BIRMINGHAM CITY University

EDUCATION JOURNAL MAGAZINE

Volume: 1 (1)
Term: Winter 2020

Welcome

*"Welcome to the first edition of the Birmingham City University (BCU) Education Journal Magazine (EJM). I am excited to be publishing **ten** fantastic articles from across our education degrees and partnership in this edition.*

As we are all aware, 2020 has proven to be a very challenging year for everybody, regardless of who they are and what they do. Education in particular has faced its own challenges, remaining open throughout a national lockdown and for schools to plan for this within a very short time frame. How schools move forwards with current social distancing guidelines has also proven to be challenging; so hopefully this publication can offer some support, ideas and suggestions on how you could reflect and develop your own practice moving forwards.

Please take the time to read our aims and goals of the EJM and browse the different articles in your own time. The articles are spread across three interlinking chapters:

1. *Enquiry and Support within the Partnership*
2. *Current Enquiry and Practice*
3. *Individual Enquiry and Scholarship*

There may be some that hold great interest for you and some that may not. I hope that everybody can find something useful from each publication.

The role of the EJM is not just for the university to publish. I strongly recommend you to make contact if you are interested in contributing an article to the EJM. This is a 'partnership' publication.

Enjoy..."

Grant Huddleston

Meet the editorial team:

Grant Huddleston	*Course Leader for BSc/BA Hons. Secondary Education (QTS)*
Dr. Tina Collins	*Senior Teaching Fellow/ITE Secondary Partnerships Research Lead*
Mary Bennett-Hartley	*Senior Lecturer in Primary Education*
Dr. Chris Bolton	*Senior Lecturer in Drama Education*

Our Aim

Our aim is to help support practice across our partnership schools and promote enquiry and research. We welcome contributions from students, teachers and academics who wish to make a positive difference to teaching and learning and believe they could help develop and support other's practice. We aim to support new and experienced writers to submit their work so that we share a variety of perspectives.

Our Goals

- *Showcase the excellent work our BCU students produce.*
- *Allow an opportunity for those interested to publish their work to promote positive development and reflection across our partnership schools.*
- *Promote confidence and competence to write for an education publication*
- *Promote interest towards research and enquiry*

How to Contribute

Anybody wishing to contribute an article for consideration should email their draft to BCUEJM@bcu.ac.uk.

You do not need to decide which chapter you wish your article to appear, but you can indicate this if you wish. Please ensure you follow the house style. Final decisions on publication are made by the editorial board. You can submit as many articles as you wish. If the editorial team have received a large number of contributions, your article may be held for later editions.

House style

When submitting an article for consideration, please aim to follow the subsequent *house style*:

- Documents should be submitted in Word.
- Any web links given should be accessible by the reader and not sit behind passwords or paywalls.
- Word count is expected to be **750**, **1500**, or **3000** words "all in" (references included).
- Acronyms and abbreviations must be written in full the first time they are used in each article; thereafter the abbreviation may be used, e.g. "The special educational needs and disability co-ordinator (SENDCO) is … "
- UK English should be used, e.g. "…ise" endings instead of "…ize"
- Numbers one to ten written in full; thereafter numerical (e.g 28 pupils aged nine completed… etc.)
- Double speech marks for direct speech or quotes; otherwise single speech marks
- Please use the Harvard referencing system (where applicable – we can support with this if necessary).

Please note that the editorial team will amend the final copy to suit our house style. You will may receive a copy back if any major changes have been made for you to proof read.

Contents

Support for Success:

The role of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Subject Mentor

Kerry Taylor - Senior Lecturer in Secondary Science (Biology)

Before joining Birmingham City University as a senior lecturer within the Secondary Education Department, I had spent most of my teaching career mentoring trainee teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT). Why? I love the profession, I think educating the next generation is a great thing we do, and I wanted to share this passion and drive with those just starting out.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in school as both a subject mentor and Professional Mentor. Working with strong trainees is a pleasure, and yes, when they struggle it can be a more difficult role. Is not 'being a teacher' also about supporting those who face challenges to overcome these and find success?

Why does mentoring matter? Hawkey (1997) describes mentoring as idiosyncratic because each instance of mentorship is based on a unique relationship. It could be easy to conclude that 'anything goes' in mentoring, which is unlikely to then inspire improvements in mentoring quality (Cain, 2006). Yet, the mentoring of new and early career teachers is one of the most important jobs a school could do (Naylor, 2019).

In November 2019, the Department for Education published the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework. Alongside the 2016 National Standards for school-based ITT mentors, there is a clear message for the important role mentors have to play:

> "*Receiving, clear, consistent and effective mentoring in…"*

(ITT Core Content, 2019: 9)

> "*Discussing and analysing with expert colleagues how to…"*

(ITT Core Content, 2019:11)

> "…*mentoring and support from expert colleagues form a key element of this multi-year entitlement*."

(ITT Core Content, 2019:3)

> "*Great teachers continuously improve over time, benefiting from mentoring of expert colleagues*."

(ITT Core Content, 2019:3)

ITT must, of course, then take into consideration the uncertain landscape of Covid-19. NQTs have been awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) under unusual circumstances (Lofthouse, 2020); and there is potential for this to continue within initial teacher training of the new academic year with the threat of a 'second spike'. Effective mentoring, I believe, is integral to our profession.

This means ITT must then ask, 'what is the role of the ITT subject mentor?'

There are a range of papers outlining the experiences of different mentors in school and how they see their role within teacher education. A study by Elliott and Calderhead (1993) saw mentors classify their role as:

- '*a mother hen to her chicks'*
- *'a good listener'*
- *'a friend'*
- *'an organiser'*

More recently How (2018) has added to this list with ideas that mentors are motivators, a mother/father figure, a companion and someone who serves reminders for code of conduct. McNally and Martin (1998) stress that mentors must be able to engage with a trainee's needs; provide low support and high challenge. Mentors provide emotional and professional support to trainees (Lofthouse, 2020) helping them to develop in confidence and in their pedagogic approaches. Mentors are the people who invest their time and expertise, for free, to the next generation of teachers to help them on their path (Wilson, 2020).

A message that resounded with me was one from Anne Swift, the 2016-2017 National Union of Teachers president:

"*The mentor holds up the mirror to their [trainee] to illustrate what is good about their practice – and highlights ways to develop further."*

(Oxtoby, 2016)

Recent advances in evidence-based education and the use of research have further professionalised our teachers (Naylor, 2019). Therefore, it is important that mentors also take on a role of one that engages with research and makes use of this to guide, support and critically evaluate trainee practice and progress (Cain, 2006).

The ITT subject mentor is an important, influential and multi-faceted role. It is a key role within schools (Naylor, 2019). School leaders and training providers need to be clear in what is expected from mentors and that mentors have the tools they need to conduct this role effectively.

"*If we look after our mentors, then they will look after our trainees*."

(Wilson, 2020:62)

Taking all of these ideas into account, how do mentors then distil effective practice? You would be forgiven for thinking that 'if a mentor does x, rather than y, there will be significant improvement within the trainee', however, approaching the literature in this way is likely to mean that mentors are left disappointed (Cain, 2006). Trainees, like the pupils in a classroom, are learning to do something; they are each unique and so must be treated as individuals. That is not to say, there are not strategies and tips that can be shared.

Being available for your trainee and making time for them is beneficial to their development (How, 2018). For example, plan in mentor meetings ensuring trainees consistently receive their mentoring entitlement. Have a time to 'check-in' at either the beginning or end of the day.

Remember trainees are human. They will get sick, they will struggle, and they will take negative feedback to heart. Be human in your response (How, 2018) and model how a teaching professional tackles these circumstances. Just like children, trainees will become demotivated only hearing the developmental areas of their practice. Let them know when they are doing well and take time to celebrate in that success with them (Oxtoby, 2016).

Approach trainees with realism. Teaching is hard, demanding and at times stressful; promote optimism and share the positives with them (Boyd, 2017). Facilitate their learning to show them how to do something, without doing it for them, and genuinely care for their progress. We would not allow the children to think they are doing fantastically well if really, they are not (How, 2018).

Mentoring is not about creating a mini-me version of the mentor (Boyd, 2017); practices that work for the mentor may not work for the trainee. Guide them in observing and critically evaluating alternatives.

So, why would we actually want to be a subject mentor?

This is an incredibly rewarding role. For me it was an opportunity to impact on children beyond my own classroom and to continue that impact long after I hang up my 'teaching shoes'. An opportunity to see confidence and skills develop into outstanding teaching and learning. This role also gives mentors the chance to inspire, refresh and innovate their own ways of teaching (Oxtoby, 2016).

References:

- Boyd, C. (2017). NQT Mentoring: How to Build A Successful Relationship. [Teacher Toolkit] 17th September. Available at: https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2017/09/17/new-teacher/ [Accessed 2 September 2020]
- Cain, T. (2006). Mentoring Trainees Teachers: how can mentors use research? Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 17(1), 53-66
- Department for Education. (2016). National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentors [pdf] 1st Ed. London: Crown. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536891/Mentor_standards_report_Final.pdf [Accessed 2 December 2019]

- Department for Education. (2019). Initial Teacher Training (ITT): Core Content Framework [pdf] 1st Ed. London: Crown. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843676/Initial_teacher_training_core_content_framework.pdf [Accessed 1 Sept 2020]
- Elliott, B. & Calderhead, J. (1993). Mentoring for teacher development: possibilities and caveats. In D. McIntyre, H. Hagger & M. Wilkin (Ed.), Mentoring: Perspectives on schoolbased teacher education (pp. 186–189). London: Kogan Page.
- Hawkey, K. (1997). Roles, responsibilities and relationships in mentoring: A literature review and agenda for research. Journal of Teacher Education, 48(5), 325–335."
- How, L. (2018). How to be a good mentor. [TeacherToolkit] 27th October. Available at: https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/10/27/good-mentor/?unapproved=209551&moderation-hash=ca25aabeafcd618bdd9f3eff62994b67#comment-209551 [Accessed 2 September 2020]
- Lofthouse, R. (2020). Editorial; Why Mentors Matter. CollectivED Working Papers Mentors Matter, Special Edition. Available at: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/carnegie-school-of-education/research/working-paper-series/collectived/-/media/c36e8c6c63a14aada1d8ad2dc886ecb8.ashx [Accessed 1 September 2020]
- McNally, P., & Martin, S. (1998). Support and challenge in learning to teach: The role of the mentor. Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 26(1), 39–50.
- Naylor, P. (2019). The Early Career Framework: A Thumbs-Up.[TeacherToolkit] 9th April. Available at: https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2019/04/09/early-career-framework/ [Accessed 25 Sept 2020]
- Oxtoby, K. (2016). How to be an effective mentor. [SecEd] 18th May. Available at: https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/how-to-be-an-effective-mentor/ [Accessed 2 September 2020]
- Wilson, H. (2020). Mentoring Matters. CollectivED Working Papers Mentors Matter, Special Edition. Available at: https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/carnegie-school-of-education/research/working-paper-series/collectived/-/media/c36e8c6c63a14aada1d8ad2dc886ecb8.ashx [Accessed 1 September 2020]

FACILITATING MENTORING IN SECONDARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A MENTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Mike Stimpson – PE Curriculum Lead, Shenley Academy

On average, in England, over 25,000 teachers begin Initial Teacher Training (ITT) each year (DfE, 2019a), requiring around the same number of teacher educators to support them. It is also well acknowledged that no matter what stage of teaching you are at, everyone needs a good mentor and, just as no one forgets a good teacher, no one forgets a good mentor (National Education Union, 2020).

There is no doubt that the role of mentoring is paramount; it allows us to look at the holistic and sustainable way we can develop as teachers, both as the mentor and mentee. However, the role of mentoring is often viewed as unrewarding; it is usually an expectation of the role as a teacher and forms part of the range of support provided to trainees. Mentors are usually committed and passionate and yet the role is layered within their day job. The role can bring tensions as the workload associated with being a teacher is already so great.

With this in mind, I want to look at some of the key barriers that must be overcome in order to support the role of a mentor and share some top tips to being an effective mentor.

Top tips for mentors

Managing workload:

In the current educational climate, workload is the single biggest factor that can make the role of mentoring a more challenging process (DfE, 2019b). This is due to the nature of mentoring always existing alongside the day job. It is a facilitative role requiring significant quality assurance and this results in substantial time commitments. The role involves time to meet, plan, observe, feedback, liaise with other school staff and arrange specific training.

To do the role properly time should be allocated by the school. It's in the best interest of all schools to provide adequate opportunity to effectively mentor in order to produce the best trainees possible.

