has helped me to develop a much deeper and fuller understanding of my students, my institution, and how both of these fit into the broader educational and social landscape.

More satisfyingly perhaps, and proving that even the most modest educational research can have real impact, the College decided to change its Mission Statement in response to the survey I carried out. Incidentally, I found that themeing my work in Part One in this way was a great help in framing and focusing my ideas and completing much of the groundwork for the thesis I'm about to begin.

It's more difficult to pinpoint changes in my teaching that I can directly attribute to the EdD, but I do think my research has led me to new ways of thinking about my students, about learning, and about the opportunities and barriers to learning that adolescent students with dyslexia face.

It has also contributed to the realisation that things like Facebook and YouTube hold real educational potential and attraction for dyslexic students.

I think now is a really exciting time to be researching the relationship between adolescence, dyslexia and technology, and encountering and exploring the work of thinkers like Foucault has helped me to conceptualise and understand that relationship in interesting ways I never would have otherwise.

On a more pragmatic level, having a journal article published did validate an experimental way of teaching reading I'd been using. This was something I'd been working on prior to the EdD, but the process of writing for publication (see previous issues) taught me a lot about the craft of writing, persistence, frustration, and the workings of the academy. It also offered plenty of opportunity to deploy some choice swearing.

All of my experience is in post-compulsory education, first in a large FE college and now the sixth-form. Meeting with colleagues three times a year has illuminated the connections between different niches in the education ecosystem: hearing resonances when primary teachers talk about the way they teach reading; hearing teachers of multilingual pupils talk about the way language shapes identity; seeing similarities between my own thesis proposal and those of colleagues working in early years, teacher-trainers, and those working with the families and carers of disadvantaged children – I've only shown the tip of the iceberg, but all of these things have left me better prepared to negotiate the waters I find myself in, and read the map of the oceans.

### **Paula Richardson gets published** **Current EdD student**

Kissock, C. & Richardson, P. (2010) Calling for action within the teaching profession: It is time to internationalize teacher education in *Teaching Education* Vol. 21, (1) March 2010 pp.89-101

(This paper was also presented at the 54th International Council on Education for Teaching World Assembly, December 14-17, 2009 in Muscat, Oman.)

Following an earlier career which encompassed teaching, local authority advising and university teaching I now work part-time in a small organization, Educators Abroad, which places student teachers from both the US and the UK, overseas for their final teaching practice placements.

What teachers need to know for the future teaching of their students is a contested area. In many cases educators continue to focus on preparing teachers for schools in their local communities, ignoring the reality that we live in a globally interdependent world, are part of the global (not local) professions of teaching and teacher education, and that teachers now are preparing to educate young people who will live past the year 2100. The article above, which was also presented at an ICET conference by my co-author, was based on my EdD research which investigates how well the participants in overseas student teaching experiences feel they have been professionally and personally prepared for a more global role as an educator.

### **Research Excellence Framework** **Recording Student Publications**

You will probably be aware of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which has replaced the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) as the mechanism for assessing the research performance of university departments.

Research environment is one of the areas which the panels consider and student publications falls under this umbrella. Therefore, if you have had any work published in peer reviewed journals, edited collections, research monographs or elsewhere since 2008, please let us know. Details should be sent to Judi Duffield <j.a.duffield@sheffield.ac.uk>.



## Dame Gillian Pugh – EdD Weekend Guest Speaker

### *Improving Outcomes for Young Children: Can we Narrow the Gap?*<sup>1</sup>

This talk explored the considerable developments in both early years policy and in provision of services for young children in England since 1997, noting the role that such services have had in informing the broader Every Child Matters agenda. Early education is now a legal requirement, nearly all three and four years olds take up free nursery education, and some 3,500 children's centres have now been established. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a curriculum framework based on key principles of children's learning, parents are recognised as central to their children's learning and development, and a key priority for government is to improve the training and qualifications of the early years workforce.

There are however many challenges, for in the rush to expand the quantity of provision, quality is at risk, and there is a danger that many new services are not sustainable, particularly in the current economic climate. The numbers of children still living in poverty is also of great concern, and the extent of inequality in the country is having a serious impact on the well-being of large numbers of children, with a long tail of under-achievement and a growing gap between those who do well and those who do not. The work of the Narrowing the Gap project, now being built on by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO), was described, which showed that interventions focussed on children in their earliest years do have the potential to improve outcomes that are fundamental to future life chances, as well as narrow the gap between disadvantaged and other children.

