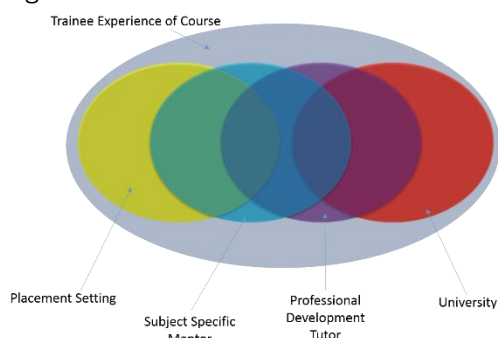# PCET Partners

Issue No.9 | January 2018

Welcome to the January edition

As placements are fully underway across the partnership it is time for another PCET Partners newsletter to let you know what is happening across our course delivery.

In this edition we look at forthcoming research within the partnership and opportunities for peer support activities. Furthermore, we discuss ongoing modules within the BCU full-time course, and Gloucestershire College and South & City College second year cohorts, and as ever we promote the online mentor training package available for free to all mentors.

Trainee Experience of Course

Placement Setting   Professional Development Tutor   University

Subject Specific Mentor

As always we are interested in your ideas and suggestions, contributions and questions, so please do contact the partnership team via Stuart Mitchell (stuart.mitchell@bcu.ac.uk) if you have anything to ask or suggest as the year continues.

Inside this edition of PCET Partners:

- Second Placement Experience
- Opportunities for Peer Support - JCC
- Mentor toolkit research project
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Second Placement Experience

During the week beginning 19th March the full-time BCU team are planning for our trainee-teachers to undertake a second placement experience. While those trainees already in a split placement are able to discuss varied experience across different areas, those who have experience from just one placement have been asked to consider what type of setting/subject area they would like to observe.

In the majority of cases this placement will occur on **Thursday 22nd March** as trainees will of course still be in their usual placement, and while we want our trainees to experience a number of environments, we do not want this to interfere in their everyday practice.

We are asking partners if they could accommodate small groups of students within your organisation, to observe a range of sessions and meet with other staff members to discuss differences in provision.

Your support in this activity would be greatly appreciated.

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Opportunities for Peer Support

Here is a great opportunity to work more closely with members of the partnership community for your own professional development.

Joseph Chamberlain College (JCC) has taken an evidenced-based approach to its continuous professional development (CPD) with teachers. As with students, it realised that individualised and personalised training is the most effective in bringing about improvements. Based on the outcomes of the comprehensive research of the Teachers' Trust project 'Developing Great Teaching' http://tdtrust.org/about/dgt JCC instigated last year an initiative entitled, **Developing Subject Expertise** (DSE). This devolved responsibility for teacher development to subject area leaders which would be based on teachers very specific and contextualised needs. While it is impossible to assign cause and effect, JCC can cite the fact that since the introduction of the initiative last year, at headline level its student progressed at AS and Diploma level in the top 10% of the country and at A2 in the top 20% of the country for the first time ever. Overall its results are the highest it has ever achieved.

Phase two of the DSE initiative will see teachers expanding engagement under its Connecting Teachers http://www.jcc.ac.uk/connnectingteachers2017/ banner and to this end JCC is keen to connect its teachers with colleagues from other institutions who would like to exchange and share practice.

Connecting Teachers-International Learning & Teaching Conference, Birmingham. Launched 2017.

'Connecting Teachers' was the first Birmingham-based International Learning and Teaching Forum, launched with a two day conference in 2017 which continues through social media.

This could be at a topic level, to explore approaches to a specific part of the curriculum or it might be at a subject level.

For example, JCC would be keen to work with colleagues on approaches to HNDs and higher level qualifications, or strategies for teaching GCSE maths and English resits with high levels of success. Sharing could involve professional dialogue, visits, peer observations or simply, email forums.

If you or your colleagues are interested please contact Damian Brant at dbrant@jcc.ac.uk to express an interest. Please indicate the subject and area of interest.