In an attempt to manage the workload of mentoring it is crucial that you focus support at an early stage. This could help time efficiency and reduce the likelihood of the mentee falling into bad habits. Some simple examples of this could be trainees using over familiar language with students or lacking consistency with the school's rules and rewards. By addressing these mistakes early, it can stop such issues spiralling and helps the trainee understand the boundaries between teacher and student.

Some further points to consider in relation to effective use of mentor meetings:

- Review meetings.
- Reduce meeting times.
- Have clear start and end times with timed agenda items.
- Consider the number of meetings in place and provide flexibility.
- Consider using audio recordings of dialogue in meetings to save time.

The additional suggestions below, if adhered to, should also help support you in managing the workload of mentoring early career teachers.

Build a trusting relationship:

Hankey (2004) made clear that the emphasis in the mentoring process is placed on reflective dialogue, rather than assessment of practice using performance based criteria. Building a clear understanding of what each other's roles are and affording the opportunity for mentees to take ownership of their practice and be comfortable with experimenting with different ideas and pedagogy allows for professional growth and learning, whilst reducing the fear of judgement. The mentor will be a role model to your trainee; being available and adopting a role as a critical friend – 'you need to work on, we need to work on' can be an effective way of supporting them.

Covey (1989) also emphasised the importance of empathetic listening in building stronger working relationships. By really listening to your mentee and placing yourself in their shoes you can create a productive culture where synergy can be achieved by working collaboratively towards your shared goals. This can result in more effective outcomes for yourself (as mentor), the trainee and the children that are benefitting from your joined up approach to their education. A positive relationship can often be enhanced by providing collaborative opportunities in extra-curricular activities when there is significant time spent together in a slightly less formal environment.

Model effective teaching:

We learn by observing others (Bandura, 1977). In the first instance, it is imperative that trainee teachers have the opportunity to observe effective modelling of more experienced colleagues to allow them to develop their own effective pedagogical methods. Specifically, in PE - a subject which requires such depth and breadth of knowledge and skills across a wide variety of physical activities - modelling by experienced professionals allows for trainees to genuinely enhance their own subject knowledge and methods of practice.

Fundamental PE specific pedagogical strategies should be instilled early within the trainee's placement. Positioning within the teaching space to have view of all children, speed of transition when getting students in to observe and setting of expectations should all be modelled early on. Having the ability to model skills and activities in PE can build confidence within the practitioner and thus support the delivery of the subject. Unfortunately, gaining confidence in the delivery of all activities isn't easy. It is therefore important to provide opportunities to teach a range of practical activities and theory lessons. I will often advise trainees to practice the performances of any skills they wish to teach. Although, it's also worth remembering that both you as the mentor and the mentee themselves can very often call upon an able student to demonstrate the skill and thus provide vicarious reinforcement for their peers.

Provide Incremental responsibility:

It often takes trainees longer to complete tasks (e.g. planning and marking) compared to experienced teachers and this leads to a heavier workload at first. Providing incremental responsibilities to trainees can support the trainee's workload and help build confidence in their practice. e.g. to start with they should plan and deliver a warm up/starter activity for a group before moving on to teach a whole skill or phase of a lesson. It is also important for trainees to be involved in lessons even if they are not directly delivering. If you find that your mentee is not very proactive in interacting with students it can be useful to set them specific key points to share with the children as this will promote this interaction and help them develop relationships with the students in the class.

It is important to be willing to hand over your class wholeheartedly but not at the detriment of the class, or the trainee. This should be a gradual process (See the gradual release model – Maneuvering the Middle, 2020). PE can support this incremental delivery well; encourage them to work with small groups as you deliver the overall objectives to the class; work collaboratively to team teach specific activities, enabling you to step in and address any issues; and allow them to plan an activity that they deliver to half the class whilst you oversee the other half.

Precise, timely feedback:

The subject of PE lends itself to lots of opportunities for regular timely feedback and pointers. Using this time effectively can reduce the length of more formal meetings whilst giving the mentee an opportunity to reflect on practice and focus on key areas of improvement. Could focused conversations take place on the minibus to an away fixture? Or on the walk back to the changing rooms from the playing fields? Try to have regular open dialogue with your trainee to facilitate their development whilst not overburdening them with too many areas to work on.

Hattie (2007), highlights the value of video feedback in providing reinforcement to learners. Can you access a video camera device (for example an iPad) and specific software (e.g. Iris) to allow the trainee to watch their delivery back and self-assess their practice? Remember to always have relevant consent if the children form part of the footage and do not share outside of your establishment.

Utilise other specialists:

Seeking a second opinion and allowing the mentee to learn from others is extremely valuable. Although you're the official mentor, it is crucial that early career teachers have the opportunity to observe other specialists and be observed by other teachers. Encourage them to watch other lessons (both within and outside of the faculty) and empower the trainees to ask other teachers to conduct observations and provide feedback. This gives a more rounded experience for the mentee whilst relieving some of the workload from you.

Finally, on this point, I would always encourage mentors to try to learn from their mentees too. Trainees will often have creative and innovative ideas for teaching specific sports or topics. It's important to harness this zest for the subject and be open to learning and gaining ideas from them, as much as trying to harvest the trainee's development.

PE will often be taught in single sex classes within secondary schools. However, as a PE teacher, it is not uncommon to teach across both genders. Providing an early experience of teaching both single sex (both) and mixed sex classes will allow trainees to develop their understanding of how girls and boys in PE can often perceive the subject differently, exhibit varying motivational factors and engage differently within the subject.

Mentoring is a great way to pass on your expertise whilst developing your own teaching by remaining cognisant of the theory that underpins practice. A number of ITT establishments are developing their mentoring programmes to support mentors and there are small financial incentives for schools to benefit from. In spite of this, there is no denying that being a mentor can present its own challenges. Nevertheless, I believe that working hard to implement the strategies within this article will support you in being an effective facilitator to the future generation of PE teachers.

Key reading to support the role of a mentor:

- Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (Curee) - National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching
- Collective Ed – The hub for mentoring and coaching – Leeds Beckett University
- @Teacher Toolkit – How to be a good mentor
- Martin Sketchley – Avoid These Ten Mistakes as a Trainee Teacher

References:

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.
- Department for Education (2019) - Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Census for 2019 to 2020, England
- Department for Education (2019b) Research report - Teacher workload survey. Matt Walker, Jack Worth and Jens Van den Brande: National Foundation for Educational Research
- Hattie, J. and Timpereley, H. (2007). *The Power of Feedback*
- Maneuvering the Middle (2020) *The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model*. Available at: https://www.maneuveringthemiddle.com/the-gradual-release-of-responsibility-model/
- National Education Union (2020) www.NEU.org.uk

How can trainee teachers manage pupil behaviour and differentiate appropriately to ensure effective progress is made by all pupils?

Kelly Slade – PGCE Secondary Drama Graduate 2020

Various Initial Teacher Training accredited providers state that trainee teachers are supported during their second placement to "shift their focus from themselves to their pupils" (Birmingham City University, 2018: 12). I argue that an abundance of trainees, including myself, struggle to make this transition due to the requirement imposed on them by the Department for Education (DfE) to gather evidence of achieving the Teachers' Standards (2011). I suggest that many trainees are preoccupied with collating credible evidence to demonstrate their capability of working in the teaching profession and consequently, pupils make little progress, if any, as the learners are not the main focus.

In this auto-ethnographic piece of research into my identity as a drama teacher, I use McAteer's framework (2010: 119) to analyse the occurrence of two critical incidents during my year in training. I explore how trainees are assessed against the Teachers' Standards and what this means for their pupils; additionally, I question whether these standards are fit for purpose in an "ever-changing political landscape" (Talbot, 2016).

One incident occurred at the time of my second placement in a year eight lesson; I instructed higher ability students to take the role of the director during mixed ability group work. I had assumed that by giving higher ability students a more challenging role of leadership and all students an increased responsibility for their own learning, such as, choosing their own characters and devising from a stimulus during group work, then disruptive behaviour would be minimised as students were engaged in "problem-solving. This is assumed to enhance critical thinking, independence, motivation, and interactive learning" (Harju and Åkerblom, 2017: 1533). Moreover, mixed ability group lists along with pupils' target grades were easily accessible and served as valid evidence of meeting standards one and five.

In reality, my approach to differentiate by mixed ability groupings and providing higher ability students with an additional challenge was ineffective; low-level disruption was constant, which would imply that not all students were engaged. Consequently, the higher ability students felt pressurised and became anxious.

Through reflective practice, I deemed this incident 'critical'; Richards and Farrell (cited in Joshi, 2018: 83) write that "a critical incident is an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during a lesson and that serves to trigger insights about some aspect of teaching and learning". By reflecting on my most recent school experiences, I realised the significance of this 'unanticipated

event' on my teaching practice. I was convinced that I had adhered to standard five of the Teachers' Standards to "Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils" (DfE, 2011). Having observed my subject mentor adopt the same strategies, I could not understand why some students struggled to engage during group work. Initially, I blamed the timing of the lesson for the students' disengagement: the final period on a Friday. However, following a conversation with my professional mentor, I began to question my lesson intentions, whether students behaved differently in my subject mentor's lessons and why teachers are required to differentiate to suit the needs of different groups of children. Tripp (cited in Joshi, 2018: 82) suggests that "To take something as a critical incident is a value judgement we make, and the basis of that judgement is a significance we attach to the meaning of the incident". Supporting Tripp, I suggest that referring to an incident as critical implies that there is valuable learning to be acknowledged and applied within future practice. In the following section, I explore how the occurrence of the critical incident during my second placement has developed my practice and enhanced my understanding of my professional identity.

Reflecting on the year eight lesson prior to mine where the same strategies were implemented by my subject mentor, I realised that more students were disengaged. In both lessons, we had identified the role of the director as a more challenging position; however, through reflective practice we realised our mistake was not providing students with a description of their responsibilities. Our lesson intentions were not clear and consequently, students were confused and failed to fulfil their role. I was preoccupied with collating evidence, together with my subject mentor who advised that the strategies we had used were "easier to evidence" the completion of continuing professional development tasks. As a result, I clearly displayed mixed ability groups to students on a Power Point and the higher ability students were written in a different colour to identify them as the directors. Upon reflection, I realised that I was unconsciously mimicking my mentor's behaviour and going against what I believed in. I am of the opinion that learners should always be considered the priority in the classroom. I began to re-evaluate my earlier viewpoint that trainees struggle to shift their focus from themselves to their pupils due to the requirement imposed on them by the DfE to gather evidence of meeting the Teachers' Standards. I now believe that the issue resides with how the statuary framework is interpreted by some individuals.

The framework is a set of standards that trainees must meet to qualify as a teacher. Trainees are required to gather evidence of meeting each standard and they are assessed on the quality of the documentation they submit. I suggest that for some trainees, collating evidence can become the priority and the intended purpose of the Teachers' Standards to ensure all pupils make progress, is lost. In the preamble of the DfE's framework, it states that teachers should "make the education of their pupils their first concern" (DfE, 2011) so why are some trainees, such as myself, struggling to shift their focus from themselves to their pupils? Surely, the requirement to gather evidence cannot be the only cause. To comprehend the logistics behind the decisions I have made thus far, in addition to the viewpoints of individuals such as Fordham's (2017) belief that "the very model itself does not work", I began to research whether the Teachers' Standards are fit for purpose. In doing so, I am aware of ethical guidelines about

my position as an educational researcher in that "Researchers must not bring research into disrepute by in any way falsifying, distorting, suppressing, selectively reporting or sensationalising their research evidence or findings" (BERA, 2018: 33). I view this reflection as developmental to the formation of my teacher identity and hence, I am eager to challenge my own assumptions and I am open-minded to thinking differently.

Many trainee teachers may assume that the Teachers' Standards are entirely relevant given that they are the primary assessment framework to track progress. For example, the inclusion of standard five to "know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively" (DfE, , 2011) would suggest that differentiation in education is essential for pupils to make effective progress. In support of this view, critics have exclaimed how differentiation is a "powerful concept" (Brevik, Gunnulfsen and Renzulli, 2018: 34). The Training and Development Agency for Schools defines differentiation as "the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning" (Bartlett, 2016: 5). According to the DfE, these differences include "those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language" and "those with disabilities" (DfE, 2011). These statements imply that having a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils and considering learning as a personalised process maximises every student's potential. However, according to some critics, the implementation is often challenging, especially for trainee teachers who "lack confidence in enacting differentiation" (Brevik, Gunnulfsen and Renzulli, 2018: 34). I suggest that this is due to trainees' lack of subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and not having the chance to build relationships with students on account of the short length of their placements.

To a degree, I support the statement made by Taylor (2017: 55) that differentiation has led to "increased inequality in the classroom". In addition, Hatton (2009: 94) explains how a diagnosis of a disability or a mental health disorder "can be an important aspect of an individual's identity, which helps them to deal with some of the challenges faced, and celebrate their difference". However, whilst a diagnosis may be useful for some, for others, the effects of labelling can be detrimental. In drama, role-taking can counteract stereotypes "as it can enable participants to demonstrate to an audience a wide range of complex feelings and attributes that subvert 'dangerous' or 'incapable' labels" (Hatton, 2009: 92). Furthermore, the introduction of theatrical vocabulary and learning with everyone in-role can "encourage inclusiveness" (*ibid.*). I suggest that although some drama teachers provide activities such as role-taking to supposedly encourage equality in lessons, inclusivity is rarely achieved due to the differentiation strategies used by some teachers**.** Pupils can become fixated on colour-coded tasks and group lists where it seems that labels still apply; "however carefully the adults believe they have disguised the fact that they are given work of different challenge, children are remarkably astute at knowing what these mean" (Myatt, 2017). This statement implies that often pupils are able to recognise different levels of challenge; I suggest that this can have a 'detrimental' effect on the progress of some pupils due to the reinstatement of 'incapable' labels but can also encourage pupils to rise to the challenge. Upon reflection, I realised

that the impulsive behaviour of some students in my year eight lesson was exacerbated by the differentiation strategies I had used.

With this in mind, I suggest that the DfE might question whether the current Teachers' Standards are fit for purpose, specifically the requirement to "differentiate appropriately" (DfE, , 2011). I believe that there is a need to differentiate in schools to ensure effective progress is made by all pupils; however, the learners should always be considered the priority. Teachers should adopt an inclusive approach to differentiation such as "probing and pushing" (Wiliam, 2018), whereby teachers challenge students using questioning and formative assessment. This particular piece of research on Wiliam's interpretation of inclusive differentiation has influenced my teaching practice. For example, inclusivity is achieved in my lessons, as I will ask a question to the class to engage all learners before choosing a student to answer. I will already have a student in mind to respond to the question based on the level of challenge; however, I say the name as if thought of spontaneously to encourage inclusivity. This is contestable as there is a risk that not asking pupils a specific question excludes them from contributing, particularly if they know the answer. Therefore, I very occasionally adopt this approach.

Having recently adapted my teaching to make the education of my pupils my first concern, low-level disruption has been reduced. My confidence in managing the behaviour of disruptive students has increased, possibly as I am now more assured that my teaching strategies are effective and the disrespect shown by some students is less a fault of my teaching practice.

This brings me on to the second critical incident, which occurred in a year seven lesson during my first placement. The school's 'Behaviour and Discipline Policy' states that "Students will receive one warning when not Prepared for Excellence and should they demonstrate not being Prepared for Excellence again during that period they will be sent to work in the 'Refocus Room' until the same time on the following school day" (). I found myself having to adhere to this policy due to my mentor formally observing me; I had issued a second warning to a student and felt I had no choice but to send this individual to the Refocus Room. In truth, I did not perceive the student's interruption as problematic enough to warrant a removal.

Upon reflection, I realised that I had once again not considered the learners in my approach to behaviour management. Instead, I was preoccupied with gathering evidence of meeting standard seven of the Teachers' Standards to "take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy" (DfE, 2011). I believe that the sanction was excessive for such a minor incident and sending a disruptive student outside the classroom went completely against my rationale as a drama teacher. I am of the opinion that taking the student away from learning is ineffective, supporting the viewpoint that punitive responses "can exacerbate student disengagement and alienation" (Sullivan, 2016). Although issuing warnings can sometimes be necessary, I suggest that drama teachers should occasionally view challenging behaviour as self-expression and motivate disruptive students to address their negative attitude by expressing what

they feel through either the creative process or performative outcomes. This is something I seek to develop in my own practice and taking students away from the classroom can disrupt their learning.

The occurrence of this critical incident has developed my practice and enhanced my understanding of my identity within the teaching profession. Following the incident, I questioned why I was adhering to a policy that went against my rationale. I began to consider the contestable nature of policy. For example, "the policy world is really just process, the movement of people and programs around common problems such as education…None of the initiatives in these fields stays fixed for very long because the problems themselves keep moving and changing" (Considine cited in Ball, 2008: 7). In other words, much of the action of policy makers is mere language and consequently, proposals do not always work in practice. I suggest that this is due to teachers like myself recognising that a policy can be proposed by any individual or organisation and represents only their perception of a common problem. According to Considine, as cited in Ball (2008), these problems are ever-changing and policies are frequently requiring modification. This particular piece of research has made me realise that I have the power to enact or ignore imposed policy decisions; policies are only realised if they are enacted. Therefore, I suggest that teachers might refer to policies for guidance only; however, they might not adhere strictly to the policy in practice, particularly if it goes against their rationale as a teacher.

Despite my viewpoint, to meet standard seven of the Teachers' Standards, trainee teachers are required to manage behaviour "in accordance with the school's behaviour policy" (DfE, 2011). Having recently understood the purpose of the Teachers' Standards in this way, I now realise how much I value this statuary framework. The intention of the standards in this critical incident reinforces my belief that the learners should be the first concern for every teacher. Additionally, I have realised the need to manage pupil behaviour and differentiate appropriately to ensure pupils make effective progress. Contrastingly, however, I now suggest that the Teachers' Standards are fit for purpose. But, effective teaching practice, whereby all students make progress, is dependent on how an individual interprets the framework. Moreover, due to the value I place on the Teachers' Standards, I would suggest that trainees might manage behaviour in a way that encompasses both their beliefs and their school's behaviour policy. Admittedly, when managing the behaviour of the year seven student, I dismissed my own beliefs and only focused on adhering to the school's behaviour policy in an attempt to meet the teaching standards. By utilising the Refocus Room, I believed I had exacerbated the student's disengagement and destroyed the relationship we had built in previous lessons.

Once qualified, I would predict that trainees, such as myself, will have more confidence in their professional identity and only then, might they decide to enact or ignore imposed policy decisions. Additionally, I believe that trainees should be open to as many experiences as possible to help them find their teacher identity, thus supporting the statement that "Identity is informed, formed and reformed as individuals develop over time and through interaction with others" (Cooper and Olson, 1996: 80).

Therefore, I believe that guidance offered to trainees, such as a school behaviour policy, must not be ignored and should be put into practice before an opinion is formulated.

Upon reflection, I realised that both critical incidents arose as the learners were not considered the priority in my approach to behaviour management or differentiation. I was too concerned with adhering to school policies and gathering evidence of achieving the Teachers' Standards. I now understand the significance of the passage of time on reflection. I initially responded naively to both incidents with frustration; I believed I had little control over my own practice due to the establishment of numerous policies and statuary framework. I now value schools' behaviour policies less and the Teachers' Standards more. I have learnt how to prioritise the learners in my planning and I present myself as a confident, patient and caring teacher. Oruç (2013) asserts that "student teachers undergo a shift in identity due to the range of experiences they gain in the process of becoming a teacher" (:208). Supporting this statement, I conclude that my experiences in schools have shaped my teaching identity. I favour practical activities and humour to engage all learners; additionally, I have realised my identity is to challenge appropriately. I value keeping disruptive students inside the classroom and managing their behaviour by using non-verbal techniques such as making eye contact with students and pointing out visual displays of classroom expectations. I also value using inclusive differentiation to engage and challenge all students.

References:

- Anon (2019) Why we need to ditch differentiation. *Tes.* [blog] 09 June.
- Bartlett, J (2016) *Outstanding Differentiation for Learning in the Classroom.* [e-book] Taylor & Francis Group. (pp.5)
- Birmingham City University (2018) *Block B Placements, Professional and Subject Mentor Briefing.* [pdf] (pp. 12).
- Brevik, Lisbeth M., Gunnulfsen, A and Renzulli, J (2018) *Student teachers' practice and experience with differentiated instruction for students with higher learning potential*. [e-book] Teaching and Teacher Education, 71. (pp. 34)
- British Educational Research Association (2018, 4th Ed.) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. (pp. 33)
- Considine, M cited in Ball, S (2008) *The Education Debate.* [e-book] Bristol: The Policy Press. (pp. 7).
- Cooper, K., & Olson, M. R (1996). The multiple &I's' of teacher identity. In M. Kompf, W. R. Bond, D. Dworet, & R. T. Boak, Changing research and practice: Teachers+ professionalism, identities and knowledge. London: Falmer Press (pp.80).
- Department for Education (2011) *Teachers' Standards [*pdf] Available from gov.uk.
- Fordham, M. (2017) Are the Teachers' Standards fit for purpose? *Clio et cetera.* [blog] 17 December.
- Harju, A and Åkerblom, A (2017) Colliding collaboration in student-centred learning in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42:8, (pp.1533)
- Hatton, N (2009) The labelling effect: drama, mental health and learning disability. The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance. Routledge. (pp 92-94)
- McAteer, M., Hallett and F. Murtagh, L (2010) *Achieving your Masters in Teaching and Learning.* [e-book] Exeter: Learning Matters.
- Myatt, M (2017) Why it's unhelpful to put limits on children's learning. *Mary Myatt.* [blog] 12 April.
- Oruç, N (2013) Early Teacher Identity Development in Procedia- Social and Behavioural Sciences 70 (pp.208)

- Peacock, A (2016) Learning without Limits. TEDx. YouTube video.
- Richards, J. C., and Farrell, T. S. C cited in Joshi, K (2018) Critical Incidents for Teachers' Professional Development. *Journal of NELTA Surkhet.* Vol (5) (pp. 83).
- Sullivan, A (2016) Schools' tough approach to bad behaviour isn't working – and may escalate problems. *The Conversation.* [blog] 26 May.
- Talbot, D (2016) How useful are standards in helping teachers' professional development. *EduResearchMatters.* [blog] 5 December.
- Taylor, S (2017) Contested Knowledge: A Critical Review of the Concept of Differentiation in Teaching and Learning. *Warwick Journal of Education- Transforming Teaching,* Volume (1). (pp. 55)
- Tripp, D cited in Joshi, K (2018) Critical Incidents for Teachers' Professional Development. *Journal of NELTA Surkhet.* Vol (5) (pp. 82).
- Wiliam, D (2018) *Dylan Wiliam talks… inclusive differentiation.* YouTube video.
- Windsor Academy Trust (2017) *Behaviour and Discipline Policy* [pdf] (pp. 3)

Bibliography:

- Ayers, D (2017) Critical Incident in Teaching. [pdf] University of East London.
- Bell, J (2010) Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science. Open University Press.
- Department for Education (2011) Teachers' Standards Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies [pdf] (pp.3)
- Farnsworth, V. and Solomon, Y (2013) Reframing educational research: Resisting the 'what works' agenda. Routledge.
- Joshi, K (2018) Critical Incidents for Teachers' Professional Development. Journal of NELTA Surkhet. Vol (5)
- McGrath, J. and Coles, A (2013) Your Education Research Project Companion. Taylor & Francis.

Economies of Performance, Ecologies of Practice and Communities of Discovery: A collaborative approach to supporting Newly Qualified Teachers and their teacher identity

Dr. Chris Bolton – Senior Lecturer in Secondary Drama Education

Demonstrating and exploring collaboratively how new teachers in the teaching profession can develop and sustain their emerging identities and practice has been an on-going, troubling and complex problem facing many newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and academics working in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) alike. Supporting NQTs beyond their university training, and their subsequent, on-going identity formation in the profession, offers opportunities to develop meaningful and lasting cross-sector 'communities of discovery' (Coffield & Williamson, 2011). However, these opportunities can create complex problems, particularly around how this might happen in reality, particularly when considering the tension between 'economies of performance' and various 'ecologies of practice' defined by Stronach *et al* (2002). This article begins to explore and demonstrate the impact of one approach that Birmingham City University and Big Brum Theatre in Education Company[1] have collaboratively undertaken to support drama NQTs and drama teachers.

Our community of discovery has been evolving since 2014 and includes NQTs, drama teachers studying for a Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL), drama teachers with an interest in our work generally, and school leaders and theatre professionals more widely. This cross-sector melting point of ideas and thinking has proven a useful crucible for stirring knowledge around collaboratively as each member seeks to understand their personal perceptions of teaching and learning, cultural experiences of education and understanding of their professional contexts within their practice. What unifies this community is their goal of genuinely supporting each other's development by taking ownership of their professional development. Alongside the development of professional knowledge, this unity influences the development of NQTs' identity, as they become competent and

[1] Big Brum, formed in 1982, facilitates Theatre-in-Education programmes and community projects for young people across the West Midlands and Internationally. https://www.bigbrum.org.uk/

confident teacher-researchers. This can only be a good thing, in that as NQTs become more assured of their professional identity they take more ownership of their own development.

Recently, the community have considered The Department for Education's (2019) 'Early Career Framework' (ECF), which seeks to establish how NQTs 'should' be supported, what they 'should' learn and 'how' to develop. This framework adds further complexity for schools, ITE providers and NQTs when looking to develop on-going and meaningful professional development. Exploring the philosophical and theoretical foundations of teaching, teachers' identities, and how these might manifest in practice has revealed an on-going tension between how performance is measured and audited whilst questioning the dispositions and commitment of NQTs in particular. For example, standard 8 of the ECF seen below in *figure 1* sets out the types of professional behaviours expected when supporting NQTs. This raises initial questions about how these 'behaviours' can be measured and/ or assessed but more importantly what impact these expectations might have on teacher identity specifically.

Professional Behaviours (Standard 8 – Fulfil wider professional responsibilities)	
Learn that…	Learn how to…
Effective professional development is likely to be sustained over time, involve expert support or coaching and opportunities for collaboration. Reflective practice, supported by feedback from and observation of experienced colleagues, professional debate, and learning from educational research, is also likely to support improvement. Teachers can make valuable contributions to the wider life of the school in a broad range of ways, including by supporting and developing effective professional relationships with colleagues. Building effective relationships with parents, carers and families can improve pupils' motivation, behaviour and academic success. Engaging in high-quality professional development can help teachers improve.	Develop as a professional, by: Engaging in professional development focused on developing an area of practice with clear intentions for impact on pupil outcomes, sustained over time with built-in opportunities for practice. Strengthening pedagogical and subject knowledge by participating in wider networks. Seeking challenge, feedback and critique from mentors and other colleagues in an open and trusting working environment. Engaging critically with research and discussing evidence with colleagues. Reflecting on progress made, recognising strengths and weaknesses and identifying next steps for further improvement. Build effective working relationships, by: Contributing positively to the wider school culture and developing a feeling of shared responsibility for improving the lives of all pupils within the school. Seeking ways to support individual colleagues and working as part of a team.

Table 1- Adapted from The Early Career Framework, DfE (2019:24-5)

For our community of practice, facilitating the development of new drama teachers as artful, risk-taking and research-informed practitioners within this framework faces specific challenges. These challenges, such as sustaining development over time, are further troubled when considering notions of professional teacher identity. Stronach's *et al* (2002) research into the nature of teacher professionalism provides a useful space for some of these considerations.

Research exploring new teacher identity formation can be seen in the work of Cooper and Olson (1996), Olsen (2008) and Oruç (2013). However, the idea of the professional as a teacher is, what Stronach *et al.* (2002: 2) call, "an indefensibly unitary construct" and that conceptually this construct "… is already too much of a generalisation". Creating views of 'teacher' identity may therefore involve conceptual thinking that is "typified, staged and judged" (*ibid)*, something that the ECF risks doing in terms of individual teacher development. This is an important consideration to make here. Not only might new drama teachers be thinking about their own professional identity construction in these ways: through the collation of evidence, practice in the classroom and integration into the life of a school, but so too might university tutors, like myself, and school-based mentors. Our role, to assure the progress of new teachers, and support their professional practice through the approaches and policies of ITE might also have to shift more fundamentally beyond what can be judged easily. Understandably, the various agents involved in the construction of new professional teacher identities, require a method of tracking development and may do this through various professional practices and be guided by education policies, or not.

For Stronach *et al* (2002: 3) this approach to developing views of teacher professionalism and the role of the teacher trainer within it demonstrate a far too simplistic and crude view of that development. Here they argue that a result from the relationship between an "economy of performance (manifestations broadly of the audit culture) and various 'ecologies of practice' (professional dispositions and commitments individually and collectively engendered)" can manifest. In other words, the instruments that are used to audit and monitor the progression of professional teacher identities are often imprecise and fail to notice the subtleties and nuance of identity formation. Using economies of performance without thinking about the ecology of professional identity formation, the relationships within it and the effect of those relationships on identity formation can therefore

fail to register or acknowledge the organic formation of identity over time. However, developing a genuine community of discovery is one approach to recognising this.

New drama teachers' professional identity formation may, as explored by our community of discovery, involve the stitching together of a number of elements, which are almost inevitably not linear, sequential or tangible nor are they typified, staged or judged. Professional development in this sense is much more subtle and organic, particularly if NQTs, drama teachers and theatre professionals are developing aspects of their teacher-ness. This is something recognised by Stronach *et al*. (2002: 3) in that "…the question of 'professionalism' is bound up in the discursive dynamics of professionals attempting to address or redress the dilemmas of the job".

Personally, and when considering my own role as a professional lecturer in ITE, I am mindful that the idea, or ideal of, being a 'drama teacher' is not constructed, promoted or celebrated. Being mindful of this enables me to resist the construction of a professional drama teacher as an "emblematic figure" (Stronach *et al*. 2002: 3). This is a useful consideration to make in the context of our community of discovery where I am seeking to explore how my own identity can affect the formation of new drama teachers' identities through my own practice. At the same time, individual NQTs and drama teachers are seeking to explore how their practice affects their identity.

The same could be true of subject mentors working in schools as they seek to support, develop and challenge the emerging practice of new drama teachers. Resisting an emblematic figured approach to the formation of drama teacher identity also challenges and disrupts the idea of the professional as "… an expression of the zeitgeist" (*ibid.*), which is something that I believe should be opposed. Stronach *el al*. (2002: 25) suggest that "…professionals do not conduct their practices in the 'real' so much as they traffic between the twin abstractions of the ideal…and the unrealised". Again, this is a useful consideration when thinking about my professional role in this process, which is further complicated when considering that "the professional constructed in the literature is the alter ego of the author, who after all is almost always a professional working professionally to construct 'the profession'" (2002: 4).

Through our community of discovery we have learned to be mindful that the construction of NQT or drama teacher identities are not formulated based upon an idealistic view of that identity, nor based upon an idealised view of what a drama teacher 'should' or 'need' be. The risk of doing so, and enforcing one's own views of drama teacher identity might prevent the personal and professional growth of those entering the profession.

Through the community of discovery, we have explored how identity and practice has, and continues to, be shaped, challenged and affirmed by NQTs' entry to the teaching profession in England. This process has led me personally, as a university lecturer, to question my complicit role within the system of ITE. The exploration of new teacher identity and pedagogy takes an oppositional space to the quick-fix-disco-finger techniques promoted by educationalists such as Lemov (2015). The professional development in our community of discovery is a slow, developmental and organic process. However, it is acknowledged that there are particular challenges to this process from economies of performance and the auditing culture that frames education more generally. By becoming aware of shifting and emerging identities and by focussing on the meaning of teaching and learning in a pedagogical sense, the community of discovery values less the measurement and comparison of practice with others and questions instead how professional identities can affect new drama teachers to create their own. Can new drama teachers learn that the value of their practice and the formation of their teacher identity can be a learning process for all involved rather than it being an outcome-driven product that is measured? Whilst it is acknowledged that competition, results, assessment and Ofsted create for schools and teachers, what Ball *et al* (2012: 514) call a "performance culture", we argue, through our community, that a stronger valuing of the artistic and artful approaches and processes of learning about identity and pedagogy is fundamental. By doing this, particularly for new drama teachers, it may not only meet the requirements of a performative culture but also, more importantly, have a longer lasting, deeper and more affective impact for both new drama teachers and, in turn, their pupils.

The community has conducted researched practice using various research methodologies and methods. The results of these approaches can be seen in various pieces of research; from "Fearriculum: An analysis of pedagogical choice and change made by secondary level educators" and "The Pied Piper and the Flipped Curriculum: a case study" to "Tell it to them? Straight? - A Study of the concerns of LGBTQ secondary school teachers in the workplace". The research demonstrates how through our community, new drama teachers have engaged with critical reflection, by engaging in high-quality professional development to improve. Furthermore, not only have new drama teachers strengthened their "pedagogical and subject knowledge by participating in wider networks" (DfE, 2019: 24) but they have also engaged critically with research and discussed the evidence, of their own research and that of others, with their school-based colleagues. This positive contribution to

the wider school culture has developed ownership and responsibility for improving the lives of all pupils within schools and thus serves as a way to meet the requirements of the ECF. More than this, by re-identifying as teacher-researchers, the community members have demonstrated how the requirements of an economy of performance can be achieved through considerations and research about their ecologies of practice.

References:

- Ball, S.J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., Perryman, J., & Hoskins, K. (2012) *Assessment Technologies in Schools: 'Deliverology' and the 'play of dominations'*. Research Papers in Education, 27:5, 513-53
- Coffield, F. & Williamson, B., (2011). *From Exam Factories to Communities of Discovery: The Democratic Route*. London: IOE Press
- Cooper, K., & Olson, M. R. (1996). *The multiple &I's' of teacher identity*. In M. Kompf, W. R. Bond, D. Dworet, & R. T. Boak, *Changing research and practice: Teachers+ professionalism, identities and knowledge*. London: Falmer Press
- Department for Education, (2019). *Early Career Framework (ECF)*. London: Crown Publishers. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-early-career-teachers [Accessed 14.05.2020]
- Lemov, D., (2nd Ed) (2015) *Teach like a Champion 2.0: 62 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers
- Olsen, B., (2008) *How reasons for entry into the profession illuminate teacher identity development.* Teacher education quarterly, 35(3), 23-40. Available at www.jstor.org/stable/23478979 [Accessed 18.04.18]
- Oruç, N., (2013) *Early Teacher Identity Development* in Procedia- Social and Behavioural Sciences 70 (2013) 207-212
- Stronachs, I., Corbin, B., Mcnamara, O., Stark, S., & Warne, T. (2002) *Towards an Uncertain Politics of Professionalism: Teacher and Nurse Identities in flux*. Journal of Education Policy 17(1). Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/27398337_Towards_an_Uncertain_Politics_of_Professionalism_Teacher_and_Nurse_Identities_in_Flux [Accessed 11.03.2020]

Think POSH and use SPACE:
A Reflective Curriculum Development Model

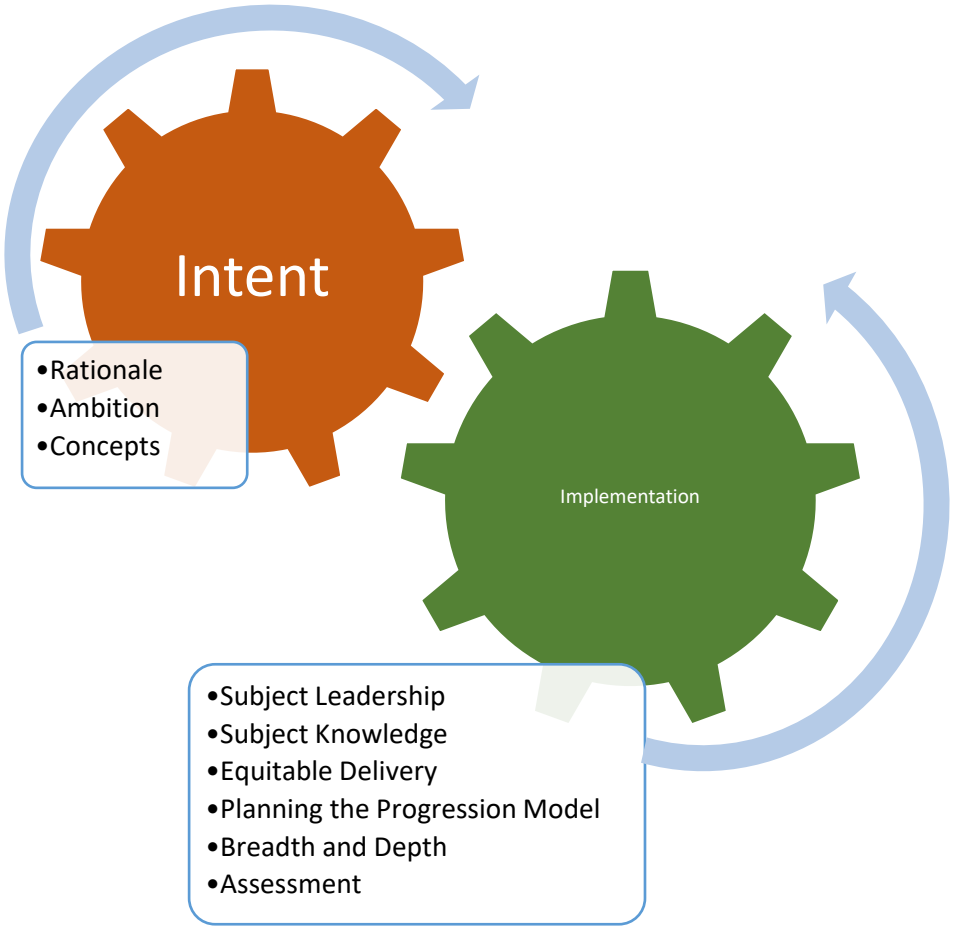
Grant Huddleston - Course Leader for BA/BSc Secondary Education QTS

Introduction

This article is a development of a publication from the Association of Physical Education's 'Physical Education Matters' journal (Huddleston and Whitehouse, 2020) and condensed for this publication.