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper has just been published in *Early Years*, 30, 1, 5-14

## Ever thought of studying for a doctorate? Join our EdD Programme!

For those of you who enjoyed your masters study with us, we would be delighted to consider your application for our doctoral programme, which is one of the most popular and longstanding EdD programmes in the country. We have a number of EdD routes, all of which are taught by leading educational researchers. They offer flexibility, combining taught units with in-depth research, and are relevant to a wide range of professionals in education and related fields. Most students complete within 4 years. You will attend three study school weekends a year at the 4\* Kenwood Hall Hotel in Sheffield. Our current routes are:

*EdD (Educational Studies)* – a general programme that studies educational theories and research across the broad field of educational studies.

*EdD (Children, Schools and Families)* – new for 2010, this route is for those who wish to research their practice with children, schools and families in more depth, for example, whether in youth or family support work, home-school liaison or extended schools.

*EdD (Language Learning and Teaching)* – offers a critical understanding of key contemporary issues in English language teaching and the teaching of modern foreign languages.

*EdD (Early Childhood Education)* – develops understandings of critical issues in early childhood research, policy and practice.

*EdD (Higher Education)* – engages students with the debates and understandings of theories, policies and practices in relation to further and higher education.

*EdD (Literacy and Language in Education)* – provides professionals with a critical understanding of key contemporary issues in relation to the teaching and learning of literacy and language in all sectors of education and training.

For further details, please contact the programme secretary, Jacquie Gillott:

Tel: +44 114 222 8096. Email: [jacquie.gillott@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jacquie.gillott@sheffield.ac.uk) or [EdD@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:EdD@sheffield.ac.uk)

### **BA Education, Culture and Childhood**

We are launching this new degree in 2011/2012, which will enable students to gain a detailed understanding of the themes underpinning current educational policy and practice and critically engage with issues surrounding child development and the meaning of childhood. For more information please visit our website: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/education/courses/cultchildhood> or contact the course director Dr Darren Webb. Email: [d.webb@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:d.webb@sheffield.ac.uk)

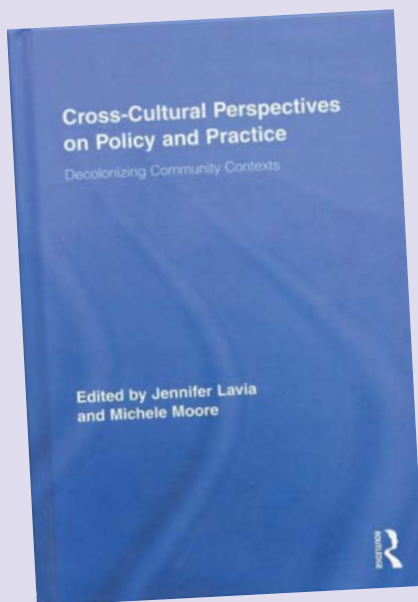


## Recent Staff Publications

Lavia, J. and Moore, M. (eds) (2010) *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Policy and Practice: Decolonizing Community Contexts*, New York: Routledge.

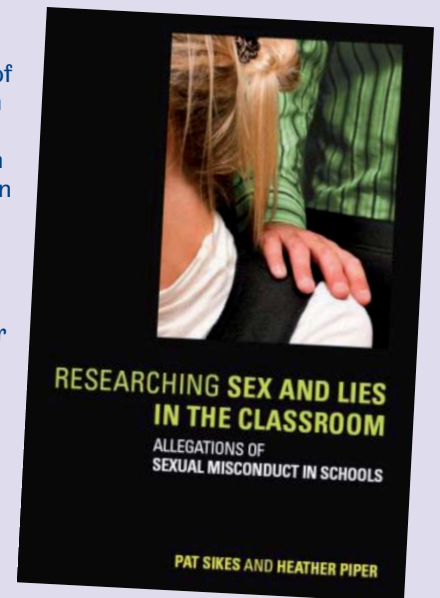
The motivation for the book came from the commitment of its editors and contributors to social justice and the necessity to pursue such an agenda within educational settings. The book takes change as its focus and the discursive engagements within the text acknowledge that the origins and significance of change are often found to be unsettling. Theoretical perspectives, innovative practice and policy are interrogated in each of the chapters as they explore how community is experienced and interpreted within a range of cultural settings. Autobiography, citizenship, resistance, peacemaking, critical literacies and second-chance opportunities are examples of unifying themes throughout. Coherent themes have been addressed; perceptions of injustice and oppression are articulated which generates strong recurring ideas for decolonizing practice through the valuing of indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

Discernable global shifts that impact on the decolonization of education and communities have also been interrogated in conjunction with local boundaries and tensions that influence and shape change.



Sikes, P. and Piper, H. (2010) *Researching Sex and Lies in the Classroom: Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in Schools*. London, Routledge Falmer.

Every day, in every school in the UK, every teacher faces the risk of having a false allegation of sexual abuse made against them. If such an accusation is made then the chances are that the teacher's life will never be the same again with the consequences being far reaching and sometimes tragic. This book explores the perceptions and experiences of male teachers, and of members of their families, their friends and colleagues, who have been accused of sexual misconduct with female students which they say they did not commit and of which they have eventually been cleared or the case has been dismissed due to insufficient evidence.



**Professor Jerry Wellington's** new book *Making Supervision Work for You* was published by Sage in March. The book is based on research he has been doing over the last four years into the supervision process and has been nominated by the *Journal of Qualitative Inquiry* for book of the year.

**Dr Julia Davies** has published a new book, co-authored with Guy Merchant from Sheffield Hallam University, entitled *Web 2.0 for Schools: Learning and Social Participation*.

A book which features **The Institute for Lifelong Learning** as a case study in a chapter written by Helen Mathers has been published by NIACE: 'University Continuing Education 1981-2006' (eds Jones, Thomas and Moseley). **Professor Gareth Parry** has also written a chapter for the book.

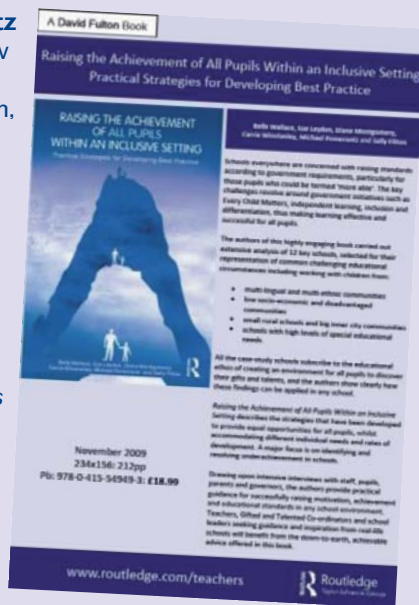
**Dr Mike Pomerantz**

has published a new book (with Belle Wallace, Sue Leyden, Diane Montgomery, Carrie Winstanley and Sally Fitton) by David Fulton Publishers entitled *Raising the Achievement of All Pupils Within an Inclusive Setting: Practical Strategies for Developing Best Practice*. Schools everywhere are concerned with raising standards according to government

requirements, particularly for those pupils who could be termed 'more able'. The key challenges revolve around government initiatives such as Every Child Matters, independent learning, inclusion and differentiation, thus making learning effective and successful for all pupils. The authors of this highly engaging book carried out extensive analysis of 12 key schools, selected for their representation of common challenging educational circumstances including working with children from:

- multi-lingual and multi-ethnic communities
- low socio-economic and disadvantaged communities
- small rural schools and big inner city communities
- schools with high levels of special educational needs.

All the case-study schools subscribe to the educational ethos of creating an environment for all pupils to discover their gifts and talents, and the authors show clearly how these findings can be applied in any school. *Raising the Achievement of All Pupils Within an Inclusive Setting* describes the strategies that have been developed to provide equal opportunities for all pupils, whilst accommodating different individual needs and rates of development. A major focus is on identifying and resolving underachievement in schools. Drawing upon intensive interviews with staff, pupils, parents and governors, the authors provide practical guidance for successfully raising motivation, achievement and educational standards in any school environment. Teachers, Gifted and Talented Co-ordinators and school leaders seeking guidance and inspiration from real-life schools will benefit from the down-to-earth, achievable advice offered in this book.