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BIRMINGHAM CITY University

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Birmingham City University Partnerships Initial Mentor Training

As ever, we continue to promote our online training package for new, existing and prospective Mentors.

This support is presented as an online learning package for you to access at your own convenience, with each section containing support materials and activities designed to help you understand or consolidate what it is to be a Mentor. Moreover, this package is free to use.

The training may be described as 'entry level' and will take around one hour to complete (in short stages if you wish), including a test at the end. Once completed (with a score of 75% or above) a certificate is released to acknowledge your completion of the training package.

The course itself is about the dispositions, attitudes and skills required of mentors. It will encourage you to reflect on what it is to be a mentor in a general sense, what knowledge, skills and attitudes mentors need and how your context relates to that.

To access the online training package click on the link below, or type the address in to your browser:

http://goo.gl/T473TI

Once you have registered with the website you can use the enrolment key below to access the training package: **BCU_Mentor_14**

Welcome to the **Initial Mentor Training** Page for teachers and trainers acting as mentors within Birmingham City University Partnerships

Instructions: Read and work through each section carefully, one at a time. Use to make sure only the section you are working on is open. There are certain act must be completed in order to unlock your certificate.

Open all ● Close all ●

One - Introduction ●

We hope this training will encourage you not only to work with mentees and share your knowledge and experience with the next generation, but also help you think about your own professional development. Alternatively, scan the QR code to the right for immediate access.

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Course Modules in Practice:

Full-time trainees are currently working through two modules that involve direct interaction with colleagues, and in developing a better understanding of their students.

Here we present a brief overview of the modules to explain how you will be able to help your mentees, at the same as supporting your own students.

Practice Based Enquiry

Through planning and enacting a research project, trainees will question current thinking and practices within their subject specialism and further develop their abilities to take responsibility for researching, determining and achieving individual professional development.

This takes the form of a mini project where trainees have been asked to question their colleagues and peers on their chosen topic.

For the purpose of this research no students will be interacted with, as we recognise that the process of action research is an ongoing activity of improvement that forms everyday professional practice. Therefore all interaction will take place between mentor and mentee, colleagues or peers on the PCET course.

All research proposals must gain **ethical approval** from the Module Leader (Stuart Mitchell) prior to starting, furthermore, all trainees wishing to engage in research within placement must also gain '**Permission of Access**' from an authorised member of staff.

Permission of access from your organisation might come from the Principle, Vice-Principle, a member of SMT, Head of Department or member of the Quality Team. It would be useful for the trainee to be aware of who this is within their placement and therefore if you were able to help them in this process we would be very grateful.
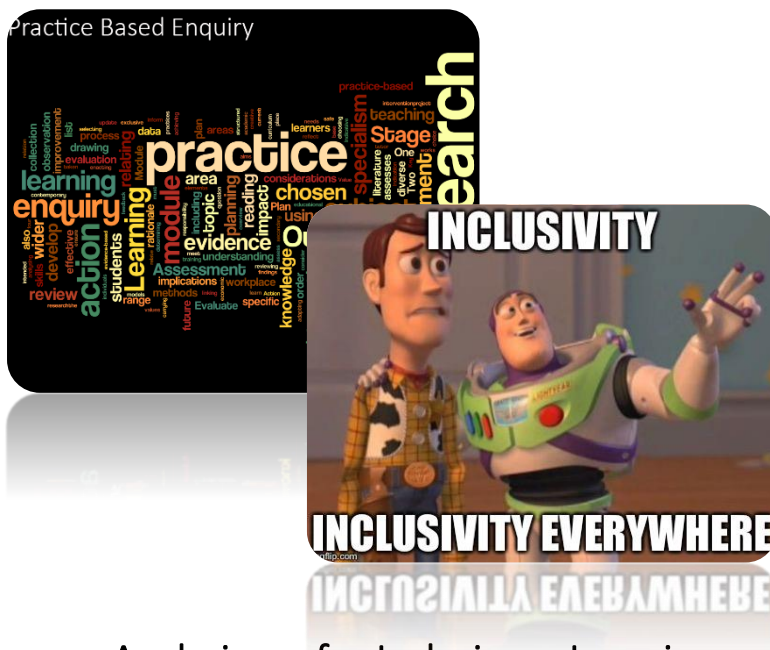
Analysis of Inclusive Learning Practice & Design

Within this module, trainees are asked to design inclusive resources for their students, providing support for all learners within the classroom environment.

