

Creating a legacy for new PGCE students

What did/do you do?

Current students reflect on their experiences and outcomes of the specific elements of PGCE course. Their reflections are added to My TeachersLearningMatters blog at <http://teacherslearningmatters.blogspot.com/>

Who is involved?

Course leader: Rachel Lofthouse
Students: Geography PGCE students in ECLS.

How do you do it?

Students complete school teaching placements during which they conduct practitioner enquiry as part of their M.level work. A facilitated group activity allows them to reflect on these experiences and how they helped them to develop their understanding and improve their practice in the professional context. During the same session students write a group reflection which summarises this discussion. They are advised that the audience is next year's PGCE students. They use the PC cluster to email this to me within 30 minutes. When they return to the seminar room the reflective writing is reviewed by the whole group with a view to identify common and distinctive features. Each piece is then added to my Blog which next year's students (already recruited) have been invited to become followers of.

Why do you do it?

Each PGCE course is 10 months long and students from one cohort to the next do not routinely meet each other as graduates are in full time teaching employment by the time the next course begins. There is an enormous wealth of accumulated knowledge and understanding which is not easily available to the subsequent students. There is a recognition that peer support and perspectives are valuable assets in professional learning programmes and this activity creates a legacy which can provide this on a virtual level. Students recruited for the course are able to start to make sense of some its demands and its outcomes prior to joining. This is valuable because the programme is very intensive and the more mental mapping that they can do prior to joining the more accessible the diverse elements of the course are likely to be. The blog remains available to them once they have joined the course which means that they can review it at the relevant times when they are engaging in the equivalent activities.

Does it work?

This is the first year that I have developed this specific approach, although there is evidence from previous years that other 'legacy' activities provide a useful stimulus for engagement and learning for new cohorts. A key outcome is the ability to join a professional community and make sense of the types of professional activities which promote teacher learning in the realities of the workplace.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

HaSS 'communicating with students' project, 2010/11

Rachel Lofthouse,
School of Education,
Communication and
Language Sciences

Coherent Curriculum theme:

- Student engagement
- Student induction