## School of Education Research Centres

**We are an inclusive research community and embrace diverse approaches to research and theory. We encourage collaborative involvement with professional groups, community projects and many more. Our research is organised in four Centres which foster the sharing of ideas, and collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives, students are affiliated to the Centre in which supervisors are located.**

*Our Research is organised within Centres:*

The **Centre for the Study of Children, Families and Learning Communities** (Directed by Professor Tom Billington) is committed to research which understands and supports the development of the lives and learning of children, parents and practitioners through inclusive, participatory and emancipatory methodologies. The Centre comprises many academics and practitioners who believe in the value of research which is theoretically and ethically sound and which engages with the needs of both participants and research users. The Centre comprises two research groups, *Early Childhood Education* and *Educational Psychology*.

The **Centre for the Study of Educational Development and Professional Lives** (Directed by Dr Chris Winter) brings together researchers variously involved in using auto/biographical approaches to study aspects of lives and careers, and/or those who are interested in education policy, curriculum, teaching and learning, both in the national and in the wider global, context. Centre members share a commitment to critical and transformative inquiry and to investigating conditions for, and influences on, the part played by education (in its broadest sense) in the quest for social justice. There is also a strong strand of work focusing on the development of contextually appropriate, ethical research methodology and practice.

The **Centre for the Study of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning** (Directed by Professor Sue Webb) includes work focussed on a broad range of related studies such as: *Higher education policy*; *Access and barriers to participation* in Higher Education and Lifelong Learning; *Pedagogy* and 'teaching excellence', and *Professionalism* of Higher Education teachers.

The **Centre for the Study of New Literacies** (Co-Directed by Drs. Julia Davies and Kate Pahl) focuses on new ways of conceptualising literacy and looking how new technologies are impacting on literacy practices. This includes understandings of 'new' and 'digital' literacies as well as multiliteracies and multimodality. Members of the group share interests in exploring literacy practices in everyday life and learning contexts, using methods from disciplines such as visual studies, cultural geography, anthropology, sociolinguistics, psychology and the humanities. The Centre addresses issues such as migration and new emerging identities and contexts within contemporary society in relation to texts, practices and communication.

# Research Projects

## Sheffield Somali Mentoring Report

Margaret Mitchell

Widening Participation/Aimhigher Community Learning Project Manager

As part of my work as a Widening Participation – Aimhigher Project manager based at The University of Sheffield, I have been working with members of the Somali community, one of the fastest growing communities in Sheffield partly because the population has a high birth rate rather than this being attributed to new immigration. The disadvantages faced by the Somali community results in poor educational attainment, exclusions from school and unemployment with low take up of entry into higher education.

Sheffield City Council and key members of the Somali Community formed a task group to take a solution-focused approach to try to find a way forward. At the same time I had built up a level of trust within this community as I engaged with adults/parents in community settings and set up many information 'Progression to HE' sessions using translators and Somali community workers. Parents were naturally struggling to understand the system in UK schools. Children were often the only English speaker in the family. Parents sometimes didn't understand the letters sent from schools giving information that their child may be excluded from school and did not know how to get help. I worked with Somali parents, colleagues at the University and other organisations to provide 'Information & understanding of the British Educational system' sessions in the community. We also brought parents into the University and held meetings here. It was clear that parents were desperate to help their children often paying for private tutors from meagre benefits or low financial situations that they could ill afford. As part of a collaborative attempt to raise aspirations and educational achievement, the Somali mentoring project was launched in December 2009 at Sheffield Town Hall.

Parental concern was obvious following the 'Mentoring' launch day when 150 parents and young people came and showed their anxiety regarding the children's poor educational attainment. We had recruited 15 Somali graduates who were interested in mentoring young Somali people. 66 children from schools and colleges in Sheffield were registered for the programme. We had to agree in the first instance to only mentor those from Yr 9 and above due to restricted numbers of mentors and classroom space.

I managed to negotiate rooms at the Octagon Centre at The University of Sheffield and it was agreed we would offer mentoring sessions on Saturdays every week from January to July as a Pilot scheme.

As the levels of attainment for Somali children are below the national average particularly at KS3/KS4 we set out the aims for the project as follows:

- To improve GCSE/VCE/A and AS Level grades.

- To provide students with positive role models – Somali graduates and UoS undergraduates/postgraduates who would share their stories/experience of their own journey to HE.
- To help raise mentees' confidence through new understanding, information and guidance around their individual educational needs.
- To provide students with an understanding of the opportunities offered by higher education and on the benefits and attractions, also demonstrating that university life is exciting and fun.
- To demonstrate that going to university is an investment which is both possible and affordable.
- To support parents/adults with advice, information and guidance regarding their own educational progression needs.