With Ofsted (2018) publishing their findings into how to assess the quality of education, they coined the phrase that schools and educators are currently using regarding their curriculum offer: "Intent, Implementation and Impact". They highlighted 26 indicators (Ofsted, 2018, p8) that would demonstrate what would make an effective curriculum, followed by a series of "predictors" (see below), that linked with a school's intention and implementation of a quality curriculum (Ofsted, 2018, p21).

Predictors



Based upon this, these indicators would form the basis for what Ofsted would use, when visiting schools to determine the effectiveness of their school curriculum. Schools have since created intention documents justifying the decisions of their

curriculum. Whilst it is worth noting that Ofsted do not ask or request these documents from schools (Ofsted, 2019), it does however initiate a thought process towards a school's curriculum and whether it can be underpinned by educational theory and evidence. I believe there is no such thing as a 'perfect' curriculum. Whilst Ofsted have created these indicators, one school's offer can be very different from another's for numerous reasons. Staffing, facilities, resources, location, pupils and personal philosophy are just some of the factors that can influence the kind of curriculum a school offers. Therefore, a school must create a curriculum that is effective specifically for their school, with quality also being contextualised in cultural, social and institutional terms.

This article aims to help create a reflective model for school/subject leaders to assist with writing their curriculum offer. Whilst using this model, a beneficial approach for leaders to reflect and question their curriculum design is to utilise the poem by Kipling (1902). Kipling's "six honest men" of '*What, Who, Where, When, Why, and How*' can be used to manufacture questions surrounding what schools currently offer and could do to improve their offer. Asking questions of your school will help drive any necessary changes and help answer what changes could be made.

Thinking POSH

- *Philosophy*

In order to create an effective curriculum, it is important that leaders acknowledge and understand your philosophy. Whether this is your philosophy as a leader or as a subject, it is vital that it matches the philosophy of your school. Your philosophy will be underpinned by what you see as effective teaching and learning and can be completely contextual to your school's circumstances/environment. Your curriculum intention and implementation will strongly be aligned with your philosophy.

- *Outcomes*

Your curriculum must have projected outcomes – the impact. What is it you want them to achieve by the time they complete this curriculum? This will be influenced strongly by your guiding philosophy, but also by your use of SPACE (see below). This will be the impact of your curriculum offer.

- *Stakeholders*

Who is involved in the realisation of this curriculum? Do they have the skills and the shared vison and drive to accomplish this curriculum? Who will check that it is effective?

- *Holistic*

Finally, does your curriculum promote positive, holistic development? Does it promote social, cognitive, affective and physical skills? Does it promote positive wellbeing to the pupils? How do you know this? Are pupils' literacy and numeracy skills promoted across subjects? It is important to consider this, as it will affect your intent, the way you implement your intent and the impact you aim to achieve.

Once you have considered the above, you can now begin looking at your subject-specific curriculum.

Using SPACE

- *Specifics*

Within your curriculum offer, what specifics or context do you need to consider? This could include numerous factors, such as staffing to realise your vision, facilities available, equipment/resources, and the pupil's needs. It also gives you the scope to discover what continual professional development could be needed amongst your staff.

- *Pedagogy*

What will be your pedagogical approach to realising your curriculum? This will be strongly linked to your philosophy and what you intend to achieve. Do all staff understand different approaches available and can they realise these? Will you signpost specific pedagogies to use or are you leaving that to be flexible for the group/teacher? Does the pedagogy produce holistic learning and promote positive wellbeing? How much responsibility is given to the learner? How will you be inclusive or differentiate teaching and learning?

- *Assessment*

How, when and why will you assess your pupils? Does the model of assessment match up with your school assessment policy? Is the assessment model valid and reliable? Is it manageable for staff? How will you review assessment and who will do it?

- *Curriculum*

What activities/topics are you offering and why and how will offer these? Does it cover all areas of your National curriculum? How does it promote progress across year groups? What resources are required?

- *Extra-Curricular*

What learning is taking place outside of lesson time? Do they align with curriculum activities? Are you able to link your school to other clubs or organisations? Who takes responsibility for overseeing extra-curricular learning?

References:

- Huddleston, G. and Whitehouse, A. (2020) Reflecting on Your Curriculum: Using Space as a Reflective Framework. Physical Education Matters, 15 (2), 13-15.
- Kipling, R. (1902) I Keep Six Honest Serving Men. Available at: https://qualityisking.co.uk/2018/03/using-six-honest-serving-men-as-a-problem-analysis-tool/
- Ofsted (2018) An investigation into how to assess the quality of education through curriculum intent, implementation and impact. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766252/How_to_assess_intent_and_implementation_of_curriculum_191218.pdf
- Ofsted (2019) Busting the 'intent' myth. Available at: https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/01/busting-the-intent-myth/

The Rise of the ‘Tweecher’

The role of ITE providers in supporting trainee teachers to create and maintain a professional online identity

Kelly Davey Nicklin – PGCE Secondary Course Leader

It is no secret that many teachers, lecturers and academics use Twitter. A quick perusing of what is currently trending shows that somewhere in the world a set of educators are Tweeting about an educational issue. At the time of writing #SLTChat and #LearningFirst are currently trending (with the number of Tweets going into the thousands) – education has a strong presence on Twitter and it is not likely to go away anytime soon. Twitter has become a much needed source of free CPD for teachers across the country, most notably for isolated teachers who find that they are the sole teacher of their subject in their school (my own subject, music, is a good example). “Spare time” for a teacher to engage in meaningful CPD or just to communicate and share ideas with fellow teachers is as rare as a welcome Ofsted inspection. Therefore, it is no wonder that many teachers are using Twitter (and other social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn) to connect and collaborate with other teaching professionals. Stoller (2015) identifies that "in what perhaps could be considered a true definition of lifelong learning, social media services create opportune locales for learning, teaching, and engagement that are imbued with community-generated creativity." For trainee teachers in particular, Twitter can offer a ‘community of practice’ (Wenger, 1998) in which trainees are ‘legitimate peripheral participators’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as newcomers to the profession, learning from existing masters (teachers and education professionals) and developing into full participants as their own teaching career is established.

This year I have experimented with the use of social media to support teaching and learning on the PGCE (Post-Graduate Certificate in Education) Secondary and Post-Compulsory courses that I work with in my current role. This mostly involved using Twitter to get trainee teachers collaborating and networking with other professionals in their sector as well as using Twitter to support the teaching and learning taking place during university-based sessions. Overall, this has worked very successfully and I will be looking to further embed the use of social media next year but with a greater focus on supporting trainees to create and maintain their professional online identities.

In the early days of Facebook (launched 2004), there were many horror stories shared about teachers’ inappropriate use of social media. No policies existed for the use of such media because it was so new. Unfortunately, some teachers learned the hard way and jobs (or worse) were lost because of the posting of inappropriate photos or comments that made their way into the public domain (a quick Google search will provide many of these horror stories for you). As a result, teachers were warned off using social media and engaging in its use was considered a very risky pastime.

However, in the last decade, social media users (but certainly not all!) have become wiser to the dangers of social media and institutional policies and users own personal knowledge of online security is more prevalent. Trainees still need guidance in understanding what is appropriate in regards to their use of social media as for some it will be the first time that they have considered using social media for professional purposes. I still remind my trainees that if their Facebook profile resembles that of a cast member of ‘Geordie Shore’* then perhaps they need have a think about what impression their online profile is giving to others and what potential employers, parents, and pupils might think.

Most trainees that I encountered this year had not considered using social media to support their learning or their professional careers and for some this was actually an alarming prospect. Beetham and Sharpe comment that “digital technologies are blurring the boundaries between public and private, crossing formal and informal practices and shifting the ground for learners as they negotiate multiple identities in hybrid spaces" (2013:14). Most trainees who already used social media set up separate accounts for professional use and this was encouraged by course tutors. Jones et al (2016) suggest that “participation in social media may present challenges through mixing of professional and personal posts damaging trust or carelessness damaging confidentiality” (2016:1639).

Many of my trainees this year did already have social media accounts with Facebook and/or Twitter (and all had engaged with social media in some way) and this is not surprising. The Office for National Statistics states that "77 percent of households have internet access, but the modes of access are changing with 45 percent of users having access to the internet from a mobile phone. For the 16-24-year old group, social networking is the main online activity" (2011 cited by Beetham & Sharpe, 2013:4).

The majority of the trainees on the PGCE courses that I support fall into the 16-24 category (the latter end, of course) and although trainees might be familiar with using social media, many may not have used it in a professional capacity before. For this reason, along with the proven benefits that the use of social media can have for teachers I propose that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers should include the creation and maintenance of a professional online identify as part of their training programmes and curriculum.

Support in creating an online identity has been researched in other professional public sectors, most notably nursing. Jones et al (2016) recently wrote a journal article about introducing Twitter into an undergraduate nursing curriculum. There were many parallels to be drawn between supporting trainee nurses and teachers. Jones et all (2016) comment that "nurses need to know how to behave professionally online, including use of social media such as Twitter. They need to take advantage of online learning opportunities while avoiding pitfalls" (2016:1639). This equally applies to trainee teachers.

My own personal use of Twitter has enabled me to network with other teacher educators across the globe and I was intrigued to come across the work of Dr Narelle Lemon who has recently researched the use of Twitter in teacher education in Australia. Lemon (2014) outlines the impact that the use of Twitter had on the professional online identities and social media use of 'preservice teachers':

> "There was a significant shift in online profiles and how the preservice teachers built and portrayed personal and professional identities. The interaction with Twitter was the first time that all the preservice teachers had considered a social media for professional networking and personal learning. They were encouraged to critically think about their profiles, content, and the people with whom they connected"
>
> (Lemon, 2014:544-546).

As well as educating trainee teachers in how to create a professional online identity, the maintenance and development of that identity is equally important. As teachers progress through their careers, their teacher identity is likely to evolve over time and therefore their online identity will need to reflect this. Richardson and Aslup comment that "professional teacher identity is not something that is created once and for all and never changed; to the contrary, the conception of teacher self-changes over a professional lifetime as a teacher gains experience in different contexts and develops new personal interests and passions" (2015:151). A professional online identify is also not restricted to the use of social media – interaction of any kind via the internet can leave a 'digital footprint' (University of Edinburgh, 2015) and trainee teachers need to be aware of how this might affect their future professional careers.

The use of social media in the context of teacher education is still a much under researched area but as more teachers and educators take to using social media for professional use and more 'digital natives' embark upon teacher training programmes, the need for supporting the professional use of social media in an ever-developing digital age will become more and more essential.

** 'Geordie Shore' is a reality TV programme produced by MTV which follows the lives of a group of twentysomethings in Newcastle.*

References

- Beetham, H. & Sharpe, R. (2013) (eds) Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age, 2nd Ed. Oxon: Routledge
- Jones, R., Kelsey, J., Nelmes, P., Chinn, N., Chinn, T., Proctor-Childs, T. (2016) Introducing Twitter as an assessed component of the undergraduate nursing curriculum: case study. Journal of Advanced Nursing 72(7). Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.bcu.ac.uk/doi/10.1111/jan.12935/epdf [Accessed 22nd June 2016]
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Lemon, N. (2014) Twitter and Teacher Education: Exploring Teacher, Social, and Cognitive Presence in Professional Use of Social Media. Teacher Education and Practice, 27 (4), Fall 2014
- Richardson, J. & Alsup, J. (2015) From the Classroom to the Keyboard: How Seven Teachers Created Their Online Teacher Identities. International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning.
- 16 (1). Available at: http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/1814/3253 [Accessed 2nd June 2016]
- Stoller, E. (2015) Why educators can't live without social media. Jisc News (Inform Feature) Accessible at: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/why-educators-need-social-media-07-jul-

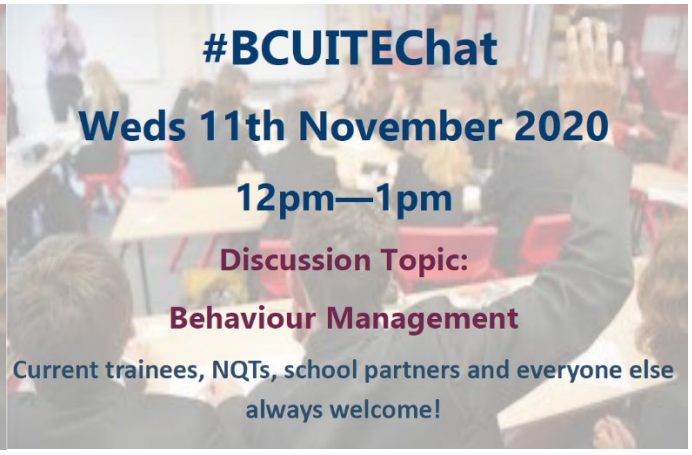
2015?utm_content=buffer7e866&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer [Accessed 12th May 2016]

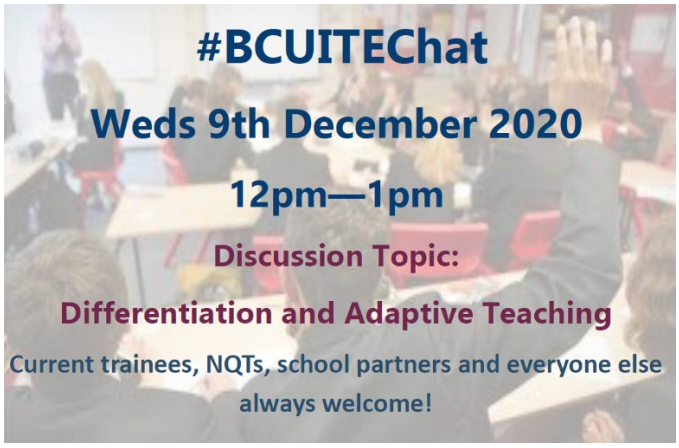
- University of Edinburgh (2015) Managing Your Digital Footprint. Available at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/about-us/projects/digital-footprint [Accessed 5th June 2016]
- Wenger, E. (1998) Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Interested in engaging in EduTwitter and the BCU ITE Chat?

Follow the @BCUITEChat Twitter handle and look out for our future chats…

Previous ***@BCUITEChat*** discussion topics:





The Gordian Knot of Teaching: Lockdown

Jessica Murtagh - Teacher of English and Year 9 Progress Leader at King Edward VI Academy, Spilsby, Lincolnshire.

Somewhat like Captain James T. Kirk of Star Trek fame, I also don't believe in the no-win scenario. Not that I would be willing to cheat, as he was when asked to participate in the *Kobayashi Maru*, but I believe that if one is willing to 'try almost anything going and then some' there are no impossible situations. My beliefs are currently being tested to the utmost level during this current incarnation of the lockdown, but the lessons learned through application of my 'try almost everything going and then some' maxim during the summer term lockdown are seeing me through this one; just.

Lockdown teaching in April and May was a once-in-a-lifetime nightmare scenario for most teachers, particularly those of us who had been members of the profession for a mere matter of months and lacked the storm-weathering previous experiences of our longer-serving comrades. However, we girded our loins and cracked on, learning how to use our Internet teaching platforms with panache. Our school leadership expectations differed right across the country, and even town to town: I was encouraged to telephone my students and their parents directly and spoke with each student every month, however, others of my TeachFirst cohort just around the corner were only allowed email contact at best. Our one uniting task was the Gordian knot of providing quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum over the Internet.

Sounds simple. My primary school teaching brother in law would send me regular photo updates of him sitting in the garden with a glass of something suspiciously alcoholic-looking at half past two on a Tuesday and told me it was. My own sister whispered something suspiciously like teachers being lucky to have another one of their extended holidays. Only I knew the truth: this was harder and more complex than most of the country realised.

The lynchpin of high quality teaching is the teacher, and when students have limited access to a teacher, learning is impeded. On a regular school day, students arrive at high school and have hourly access to professional specialists sharing carefully crafted learning opportunities face-to-face. During the lockdown, the students' access to their teacher was dependent on a whole host of perfect scenarios which I have yet to see co-existing in a normal lockdown family: a quiet place to work, a working laptop or computer, personal time dedicated to working without interruptions, a functional internet connection, and, the one factor I could partially control at least: lessons provided via an easily understood and accessible medium with an expert available to ask for help when inevitably needed.

The average locked-down child of my acquaintance had shared laptops at best and I would regularly find students having to use the only laptop in the home after their parents or other siblings had finished work for the day. With all of their family locked down together, the interruptions were myriad. The vast majority were stuck indoors all day long in small, claustrophobic houses with many siblings for constant company on a seriously reduced income. Resources were scarce. My phone calls to students were often hijacked by parents needing to emotionally vent and the counselling element of my job doubled every week the lockdown continued.

My school chose as its learning platform the ubiquitous and easy to set up and navigate Google Classroom. Free of charge and glamour free, it is the pared-back base model of the online classroom. Students join classrooms with an invitation to a student email address or classroom code and lessons are provided by way of scheduled 'assignments'. Work can be 'turned in' in creative ways, with attached photos of written work the norm in my classrooms. Of course, this is the beginner model of online learning, with no integrated 'live' or 'recorded' lessons possible, and links sending the learner out onto the internet, often never to return that day. Much, much, much work was frustratingly lost through user error or internet connectivity, even when using Google Docs as the preferred medium. Our school provided paper learning packs, quickly produced by heads of department, photocopied by long-suffering support staff and devotedly delivered by our assistant headteachers every month. Yet, still there were many students who arrived in September, having had only a passing acquaintance with any form of education for the past six months. The system still had chinks, despite the weekly welfare phone calls to every single student and family. Students could get away without working for weeks as, with over 100 students to chase up, as well as producing and then marking work for lessons and answering roughly 20 emails an hour asking for help, keeping on top of the errant minority dropped clean off the radar in all but the GCSE groups on busy weeks.

Our current online teaching has vastly improved since these bad-old-days. We now have Teams set up, with all homework set on Teams, all lessons posted on Teams, including 'live' recordings of lessons for isolating students to interact with at home. Having streamlined our approach, marking and chasing up errant workers is much easier and supported. Our only problem is that we are

trying to carry out this behemoth task while undertaking lockdown teaching within schools as well. We race between parts of the school where bubbles of students sit and wait for us, using IT which varies widely between buildings, and being asked to undertake an increased level of supervision of sanitary arrangements and behaviour. The Gordian knot has now been re-imposed upon us during our newly enlarged job responsibilities: and the teachers are suffering.

I have yet to meet a teacher who is not exhausted most of the time. If anyone is making money at the moment, it's the cosmetic companies selling superpower under-eye concealer of which I go through bucket loads. With masks and visors, malfunctioning IT and stir-crazy students, our lives are one big merry-go-round of online and offline teaching now fused into one. The big losers during 2020 are the teachers: we may not have lost our jobs, but our current workload levels are teetering on the cliff's edge.

Our pressures are new and frightening. Somewhat like Alexander the Great, we are trying to conquer the vast continent of Asia with a fatigued army behind us. We walk up to the knot with our own knotted stomach - and when I say 'walk, what I mean is 'drag my superloaded trolley that I carry around school with me including visualiser for recording 'live' lessons for isolators, the contents of my desk which is no longer mine, and all of my teaching resources for 5 very different classes every day'. We consider whether we will have time to mark the work from students waiting on Teams for us as we cannot touch their exercise books anymore and need proof of progress and learning before we collapse in bed at midnight. We have endless Teams meetings with colleagues and a seemingly increasing number of CPD events. Our PPA hours are spent wrestling with Teams, trying time and again to decrease the size of the knot, until, like Alexander, we want to take out our swords and give it a few thwacks and have done. Or maybe that's just me.

However, the constraints of the problem of bringing high quality teaching to the students brings me back again the next day and the next day and the next. Why? I'm willing to try almost anything going and then some to reach my students. They are what matter. Their progress and ability to reach their ambitions. And that goal makes me feel just like Henry V of whom it was said: 'Turn to him any cause of policy/The Gordian knot of it he will unloose/ Familiar as his garter'.

Online teaching is maybe not a garter, but a bedfellow at least. And I will always try again to master it. Because of the students. They're why I'm a teacher in the first place, after all.

Expanding Low-Ability Students Vocabulary via Vygotsky's Principles

Jasmin Gill – Secondary English Teacher, Kingsthorpe College

The importance of acquiring a vast vocabulary.

Vocabulary comprehension is significant because a rich lexicon contributes to students' overall academic achievement (Townsend and Collins, 2008). Access to a wide range of vocabulary also increases student collaboration, independent learning and academic confidence thus highlighting the holistic effect that overcoming this conceptual challenge could have on a child's education (Lesaux et al., 2012). Furthermore, I believe that vocabulary acquisition is important for students in order to gain the wide repertoire of language required to communicate their ideas, opinions and emotions coherently in later adult life. Vocabulary acquisition is particularly challenging for low-ability students as research suggests that underperforming settings require significantly more support when developing vocabulary (Lesaux et al., 2012). This is unsurprising as reading is more challenging for children who possess limited vocabulary skills because comprehension requires expending cognitive effort on simultaneously decoding a word whilst trying to decipher its meaning (Wasik and Hindman, 2018). In turn, this raises the following concerns: children who have difficulty with reading typically struggle in school and are more likely to underachieve whilst a disproportionate number of children with limited vocabulary skills are in poverty (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; Morgan et al., 2011). The multitude of negative consequences correlated with a limited vocabulary emphasises the necessity of addressing this conceptual challenge.

Using Vygotsky's Social Constructivist principles to address limited vocabulary.

Power of Language

Vygotsky (1962) suggests that language is required to transmit knowledge from the outside world to individuals who can then internalise it and incorporate the knowledge into their own framework of understanding. As mentioned previously, I believe that the study of English should equip students to develop into aware and knowledgeable adults. Therefore, providing students with an extensive vocabulary allows them to enrich their views about the world and communicate their ideas articulately during their school life and beyond.

Social Interaction

Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) proposes that a child's learning occurs via social interaction with a more knowledgeable other. This emphasises the pinnacle role of teachers and peers within the learning process. It is on this basis that I endeavour to maintain a high standard of vocabulary within my classroom, ensuring that any words used that are likely to be unfamiliar to students are then explained and reused in different contexts to allow students to assimilate the language. For example, I often use the word 'imperative' within lessons; at first, the students questioned the meaning but after receiving an initial definition alongside reusing the word in other contexts, students have grasped the meaning. Vygotsky (1962) emphasises that it is important to provide definitions and not rely on context cues because knowing a word without meaning means knowing nothing but an empty sound.

Moreover, in line with the social constructivist approach to learning, research suggests that providing students with opportunities to communicate is critical in supporting their lexicon development (Cabell et al., 2015). Interestingly, this pedagogy aligns with my view that students should develop the communication skills to navigate within a dynamic, social world. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to engage in back-and-forth conversations with linguistically competent adults and peers (Justice et al., 2018). This directly contradicts a didactic approach to teaching which has come under scrutiny for the passive role that students play in their learning (Shaffer and Small, 2004). Although lecturing remains a popular didactic method preferred by many renowned higher education institutions, I believe that such method is inappropriate for teaching a low-ability key stage three class (Albaradie, 2018). The didactic method directly contradicts my values for English teaching because students play a passive role in their education and are not encouraged to practise the skills to communicate their ideas and question the world around them – students are solely expected to absorb information. Moreover, I have previously employed a mini-lecture technique within

lessons, however observations demonstrated that students lack the attention span and ability to capture the most relevant information during a session of didactic teaching. I have noticed that students respond better to interactive lessons and therefore I will be adopting a social constructivist approach to my scheme of learning in an attempt to gain maximum engagement from students.

In line with Vygotsky's theory that students learn via social interaction, I have developed a seating plan that allows students to cultivate skills via interacting with peers; tables are mixed ability and students with special educational needs or EAL learners have been placed beside peers who are able to support them. Learning is significantly enhanced when the classroom atmosphere is co-operative thus students are encouraged to support and guide each other when necessary (Khaliliaqdam, 2014).

Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Another important premise of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory that will be embedded within this scheme of learning is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is defined as the level of development that a child can achieve beyond their unassisted efforts via guided collaboration with more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976). Vygotsky (1978) asserts that ZPD is an essential feature of learning and it has been suggested that a child's ZPD ability may be more indicative of their mental development than what they can achieve independently (Pollard, 2002).