Part of this module allows trainees to complete learner profiles from their practice, and it is at this stage that your assistance would be of great help. Your own students will also benefit from any support offered in this module.

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Co-Construction of a framework for mentor support

Each year the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences invites bids to a value up to £5K for research-focussed pilot projects. The PCET team were successful this year in their proposal to further develop mentor support within the PCET partnership.

The project team, of Stuart Mitchell (Birmingham City University), Angela Hughes (Gloucestershire College) and Kelly Rogers (South & City College) will shortly be sending out participant information letters to all mentors inviting you to participate in the pilot research.

The project aims to focus on the development of a framework that assists mentors who support in-service and pre-service trainee teachers in post-compulsory settings. The idea of situated learning while on placement relies greatly upon a relationship that centres on the effective management and development taking place between the novice and experienced tutor, with mentoring playing a major role in the induction of trainees into new domains and practices in different settings across the post-compulsory sector (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As we are all aware, mentoring in the workplace is a key ingredient in successfully "growing an individual" both professionally and personally (Lord et al. 2008).

The PCET course is supported by key documentation and training provided by the University PCET team (including the online mentor training signposted within this newsletter), however as we experience a constant flow of mentors due to the nature of subject demand within the course it is often noted that experience can differ across the partnership and therefore a clearly established conceptualisation of the meaning of the role is vital in allowing mentors to aid the transition of individuals between novice and experienced tutor.

The project sets out to co-construct a framework or toolkit of support designed by mentors, for mentors using the pre-existing ETF standards as its basis along with the extensive existing literature discussing the role of the mentor in professional settings.

Existing partnership mentors are invited to discuss and reflect on their role and experiences, including key issues and training needs with the end goal of designing a 'toolkit' that mentors will be able to refer to in support of their relationship with trainee teachers and their own professional development.

Look out for further project information in the next few weeks.

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Course activity

Current half term activities have included subject specific sessions, with groups visiting the Bullring shopping Centre and Birmingham City Library to discover a number of strategies to engage Social Science, Humanities and English students outside of the classroom..

Shortly the BCU group will be visited by colleagues from Joseph Chamberlain College to discuss employability and interview technique, while Hays Recruitment are also due to visit shortly.

Furthermore we are expecting colleagues from OCR to visit the group in order to talk through ongoing changes and challenges across the partnership. This session will be recorded for or partner courses in Gloucestershire College and South & City College in order that information is shared across all of our students.

If you or anyone from your organisation is interested in delivering on a relevant topic to the PCET group please do get in touch to discuss.

Focus on student data

One of the key areas, linked to our PCET priorities, is our ongoing focus on the use of student data within the development of our trainee teachers. Not only will development in this area allow our trainees to complete their inclusive resource module (mentioned earlier in the newsletter) but it will also support your own students in receiving even greater support from heightened planning, differentiation and coverage of specific student needs. Where possible it would be great if you could help your trainee in accessing information on their students and discuss how this might be used.

Contribute to the Partnership

We are focused on developing a support network for our partner organisations and if you wish to contribute to this process by writing a short article or by offering ideas for best practice in meeting the needs of your trainee, then please contact the PCET Partnerships team via Stuart Mitchell (stuart.mitchell@bcu.ac.uk).

PCET Partners

PCET Partners is produced by the PCET Partnerships team at Birmingham City University.

Please send any feedback, suggestions or contributions to:
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