

PCET Partners

Issue No.2 | October 2015

Welcome to PCET Partners (again)

Welcome to the second edition of PCET Partners, and our first of the 2015-16 academic year.





Over the summer we have been developing a series of support resources that we hope you will take advantage of in both the development of our trainees and your own professional enhancement.

This range of materials were designed in order to focus our attention on the importance of the mentor/trainee relationship, something that is raised in the welcome message from Karen McGrath, our Programme Director. →→→

In this edition of the PCET Partners newsletter we are focusing on a range of issues including the introduction of our new Graduate Student Support Advisor, some suggestions on the mentor/trainee relationship from current trainee teachers, an overview of current course modules, and another section devoted to the initial online mentor training package we presented in the last edition.

As always our focus is help you in the mentoring process and to this end we are always interested in your ideas from practice. If you have any suggestions or practical advice for other mentors please contact us at pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk

Inside this edition of PCET Partners:

-  Introducing the Graduate Student Success Advisor for Education
-  Prevent Agenda and British Values
-  What makes a good mentor/trainee relationship – ideas from our trainees
-  Current course modules – PBE and ETLA

A Message from the PCET Programme Director – Karen McGrath

Firstly, let me welcome established and new partners and mentors to a new academic year.

Research suggests that mentors play a significant role in helping trainees to develop their skills in order to become more effective, and reflective, practitioners. Considerable importance is placed upon the relationship between a mentor and trainee and your role is one that we value highly.

We hope that working with trainees, and with the BCU PCET team will be a positive and rewarding experience for you.

Karen McGrath, PCET Programme Director

Mentor Briefings

As we continue to build and support the relationship between our mentors and trainees we will be offering mentor briefing sessions at the City North campus on **Wednesday 21st October** and **Monday 2nd November**. Matthew Waterhouse will be contacting you shortly to invite you to this event.

Both sessions begin at **4:30** and will last approximately 90 minutes. The session goes through course paperwork and additional support offered in your role as mentor.

If you are unable to attend the sessions advertised above please do not hesitate to contact the PCET Partnership team to arrange a visit to your organisation by course tutor Stuart Mitchell - stuart.mitchell@bcu.ac.uk

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Graduate Student Support Advisor

As the Graduate Student Success Advisor for Education my role is to proactively provide students with opportunities to seek support and knowledge to successfully complete their teaching qualifications.

My role is to have a visible presence within the education department and ensure all students have access to key information and support they may need throughout the course. I also provide a signposting service to the wider university support network for both staff and students for progression, engagement and achievement.

The support has been put into place by Birmingham City University to enhance the likeliness for all students to persist through to the completion of their teaching course. As the GSSA I work directly with the students, faculty and staff to collaboratively increase student success in connection with persistence towards graduation.

As a recent Birmingham City University PGCE PCET student I fully understand the stress and anxiety a student may feel during assignments or teaching placements. I am here to support the students through any worries or concerns they may have throughout their teaching qualifications.

Samina Shafieq
GSSA



Samina Shafieq

Graduate Student
Success Advisor



Listed below are just some of the areas that Samina deals with in support of our PCET trainees:

- Personal development training advice/ signposting
- Disability support and guidance
- Disability screening advice
- Assistive software training and guidance
- Exceptional circumstances guidance and signposting
- Assessment guidance
- Attendance issues

Samina will be working very closely with Karen and the PCET team to ensure that our trainee's experience is as fulfilling as possible.

If your trainee is having issues in relation to any of the above areas please suggest to them that they visit Samina when next in university, or contact her directly at samina.shafieq@bcu.ac.uk

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Practice Based Enquiry – a new PCET module

This year we are introducing a new module to the PCET palette. EDU7219 Practice Based Enquiry is a research assignment that will allow trainees to delve deeper in to their subject specialism and discover new ways of teaching and enlightened approaches to viewing developments in their area.

Through planning and enacting the first iteration of 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.

The module content is aimed at supporting them in developing a range of skills necessary to carry out evidence based research, including enquiry techniques, perspectives for evaluation and approaches to reflection.

Sessions will also pay attention to practical, theoretical and ethical considerations relating to research approaches, data collection and presentation, which will also go towards developing their ability to use work place data in providing for and supporting their students' development.

Trainees will be guided in a range of research techniques, and many may select to carry out appreciative studies of good practice within their subject area. This may be something you will be able to help with as experts in your field, and guide your trainee to relevant research and practice within the area.

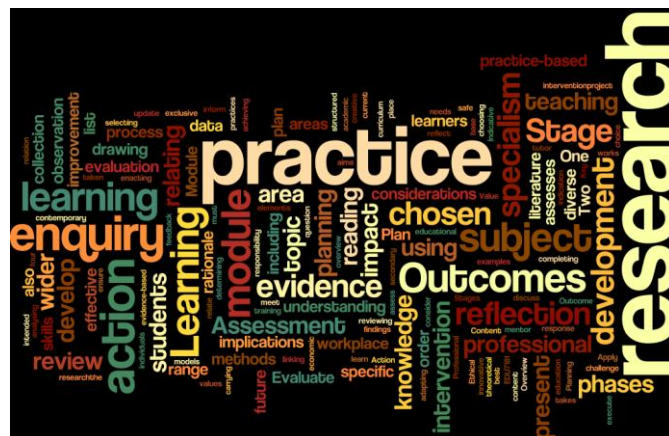
Effective Teaching, Learning and Assessment in the Classroom

This module supports the trainee in developing their knowledge and skills relating to key theories, principles and practices of effective teaching, learning and assessment in their specialist subject.