Following this, Vygotsky's ideas are at the heart of Wood et al.'s (1976) notion of scaffolding. Scaffolding occurs when the more knowledgeable other provides assistance to aid students in completing a task beyond their independent ability (Shabani et al., 2010). An extensive review of scaffolding research concluded that scaffolds should be adjusted to slightly above what a learner can do autonomously to ensure that they are developing their skills and ability (Van de Pol et al., 2010). Therefore, I will support students to work within their ZPD by scaffolding activities to ensure that the knowledge is stretching and challenging but accessible with guidance. Research suggests that if students feel supported to improve their academic proficiency and can see their ability improving then they will be more motivated to continue to develop such skills (Lesaux et al., 2012). This highlights that scaffolding support may not only enhance students understanding of sophisticated vocabulary but may also motivate them to continue to develop their lexicon independently. Scaffolding is especially important as research corroborates that learning words is not an easy process (Townsend and Collins, 2008). Therefore providing support allows students to feel less intimidated by tasks and ensures that success is achievable, and this is important as adolescents 'crave opportunities to feel successful' (Lesaux et al., 2012, p. 233).

However, it must be acknowledged that even within a streamed low-ability class, students display a range of ability and individuality; for example, some students are EAL learner and others have specific learning needs such as dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Firstly, it is difficult to accurately assess each student's zone of proximal development and this would be a laborious method to accurately complete. Further, not all students will have the same ZPD and thus scaffolding will need to be differentiated according to need and level of prior learning. Although in theory this is the most conducive method for learning, this outcome is not feasible during the limited time constraints that I have to plan lessons. Therefore, I will need to scaffold the material in a broader manner whilst ensuring that all students are able to access the learning, understand the material and comprehend task instructions. I recognise that pitching learning too high will result in the content being inaccessible to students current level of understanding and may lead to feelings of frustration and discouragement; on the other hand, learning that is too easy for students and lacks sufficient challenge may lead to boredom and lack of engagement (Lesaux et al., 2012). Therefore it is important that all students are experiencing adequate challenge when completing their work.

However, specifically directed questions that are aimed at encouraging the child to consider concepts or ideas within their ZPD can be used as an individualised scaffold. Nevertheless, questions that are mismatched to learner level can be problematic; asking low ability learners unrealistically perplexing questions can lead them to lose self-confidence whilst asking advanced learners simple questions can demotivate them (Long et al., 2015). Therefore, teachers should remain aware of each pupil's strengths and areas for development to ensure that they ask questions that are matched specifically to challenge each learner. In addition, research suggests that teachers should provide sufficient time to allow students to carefully consider an accurate response to questions (Wasik and Hindman, 2018). Therefore, I will aim to ask questions that prompt students to think beyond their independent ability whilst also providing enough time for students to carefully consider their answers to challenging questions.

Teaching Vocabulary

It is important that vocabulary teaching goes beyond learning the dictionary definitions because words may be polysemous. To have a solid understanding of vocabulary students need to grasp the nuances of words alongside the associations with other words (McKeown, 2019). It is imperative that students engage in active processing of the words, considering the multiple meanings and applying the words appropriately (McKeown and Beck, 2004). Therefore, I will ensure to adopt activities that require students to think about the complexities of words so they can grasp the meaning on a more advanced level. To illustrate this, Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) would suggest that simple recall of a word's definition is a lower-order skill. At the very least, I would expect students to demonstrate simple yet accurate comprehension of vocabulary. However, the majority of students should be able to apply the vocabulary independently by the end of the scheme of learning. I will also ensure to provide opportunity for students to process the words deeply via engaging with higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis of the words, synthesising their meanings and evaluating their decisions (Bloom, 1956). Therefore I will provide ample opportunity for students to engage with the language using higher-order thinking skills to enhance their ability to comprehend, retain and apply the vocabulary.

Research reiterates the importance of addressing vocabulary as a barrier to learning with a low-ability class. Findings suggest the need for direct vocabulary instruction, especially for students who experience difficulty when reading because they are less likely to encounter new words and when they do so will be less successful in deriving meanings from context (McKeown and Beck, 2004). Further, if the vocabulary proves to be useful and interesting, students are more likely engage thus the purpose of acquiring a range of vocabulary should be made clear to students throughout the scheme of learning to increase their motivation (McKeown and Beck, 2004).

How effective was this in reality?

After engaging with this scheme of learning to overcome the conceptual challenge of vocabulary, students seemed to develop their lexicon. This is evidenced by the majority of students employing a wider breadth of vocabulary within their second assessment (see appendix H). The words that students chose were often vocabulary that was directly taught within the scheme of learning thus highlighting that students understood, retained and applied their newly acquired knowledge. This may have been due to the compressed 'spiral' nature of the scheme of learning, advocated by Bruner (1960). I adopted a spiral approach as it involves repeatedly reviewing, consolidating and linking previous knowledge (Coelho and Moles, 2016). Each activity within this scheme of learning was explicitly linked so that students could envisage the bigger picture; this was especially valuable with low-ability students to ensure that they recapped previous learning to overcome this conceptual challenge. However, it is important that this 'spiral' approach continues throughout the students learning, not only during this academic year but further beyond into their key stage 4 education as vocabulary remains one of the key focuses of the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014).

Although I have concluded that students have made more sophisticated vocabulary choices, this assessment failed to clearly demonstrate whether they understood the subtle nuances of words or whether they grasped a solid understanding of definitions. It must be acknowledged that a minority of students did use ambitious vocabulary but in the wrong context. This would suggest that although students retained the word, misconceptions of the meaning remained. This implies that although students have acquired a more varied lexicon, the conceptual challenge of vocabulary comprehension might still be present. Therefore, the next step of learning may be to allow students to practise using vocabulary in the correct context and providing feedback to develop the student's understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, the conclusion that students employed more sophisticated vocabulary is subjective and potentially biased. There is not an objective measure of whether students have overcome the conceptual barrier of vocabulary comprehension, which is a potential shortcoming of this scheme of learning.

5.a Social Interaction

Based on Vygotsky's (1978) principles of social constructivism, social interaction was an integral part of this scheme of learning. Although the majority of the work was produced independently, classroom discourse was encouraged to share and challenge

ideas respectfully. Not only does this emphasise the social and cultural nature of human learning but such situations provide students with opportunities to participate, observe, reflect on, and practise knowing and thinking (Kumpulainen and Wray, 2001). Also, this method of learning supports individuals to build the skills needed to communicate and challenge ideas effectively as adults in a fast-paced social environment.

Although social interaction permitted students to support each other, I was conscious of individuals relying on others for answers and thus limiting their personal development. Therefore students still had to produce independent work to ensure that they remained engaged with the learning. Pairs were created from the seating plan whereby more competent students were seated next to less competent ones and this directly aligns with Vygotsky's principle of social interaction with a more knowledgeable other. However, research suggests that pair-work could have been improved by assigning roles within tasks to avoid a student from taking over the activity from his or her pair to ensure that all students are motivated to participate (Achmad and Yusuf, 2014). Therefore, this highlights how I could improve my pedagogy and make pair work more effective in the future.

Furthermore, I ensured to give instant verbal feedback to students when circulating the classroom to monitor their progress. This social interaction provided guidance and support to enable students to work within their ZPD. I focused my feedback on making reference to students' output and how to improve it. This is to ensure that I was challenging students to complete work to a standard beyond their independent effort – another central concept from Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Students responded well to specific guidance with clear instructions explaining how to improve and this worked as a motivating factor in their efforts. The mini-whiteboard task also allowed a formative assessment of students' learning (Faber, 2013). The total participation technique allowed me to monitor pupils' progress and provide verbal support for those who demonstrated that they struggled to apply vocabulary appropriately. This technique ensured that all students were engaged when applying their learning. Student A, who is usually an apathetic learner, was highly involved and employing ambitious vocabulary in this activity, showing that this was an enthusing technique. Students seemed to demonstrate a sense of healthy competition to gain achievement points for the most ambitious vocabulary choices and it was evident that students were pushing themselves.

In line with the findings of the literature review, directed questions were central when stretching my students to work within their ZPD. I asked questions to specific pupils, factoring in their ability and ensured questions were challenging but achievable. I aimed to ask open-ended questions and waited at least three seconds so that students had sufficient time to give a considered response (Erdogan and Campbell, 2008; Wasik and Hindman, 2018). Questioning was based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) with the implication that higher-order thinking skills were incorporated into questions aimed at more competent students. On reflection, it would have been beneficial to allow more time for follow-up discussions based on student responses whereby other pupils could build or challenge ideas. Within the classroom students seemed to present a natural inclination to build on ideas or challenge responses however, I had to limit this discourse due to the time constraints of the scheme of learning. In future, I will encourage further classroom interactivity to allow students the opportunity to gain the confidence to share, develop and challenge ideas.

5.b Scaffolding

Research findings ensured that I was more conscientious of each student's ability when planning the scaffolding of tasks. I have always maintained high expectations of my pupils, but I found that the support of scaffolds lead to pupils gaining confidence and becoming increasingly able to reach the learning objectives. This confidence transpired into more effort and enthusiasm within class, probably because the task seemed less daunting. As the scaffolds were discreet (for example, the cloze activity) students didn't necessarily recognise that they were being supported and this also may have lead to the subsequent rise in confidence in their ability. Furthermore, some scaffolds included slightly different tasks that were labelled as increasingly challenging. All students were instructed to work through the tasks under the premise that they would be maximising their effort. Therefore, if students possess the ability to complete the more challenging tasks, there was the underlying assumption that they would manage to reach that activity within the lesson as a result of moving through the easier tasks at a faster pace. However, it is possible that some students may not have necessarily pushed themselves to complete the more challenging tasks. Although I circulated the

classroom and encouraged pupils to be working at the correct level, there were a few that did not meet my expectations of work. Therefore, in the future I may need to specifically tell students which level of challenge they should complete.

Although the majority of students did improve their understanding of tier two vocabulary, there is undoubtedly further progress to be made. Due to the limited duration of this scheme of learning, it was not possible to entirely overcome the conceptual challenge of vocabulary comprehension. Furthermore, due to the complex and extensive nature of vocabulary, it could be argued that there will always be the opportunity for development of a student's lexicon. Research suggests that building 'word consciousness' over time is a crucial strategy in boosting student vocabulary growth (Barger, 2006). This links directly to Teacher Standard 2: '[encouraging] pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study'. I recognise that this is an area of my pedagogy that could be developed. Word consciousness is important as it creates a fascination with new words that prompts on-going student inquiry thus encouraging them to become independent learners (Graves, 2006). I value the importance of guiding individuals to become aware, competent and confident adults and therefore building skills that encourage students to become responsible, independent learners provides a solid foundation to do so.

In conclusion, thorough exploration of this conceptual challenge has allowed me to develop my pedagogy. Students have developed their lexicon although room for improvement still remains. As vocabulary comprehension is a key focus throughout both key stage three and four, I will apply the knowledge that I have acquired from research findings across my teaching practice.

There's always an alternative: Creativity across the Curriculum

Stephen Sharp – Head of Art & Design, Pegasus Academy, Dudley

It's clear that creativity and engaging in creative activities is important for our wellbeing. Just look at the massive uptake of creative activities during the recent lockdown. People have turn to creativity to express new feelings and opinions as well as to offer a sense of escapism from recent events. Creativity has the ability to help make sense of the world and allows us to see things in different ways, it helps to explain abstract concepts and improves the way we function, communicate and live. In schools, being creative is mainly associated with Art & Design and Creative Arts, but this is not to say that this is the only place where creative activities should thrive. Creativity has the capacity to be utilised by all staff in all subject areas, but there is a big issue, most people don't know how to be creative!

First, let's define what we mean by being creative. If we use the definition by Ken Robinson, creativity is "**Coming up with original ideas which have value".** There are a couple of interesting point to discuss, first is that there is no reference to a particular subject, therefore creativity has the ability to span all areas. The second is the idea of value. Value is subjective and could be viewed in many different ways such as aesthetic, conceptual, technical or monetary, but key to all of this is that ideas have value in every sense.

Many people's first experience, and therefore association with creativity, is in the art room at school. During this time, you might have been asked to draw an image or make a sculpture and at the same time be creative. The problem with this is that a lot of the time people are never given the skills needed to be creative. As a result, if you were able to draw reasonably well or make things to a good standard then you were deemed to be creative. Therefore, many students go through education with the potential of being creative but thinking they are not because they haven't been shown how to. It's important to state at this stage that creativity and artistic ability are not the same thing.