The Somali graduates we recruited all completed the Aimhigher Associated, Mentoring Training, which involved:

- Child Protection – 'What if' scenarios
- The National Curriculum Key Stages and transition points
- Higher Education Progression Framework
- Role play/peer observation
- Scenarios/possible educational problems
- Ground rules
- Study techniques, revision and exam technique
- Goal setting/Action planning
- Monitoring
- Mentor personal development.

The emerging information coming out of the weekly mentoring sessions will be useful to teachers/parents/young people in terms of what could be offered as possible extra-curricular support.

All 40 children who have been mentored so far are asking for help with Maths, English and Science. So much so that the main aims of the project, such as raising aspirations, are now changing to mentors actual teaching. This is what the young people want and absolutely this is what parents want.

I have also enlisted the help of Student Ambassadors from The University of Sheffield to help with Science, Maths and English support. Eleven undergraduates and some MA and PhD students who are studying Medicine/Engineering and English have begun to work with us mentoring the students.

The project is growing and is very exciting, we have lots of ideas and plan to offer group sessions/visits to see and participate in activities at the University. I have also spoken to Somali World News BBC TV Correspondent Rageh Omaar. He has offered to support the project and will come to TUoS to visit the young people and those connected to the project. I also received a message from

the VC from Somalia University who had tracked me down at the University to offer support following reading a press announcement that was in Times Higher about the project.

There is a real need for this project and others like it to continue. This pilot only runs to July and everyone connected to the project wants it to continue, especially the children who have shown in the interim evaluation that they are progressing well and are very well motivated to improve their grades and are stimulated through working with our mentors and undergrads/postgrads. They and their parents want the project to continue.

It is remarkable how many children are seeking help and who are willing to come every Saturday to the mentoring sessions. The emerging information will be very useful to schools/teachers who may want to find a way to offer extra support in the areas most needed. The success of this project perhaps is unique in that for the first time according to the Somali parents we are providing something that is community-led and directly addressing their concerns – that is working with parents/young people/Sheffield University/Connexions/Sheffield Council/Colleges/Aimhigher. We now need to approach schools to develop ways of integrating this project into mainstream wherever possible. This project is only a part of my role and does not allow for me to fully manage this project permanently. Community members are being encouraged to manage the project in the future with support from all the agencies concerned.

In the meantime I will continue to co-ordinate the mentoring project/sessions and look forward to seeing the young people that we are working with blossom.

## Children's Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age

Two members of the School of Education are taking part in an exciting research project entitled Children's Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age, funded by the AHRC Beyond Text programme. **Professor Jackie Marsh** and Research Associate **Dr Julia Bishop** are working on the two-year project in collaboration with colleagues at the University of London's Institute of Education, the British Library National Sound Archive and the University of East London. The project has three strands:

- the digitisation of recordings made by pioneer children's play researchers, Peter and Iona Opie, in the 1970s and '80s,
- the gathering of contemporary data about children's play in two primary schools, one in Sheffield and one in London, and
- the adaptation of playground games for physical computer game interfaces such as the Nintendo Wii.

Children are involved in all facets of the project, including the design of a British Library website to showcase a selection of the Opies' material and today's play as found at the two schools. Children at both schools are involved in documenting their own play and some have an additional role in a panel which advises the researchers on aspects of the project as well as providing feedback on the computer game experiment.

One year into the project and it is clear that many older forms of play are still very much alive and enjoyed, such as tiggly (chase games), clapping, football, handstands, skipping, counting out or 'dipping', building 'nests', and games of pretend. These are learnt from many sources but are primarily passed around by the children themselves. The influence of the media, already present in the Opies' earlier examples, is also found in forms of play such as singing, dancing, cheerleading, fantasy and role play. There is evidence that children are beginning to turn to the internet as a source for jokes, dance routines and clapping rhymes. These in turn seem to revitalise the repertoire and stimulate further inventiveness among the children.

For further information about the project, including a recent conference featuring interim findings, see <http://projects.beyondtext.ac.uk/playgroundgames/>. A book on the project's findings, as well as the British Library website, is also planned.



## Curious about Literacy?

An exhibition of literacy practices in homes recently appeared in a kiosk on The Moor in Sheffield.

**Dr Kate Pahl**, from the *Centre of the Study of New Literacies* had a set of images in the exhibition called: *Materializing Literacy: The uses of literacy in Rotherham and Sheffield*. The images come from two studies of literacy practices in homes in Sheffield and Rotherham. This exhibition was part of the Curious Festival. Curious is a festival of exciting and engaging events organised by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.



