

# PCET Partners

Issue No.4 | January 2016

## Welcome to Issue #4

Happy New Year to you all and welcome back to a new term after what was, hopefully, a relaxing Christmas break.

This is the third newsletter of the academic year designed to keep you informed of events from the course and up to date with the activities that your trainees will be/have been involved with this term.

By now a good many trainees should be well into their teaching programme and should have ideally been observed two to three times, although individual trainees will be at varying stages dependent on their placement, timetable and level of confidence. This is merely a guide and further information is available on the PCET Partners website, in the document titled – A Year in the Life of a Mentor.

At this stage it is also key to point out that it is important for trainees experience a wide range of teaching experiences during their placement, involving different levels, course types and age ranges where possible. In addition, we have a lot of very able trainees, so do look for additional opportunities for them to develop if possible and ways in which to really stretch and challenge their skills and abilities.

### Inside this edition of PCET Partners:

-  OCR visits with news of reforms
-  Opportunities for your Professional Development
-  Online Initial Mentor Training
-  Developing your mentor/trainee relationship
-  Advertising your events, activities and ideas

## OCR visits with news on reforms

One of the aims of the PGCE PCET course is to build and support the knowledge base of our trainees across a wide range of topic areas. To this end we have had the great pleasure of being visited by Mara Bogdanovic and Tricia Banks of OCR, who presented a session on Post-14 Education Reforms.

The session outlined current and future changes in general and vocational education, and offered excellent opportunities for our learners to develop their understanding of policy drivers and changes in curriculum structure. More details of this session are available on the following page.

## Opportunities for your own Professional Development

In addition to the support that you offer our trainees we would like to present you with opportunity to develop your own professional identity and qualifications. This is possible through completion of the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) qualification offered by the School of Education.

Overleaf we detail one of the many modules that is on offer to you relating specifically to your role as Mentor to our PGCE PCET students.

By completing this 30 credit module you would be working towards a full Level 7 qualification, via the experience gained from your work with trainees.

If you are interested in learning more about the MTL modules on offer please do not hesitate to contact the PCET Partners team for more information.

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## OCR visits with news on reforms (continued)

The session discussed a vast array of changes that either have or will affect change in the sector, including the Raising Participation Age, the introduction of Programmes of Study, GQ reform, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, VQ reform and maths and English expectations (reaching GCSE level before learners leave education).



The focus of the talk (and following discussion) involved the raising of academic attainment to improve workforce opportunities, and emphasized the trend of 'linear' qualification pathways that differ greatly to those experienced by most of the trainees. A theme of synoptic study seemed to develop across the whole talk and this is something that many trainees will not have had experience of in their own studies, and may be the experience of your own education and teaching.

Trainees asked some deep and searching questions regarding government engagement, practitioner consultation and future expectations, such as dealing with learners who require additional support to achieve newly raised standards.

The discussion allowed trainees to contemplate how changes will affect their own teaching and any discussions that you feel relevant to your own organisation or subject area would be incredibly useful for them to take forward in their thoughts.

## Opportunities for your own Professional Development (continued)

As one of the many options available to you in career progression through studying with Birmingham City University we present here details of one such module - **Professional Development, Coaching and Mentoring**. Although the list below is not exhaustive, nor exclusive, the range of topics and issues you may wish to consider in your enquiry focus might include:

- Theories, models and frameworks for sustainable educational continuing professional development and learning.
- The development of learning organisations and communities of practice/enquiry; professional learning through local, regional, national and international networks and collaboration.
- The influence of professional development on practice, teacher identity, leadership roles and institutional success.
- Theories and models of coaching and mentoring; differences and overlaps in coaching and mentoring practice.
- Training, development and education of new teachers and other professionals, including through coaching and mentoring.
- The impact of professional development, coaching and mentoring on institutional practices and learning outcomes.

For further details contact the PCET Partners team.

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## Birmingham City University Partnerships Initial Mentor Training

As the course continues, so to do we continue to promote our online training package for new, existing and prospective Mentors. We would like to take this opportunity once again 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**

A screenshot of the "Initial Mentor Training Page". The page has a white background with blue text and logos. It says "Welcome to the Initial Mentor Training Page" and "for teachers and trainers acting as mentors within Birmingham City University Partnerships". There is a circular logo on the left with the text "THE BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY TEACHER" and "Committed Creative Confident". On the right is the Birmingham City University logo. At the bottom, there are instructions: "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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## Developing your mentor/trainee relationship

Further to the guidance and suggestions we offered in our last edition, we would like to present more ideas on how to develop an effective mentor/trainee relationship.

At this stage of the course we would suggest that you allow some independence, with a move from direct to indirect forms of supervision, as your trainee becomes more experienced. In addition to this:

- Encourage critical thinking;
- Create opportunities for learning;
- Ask the right questions to assist trainees to solve their own problems;
- Share your own reflections to give trainees insight into decision making and problem solving skills;
- It is important to listen and hear what it is that the mentee is seeking to achieve.

In order to ensure effective mentoring support it is important to realise that the process is two way and its success is the responsibility of both the mentor and the mentee.

Some prerequisites for success include the following: a commitment to the goals of the mentoring process; a professional attitude; openness and honesty; willingness to learn; the ability to question one another; mutual respect; the contribution of time; active listening skills; the ability to show appreciation; being able to ask for specific help; working through any conflict; giving and receiving feedback; trusting each other and periodically reviewing the relationship and the process.

## Advertising your events and offering guidance to fellow mentors

We always welcome feedback from you about how we can improve the newsletter and we would like to extend this to include information about any events that are taking place at your institution that you would like to publicise through this newsletter.

The next edition of the newsletter is due for release at the end of February and if you would like us to put your institution event in the spotlight then please let us know using the email address at the bottom.

## Write for us

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 at [pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk)

Please do consider contributing to the development of this community, and sharing your experience with the BCU Partnership.

## 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](mailto:pcet.partnerships@bcu.ac.uk)