All people have the ability to be creative, it's a skill which can be taught and the more you do the better you get. Practicing creativity and being creative can make a positive impact on both your work and home life. The following quotations are from conversations I have had with a colleague over the years referring to marking and assessment **"I spend 3 hours marking a set of year 11 books during the weekend." "I get up at 4 in the morning so that I can get a set of books marked ready for the next day". "I spent the whole of the holiday marking my books."** I know that marking and assessment is a whole issue in itself but my first response to these statements was to question why this had to be the case and could there be an alternative way of working. Could we apply some creative thinking to design systems which work more effectively and efficiently? I then asked myself why other staff didn't think like this in the first place and

had just accepted this as the way things are done, the answer always came back to a lack of creative awareness.

So, I set myself the challenge to distill the main skills, techniques, strategies for creative thinking and present them in a format which is applicable to all subjects and could be used to support staff and students to become more creative. Here's what I came up with…

Let's explore these ideas in a little more detail.

Simplify the Fraction is to reduce something down into its simplest form and to remove anything which is not needed or causes a distraction. This could be used to improve worksheets for students or to streamline a policy or system currently in place.

Think Punk is adopting a DIY aesthetic to your practice and be proactive with your ideas. Don't wait for someone else to do it, do it yourself. If you can't physically realise the idea yourself then share it with others to make it happen.

Question Everything, Nothing is Sacred. Questioning is vital to being creative, if nothing is questioned then nothing will change. Being curious and challenging the status quo can help to reimagine how things are done, look or function.

Be Visual. You can read an image much quicker than a word. Use symbols, images, pictures and colours to communicate in a much more direct way.

Don't Be Precious, Ideas are Free. People who lack creative skill may have 1 or 2 ideas and will hold on to them because they are worried they won't have any more. Creative people will come up with lots of ideas, some better than others, and will select the best one to develop.

Be Open Minded and being respective to new ideas can help to improve your creative output. No one person has all the answers and allowing new ideas and thoughts into your work can expand your own understanding and practice. Enjoy the process of learning new things and be forever curious.

Rather than being a set of tasks or instructions, these strategies should be seen as ways of thinking to be applied to work and/or home situations. Some of these strategies may have more resonance than others, and some may be things which you already do. By no means is this a comprehensive list of all the creative strategies ever invented, but they offer an important starting point to kick start your creative muscles and get you thinking about how you could function more creatively. We all have the ability to be creative, all we need to do is recognise it.

If you would like a digital version of this poster, please email me ssharp@pegasusacademy.org.uk

Academic Ableism in Higher Education

Dr. Shrehan Lynch (Guest Writer) - Senior Lecturer in Secondary Initial Teacher Education at the University of East London

Dr. John Macklin (Guest Writer) - Director of Careers & Enterprise at the University of East London

'The ethic of higher education still encourages students and teachers alike to accentuate ability, valorize perfection, and stigmatize anything that hints at intellectual (or physical weakness' (Dolmage, 2017, p. 2)

Introduction

In this piece, we argue that universities and by extension all educational establishments need to address inequitable systems and pedagogic practices to ensure they promote inclusive opportunities, where achievement and success are available to all students and staff. Part of this process includes reflecting to ensure we do not replicate cultural and societal norms concerning disability.

'Disability is one of the most frequently forgotten forms of social, political and cultural oppression' (Christensen, 1996, p. 63)

Disability is a socially constructed term; it denotes a difference whereby specific groups are given unequal values. Sensoy & DiAngelo (2017) refer to this as a social stratifying strategy that societies adopt as norms; this creates oppression due to the way we organise specific groups of people. Our society is designed for/by, built for/by, and controlled for/by non-disabled individuals: this excludes disabled people (Swain et al. 2003). Consequently, people with disabilities have been unfairly and unjustly treated in our societies for centuries and there continues to be a lack of clarity on what is unjust (Rizvi & Christensen 1996).

Ableism

Ableism, we argue is the conscious and unconscious favouring of those perceived as 'able' over those perceived to be disabled, or indeed those assessed as disabled. Ableism positively values able-bodiedness (Dolmage, 2017). Anyone deviating from the norm is considered 'tragic', 'dangerous', 'inferior' or 'less than human' (Swain et al. 2003). As a society, being disabled has a specific stigma attached to it and ableism reinforces that stigma. However, individuals are not just disabled, identity is multidimensional (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) and complex. Thus, while our focus is on ableism, we recognise that individuals could also be part of another minority group e.g. female, trans, Muslim, and/or a person of colour, etc. Thus, as educators, we take into consideration the intersecting elements of a person's identity with various forms of oppression.

Ableism is reinforced at universities because they are set up hierarchically, organisationally and architecturally in ways that reflect society (Dolmage, 2017). The academy is a site of class privilege that excludes certain students (hooks, 2015). Dolmage (2017) illustrates barriers to university with the visual of steps leading up to the entrance of the university creating a physical barrier to access. This helps understand the ways in which the architect of the university space is exclusionary. This paper illuminates' ways that we have observed universities being ableist from an academic ableism perspective. Academic ableism recognises the inequitable material structures of universities but also seeks to critique ways of learning, assessment, pedagogy to persuade organisations and individuals to make change (Dolmage, 2017). We intend to disrupt the knapsack of unearned advantages and entitlements (McIntosh, 1988) that educators may or may not be conscious of that enables students/ staff to succeed easier than others. Said another way, the issue for universities and schools is they are adding useful tools to the able students' knapsacks and filling the 'others' with unnecessary items that hinder success.

Further, we position ourselves as somewhat knowledgeable regarding academic ableism as we are considered by our university as disabled. Although not visibly obvious, we are neurologically different; Shrehan dyslexic and John dyspraxic. While physically privileged and our 'hidden specific learning disabilities' only represent one viewpoint we are educators and researchers of the matter, which helps deepen our understandings to a certain degree. In what follows we present several considerations and issues that we have come across and consider to be academic ableism. These anecdotal examples are by no means an exhaustive complete list, but they are from our experiences, students/ colleagues/ friends whom we have had the pleasure to work with and share narratives.

Pedagogy

In universities just like schools, under the Equality Act 2010, students with a disability are entitled to support and should receive funding so that they can effectively learn. However, the support can be seen as a retrofit and only requires academics to adapt a part of their pedagogy without questioning their underlying practice and how something might be considered as ableist. While we are not claiming individual educators are ableist, we are suggesting that not having inclusive pedagogy as a requirement for teaching highlights how the institution works in ableist ways. Furthermore, for someone to receive support, the requirement enforces that they have a diagnosis. For John, after struggling during his doctoral work, he was diagnosed with dyspraxia. Being undiagnosed meant he missed out during his formal education years (school, undergraduate, postgraduate) on provision and support which could have affected his life choices.

Educators have a responsibility to ensure their practice is inclusive; putting all learning materials on the university learning platform, using captioning for videos, encouraging 'jazz hands' (hand waving) instead of clapping for non-neurotypical students. However, such practices are not occurring as standards practice. The emotional toll for students is exhausting especially constantly asking for recommended practices suggested by disability services to be adhered to. The reality is that many lecturers have received no formal training regarding inclusive practice. As schoolteachers, we were trained to support all learners in our classroom spaces, but how can we expect colleagues that come directly from industry to know how to adapt their pedagogy?

It is common knowledge that lecturers can have microaggressions (everyday sensitives) to minority groups (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) and this can be displayed by reinforcing traditional pedagogies such as 'chalk and talk' or otherwise known as standing behind the lectern and reciting information to students. In an ideal higher education situation, on day one, lecturers would share that they acknowledge and appreciate all students and ask them to share via surveys or a 1:1 meeting how they would like to learn and what the educator can do to accommodate. Of course, this means a radical rehaul of standardised module delivery, flexible courses, small class numbers, and listening to students' voices. Such an idealised view contradicts the consistency, monitoring and accountability systems neoliberal universities enforce.

Curriculum & assessment

Intellectual ability is foregrounded in higher education (Dolmage, 2017). Academia, by nature, privileges and reinforces specific intellectual abilities and ways of knowing. Most commonly written text is the most valued form. We see this in the continual setting of academic texts as a requirement, reading lists, and students completing examinations and essays for grades. Educators are looking for a specific type of language in the writing. This has been termed linguicism, which is discrimination based on language or dialect. Linguicism privileges neurotypical ways of knowing that do not suit minority groups, not just those that are disabled but English additional language learners. Moreover, short blogs, podcasts, poetry, spoken word, and film can be adopted rather than setting traditional academic texts. Authors of these forms are imaginative and release their intellectual mind through alternate ways. These examples could also be one way that assignments are submitted – disrupting the status quo. When academic text is a requirement, for example, for English literature courses, drawing on individuals that the students identify with is important. Not only people with disabilities but people from an array of minority groups that reflect our diverse society.

Space

The material and physical space of universities privileges one group over another. This means neurotypical staff and students get unearned advantages in education systems and social institutions become discriminatory (Goodley, 2011). As an example, here are some of the ways space (libraries, classrooms, lecture theatres, offices) privileges one group over another:

- Light brightness
- Light switches out of reach
- Lifts being out of action for extended periods
- Cold/hot lecture theatres
- Hard, uncomfortable seating in classroom spaces
- Access to ramps
- Long lectures (1 hour plus)
- Narrow spaces e.g. space between bookshelves in the library
- Clothing requirements (smart versus comfortable)
- University buses being out of action

How examples affect individual groups was intentionally not described because the examples can affect an array of people with alternate needs. Institutions that seek to make their spaces more inclusive should consider doing a needs assessment of staff. If institutions do not look after staff, how can adequate provision be provided for students? This is the same for recruitment processes, people with disabilities may feel like they do not want to apply to work in spaces that they know are not inclusive, consequently, it is the universities responsibility to encourage applicants and openly state how they will ensure the applicants' needs are met.

Research

Students and staff are required to research in higher education. However, much of what is produced is not accessible to the masses and filled with academic jargon (hooks, 2015). The text becomes obsolete to thousands of individuals. We have a responsibility as academics to ensure that knowledge is shared through accessibility forms of knowing. Moreover, the people we are writing for can access it.

Importantly, we have recognised a lot of research still 'on' target groups rather than 'with' individuals. This has been the case for disability, children, people of colour, etc. When research is done on groups, there is a hierarchical approach to the research process and the researcher is removed from the everyday lives and voices of the participants. Furthermore, the researcher makes specific judgements and positions the researched group as the 'other', many academics have claimed this is unethical and groups should be part of the decision-making/ research process. This type of research takes more time and care and cannot be done quickly.

The reality of many academics is the pressure of producing research articles is monumental, it means academics are judged on the capitalist notion of productivity and rather than the quality of articles produced, quantity is sought. This has several knock-on effects, first, not all academics can produce fast articles – research takes time and people write/ understand at different speeds. Second, individual workloads in universities are constantly increasing yet the expectation to research continues at the same pace. It can become overwhelming to juggle the teaching, research and service requirements of universities. Additionally, shared office spaces can significantly reduce work productivity. As lecturers, we work in a shared space, as neurologically different to our colleagues we find that concentration is hard, constant disruptions and conversations occurring in the space are distracting and the environment is not always conducive to industrious work. If institutions want to continue in capitalist lines of work, they must support staff in ways of working that suit them.

Concluding thoughts

This paper has indicated some of how people with a disability are disadvantaged in academic spaces through the lens of academic ableism. The Equality Act (2010) cannot and should not be the only reason that we change practice and our institutions. Higher education should be a place where difference is encouraged and all students are catered for – structurally, physically, sensory, and emotionally. We have the agency to challenge the institutionalised oppression deeply rooted within the structures of the academy. It is up to us, to create the change. First, we must begin by asking questions, to ourselves regarding our pedagogy, curriculum/ assessment, space and research then seek input from minority groups. Only with collaboration can a prosperous inclusive future occur in academia.

Supportive websites/hashtags that may help you:

- The dyslexic academic: https://www.dyslexicacademic.com/blog
- Office for Students: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/support-for-disabled-students/
- Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence, government document (2017): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to-excellence.pdf
- Twitter: @everydayableism, @academicableism, #whydisabledpeopledropout #academicableism

References

- Christensen, C. (1996) *'Disabled, handicapped or disordered: 'what's in the name?''* In Christensen, C., & Rizvi, F. (ed.) Disability and the dilemmas of education and justice, pp. 63-78. Bristol: Open University Press.
- Christensen, C., & Rizvi, F. (ed.) (1996). *Disability and the dilemmas of education and justice.* Bristol: Open University Press.
- Dolmage, J. T. (2017). *Academic ableism: Disability and higher education*. University of Michigan Press.
- Hooks, b. (2015). *Feminist is for everybody*. Oxon: Routledge.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*. New York State United Teachers.
- Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Swain, J., French, S., & Cameron, C. (2003). *Controversial issues in a disabling society*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.