Further details about the project are available on the web at <http://www.inhabitingpace.org/> and blog <http://inhabitingpace.blogspot.com/>

## Making it REAL: Raising Early Achievement in Literacy

**Professor Cathy Nutbrown** and **Professor Peter Hannon** have developed a pioneering programme to improve literacy levels among pre-school children. Having shown, through a longitudinal study (1994-2006) that the methods used in the REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) Project can benefit children's early literacy development, the programme is now being rolled out to schools and children's centres in two UK local authority areas.

The National Children's Bureau won Big Lottery funding to develop the original REAL project into a new initiative, 'Making it REAL: Raising Early Achievement in Literacy'. Cathy Nutbrown is now working with the NCB which is currently supporting 16 teachers and practitioners working with some 320 families with children under five. The Early Childhood Unit began work on the new Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) project in August 2009 which will continue for three years. REAL builds on what parents already do at home to help children learn. The relationships developed between practitioner, parents and children are central. Parents receive support to provide more opportunities for their children to learn through books and stories, songs and rhymes, environmental print and early mark making activities.

Parents, practitioners and children will be directly involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the project. Anticipated outcomes are increased parent confidence and knowledge of how to join in with children, model practice, recognise, and respond to children's progress – and improved communication and social skills for young children.

More can be read about REAL in Nutbrown, C. Hannon, P. and Morgan, A. (2005) *Early Literacy Work with Families*, Sage Publications.

Further information on the origins and findings of the REAL Project is available at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/research/stories/socialsci/22.html>



# Recent Successes for the School of Education

**Professor Gareth Parry** has recently been invited to join the Expert Group on the Drivers of Education and Training Policy in England (Chair: Baroness Estelle Morris) and the Steering Group for an LSIS-funded Project on Higher Education in Further Education: Strategic Options, Operational Challenges (Chair: John Widdowson). **Gareth** also recently made a presentation on Higher Education in Further Education at the Invitation Seminar convened by the Leadership Foundation in Higher Education, the Association of Colleges, the 157 Group and the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges, London.

In February **Dr Kate Pahl** gave a talk at the Diasporas Identities Migration Final Event, a trans-disciplinary research programme funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), on the Narratives of Migration and Artefacts of identity project at Tate Britain. In March she was invited to talk about the Diasporas Identities Migration Project at a workshop, also funded by the AHRC, on South Asian Families: Transnationalism, Gender and the Life at the University of Sussex.

**Dr Darren Webb** was given the 2008 Eugenio Battisti Award for Best Article in Utopian Studies.

**Dr Jennifer Lavia, Dr Jools Page, Professor Pat Sikes** and **Jayne Rushton** were all nominated for a Service Excellence Award by our students. These awards are presented to recognise and celebrate the excellent level of service provided by individuals and teams from all areas of the University.

In November 2009 **Dr Michele Moore** presented a paper at the National and Capodistrian University of Athens Disability and Policy conference entitled *Telling cross-cultural stories about inclusion: problematic views of disabled children's lives*.

**Dr Terry Lamb** was commended by the French Prime Minister for his work on establishing a joint Anglo-French qualification and his longstanding services to language teaching.

He was awarded the title of Chevalier dans l'ordre des Palmes Académiques which translates to Knight in the Order of the Academic Palms.



The medal was presented to Terry by the French Ambassador, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, at his official residence in London. One of the world's oldest civil awards, originally created by Napoleon in 1808, the 'Ordre des Palmes Académiques' rewards distinguished members from the field of education notably for their contribution towards the expansion of French language and culture throughout the world. It is the most significant award in academia in France.

In his speech, the Ambassador presented the reasons why the French Government was awarding this honour, referring to Terry's work both nationally for the University of Sheffield and internationally as President of the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (the International Federation of Modern Language Teachers).

Terry said: "I am honoured to receive this award by the French Prime Minister. It is recognition of the importance not only of French but of language learning generally, and shows a genuine desire for our countries to work more closely together and to offer our young learners the opportunity to have their learning recognised by both countries. This is a highly significant step which will hopefully lead to similar collaborations with other countries."

## Research Grants

**Professor Cathy Nutbrown** has been awarded a grant from the HEIF 4 Knowledge Transfer fund for work on developing a Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project website.

**Professor Tom Billington** was awarded funding for a project in which he will be working with the Judiciary and the Merseyside Family Justice Council (MJFC) to develop a secure, on-line system for managing information relating to Expert Witnesses (for example, psychiatrists, psychologists, independent social workers).

**Dr Tim Corcoran** was awarded a knowledge transfer grant for a project working with NHS Calderdale Child & Adolescent Mental Health service on exploring classroom teachers' views regarding their roles in school-based mental health promotion.

# Retirements in 2009/10



## Professor Peter Hannon

Amongst those who retired from the School of Education in 2009 was Professor Peter Hannon, well known to students, staff and hundreds of alumni of the School. Peter joined the University in 1979 as a Lecturer in Education. From 1998 he was a professor; between 2006 and 2009 he led the School of Education as its Head. In his 30 years in

the University, Peter worked with colleagues on many teaching developments, including Masters' programmes in Literacy and in Early Childhood Education. He supervised numerous PhD students, some of whom subsequently went on to University posts. His many research projects in literacy and early childhood education brought Peter into contact with schools and families in Sheffield, particularly in disadvantaged areas of the city. His work has been recognised nationally and internationally. As an Emeritus Professor in the University, Peter continues to research and write about issues in children's development and in learning which first drew him into academic life but his retirement now gives him the opportunity to spend more time in outdoor pursuits and the arts.



## Professor Greg Brooks

For decades I had promised myself I would not flog on to 65, and had 62 in mind, but my last externally funded projects at Sheffield ran to March 2008 and I was doing a lot of work on the RAE return in 2007, so the actual moment was at midnight, 31 December 2007 – at the first gong I yelled "I am a free man" and toasted all there – I was 63½ to the

day and it was the (official) end of seven very fruitful and highly enjoyable years working with excellent colleagues and friends.

How is retirement so far? Busy (as they all say), but getting gradually less so. I have continued to look after three students, and still have a toehold in a project directed by Gareth Parry. In 2008 I gave 20 presentations

and had 16 items published; in 2009 seven presentations and seven publications, and in 2010 (so far) one presentation (via the internet to a family literacy day conference in Budapest – I was meant to be there but Eyjafjallajökull interfered) and two publications, with several more of each in the pipeline, including a seminar at the Royal Society of Arts in April, and one at Glossop Road on 25 May. Since 1991 I've been actively involved with the International Development in Europe Committee of the International Reading Association, which formed itself a parallel entity called the Federation of European Literacy Associations in 2008 – this is legally registered in Belgium and I helped with ensuring that the official documents (they are in French, which most members of the Committee don't speak) have an English translation which is certified as legally accurate.

Other research: In 2008-09 I took part in a national evaluation of family literacy programmes in England (thus revisiting an area I'd first directed in 1994-95); in 2009, Maxine Burton and I worked on an EC project and devised a glossary of 67 terms in the adult learning field, in all 28 official languages of the EU and associated states (we didn't have to know them all – we had help from an international network); and in 2010 I'm working on another EC project, a Europe-wide review of parental support for early literacy development. I've also completed several statistical projects, three to do with the progress in literacy of young people who have offended, and one for the Learning and Skills Improvement Service on how long it takes adult basic skills learners to move up one level of the National Qualifications Framework (now the Qualifications and Credit Framework). Also this year, Maxine and I are evaluating a programme in English for women who speak other languages in Brixton. I have been involved in setting up a national evaluation of the Book Trust's Bookstart initiative (Peter Hannon chairs the Advisory Group for this), and I've almost finished devising the content for an intended DCSF website giving schools advice on literacy catch-up schemes.

In October 2008 Maxine and I moved the 200 miles from Sheffield to a village in Surrey (we are now living within 6 miles of where I was born and grew up), and in April 2010 another 200 yards to a somewhat larger house on the same street. This means I can now provide more support for my 93-year-old dad who lives just a few miles away. And Maxine and I have managed several trips in our campervan, including 9 days in France last September.

So can I recommend retirement? Oh yes, and the very best thing so far is the arrival of my first grandchild, Hannah Elizabeth Brooks, on 28 February. She is of course the most gorgeous baby ever born.

## Final Words...

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. We aim to produce the newsletter on an annual basis, so please do let us have your news for the next one. If you have any contributions or questions for us, or wish to talk to us about further study in the School, please contact us using the details below or by taking a look at our School Of Education Web Pages: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/education/>

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