It is situated alongside the Professional Practice module, as it facilitates the gathering of evidence for their portfolio (the PDP that is discussed in mentor briefings). PCET trainees will also develop their knowledge of the need to be able to carry out both formal and informal assessments, feedback the results to learners and use the information to guide planning and teaching for the future.

This module aims to develop the trainee to:

- act as a specialist subject teacher, or trainer, who is informed and supported by a coherent and relevant body of educational knowledge;
- have an advanced knowledge and understanding of learning and teaching which enables them to demonstrate high levels of reflective and professional practice; including the core functional skills and standards required by national bodies.



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Birmingham City University Partnerships Initial Mentor Training

In Issue #1 of the PCET Partners newsletter we introduced our online training package for new, existing and prospective Mentors. As a new academic year begins we would like to take this opportunity to remind/introduce you to this extra level of support offered by Birmingham City University.

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**



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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What makes a good trainee/mentor relationship?

In order to provide new mentors with some ideas of how to develop a good working relationship with their trainees, we asked some of our part-time trainees to offer their own ideas and experiences of what makes a 'good working relationship'.

These are some of their ideas:

Top Tips for New Mentors

1. Your mentee loves it when you're approachable and available. Joining a new institution for teaching practice can be confusing and a little overwhelming, and a friendly face can be the life raft in an ocean of new rules and regulations. If you're busy (and your mentee understands that you often are), let them know when you'll be able to get back to them - it'll make them feel valued and a little less like they're sinking.

2. Be prompt in your written feedback for teaching observations. This helps the trainee prepare their self-evaluation and a set of targets to get the most out of the next observation. Your mentee wants to progress in their teaching, and that's difficult to do when they haven't got the written evidence of where they need to improve.

3. Ask your mentee what they've completed in their PDP/ Skills Audit/ Core Competencies this week, and repeat this question every week throughout the course. It helps to keep them accountable. Yes, that was a look of panic you just saw flicker across their face...

In addition to these suggestions from Claire, we also offer musings from Clare – they are two different people – honest – notice the spelling.

A good mentor should...

...share their personal experiences, good and bad, as this helps motivate the student teacher, especially when things have not gone as planned. We need to know that we are not the only ones that have made mistakes!

...be ready to discuss the standards so a mutual interpretation can be reached.

...give constructive criticism - help us develop our approaches in a positive way.

...make the student teacher feel comfortable about observations - it is a nerve-wracking experience!

...use a student teacher's resources if they are good - this is a huge boost to our confidence!

...let go of the reigns! We know it is hard for you to let us take over your class, but we must do it otherwise we will never learn to teach effectively.

...realise that a PGCE student can be useful to your own time management - whilst we take some of your teaching hours, you can catch up with other work. We can also undertake marking and some admin to help you.

Overall a good mentor should...

...remember how it feels to be a student teacher!

Wise, and hopefully helpful, words from our trainees.

If you require any further guidance on the mentoring role please do not hesitate to contact the PCET Partnership team, or Stuart Mitchell (stuart.mitchell@bcu.ac.uk) directly to discuss extra support or further mentoring qualifications for your own Continuing Professional Development.

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Future PCET Partners newsletters

We will be releasing a further five newsletters across the academic year.

The aim of these newsletters is to ensure that you are supported in developing your own mentoring skills and sharing best practice around the partnership. If you wish to write a short article examining the mentor role or offering ideas for best practice in meeting the needs of your trainee, ask a question or add a suggestion for meeting specific Professional Standards, then please contact the PCET Partnerships team at pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk

In addition to submitting articles to PCET Partners, we are also interested in your ideas for CPD events, training opportunities, key discussion points and ideas for addressing professional standards.

Each newsletter is set to deliver key information at relevant points across the year including submission dates for trainees' assignments, alerts for the completion of each term review and a focus on module expectations in order that you might be able to support your own trainee in their work.

These will be sent out on the weeks beginning:

12th October '15
30th November '15
18th January '16
29th February '16
18th April '16
6th June '16

The Prevent agenda & British Values

On Monday 5th October we had the pleasure of welcoming **Selina Stewart** of the **Education & Training Foundation**, who hosted an excellent session based around Further Educations **Prevent** duty and consideration of **British Values** in the education sector.

Trainees were engaged in discussions and activities based around relevant statutory guidance, links to safeguarding and the concept of extremism.

Great care was taken in discussing what this duty does and does not include, so that trainees were able to differentiate between the mythical/stereotypical understanding perpetuated in some areas, and the genuine role that educators have in protecting students, promoting democracy and celebrating an individual's liberty.

If your own organisation delivers similar safeguarding training that supports your student population and staff members we would ask that you allow our trainees to attend and learn more about the students and environment in which they are working.

PCET Partners

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

Please send any feedback, suggestions or contributions to:

pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk