

CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SETTINGS OTHER THAN SCHOOLS ON NQTs' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Background

Since the introduction in September 2002 of the revised QTS Standards set out in Qualifying to Teach it has been possible for students to engage on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses to undertake part of their teaching placements in “settings other than schools.” This is a recognition by the TTA that what goes on outside the classroom is just as powerful for learning as that which takes place in school. “Valuable pupil learning can take place in a wide range of out-of-school contexts. Teachers need to be able to plan to make the best use of these opportunities for learning and recognise the additional value that they bring.” (TTA Handbook)

Museums, libraries and archives have an important role to play; they have unrivalled resources which can motivate even the most disaffected pupils, inspiring a desire to find out more. They can provide hands-on learning opportunities, open eyes to new worlds and underpin learning in a way that is not possible in a classroom. Over £5 million pounds has been invested in museum and gallery education through the Museums and Galleries Education Programme since 1990. This is happening at a time when learning in the schools' sector is focusing increasingly on creativity, evidenced by the government's recent announcement of a further £70 million in funding for the Creative Partnerships programme which will enable pupils in some of the country's most deprived areas to have access to culture and the arts. “Creativity isn't an add on. It must form a vital and integral part of every child's experience of school.” (Charles Clarke, June 2003)

Yorkshire Museums Libraries and Archives Council (YMLAC) has initiated a dialogue with ITT providers in the region to demonstrate how these settings can be used to enable students to work towards many of the QTT Standards in addition to planning learning in settings other than schools. Creative connections between the ITT, museums, libraries and archives sectors could make trainees into more effective teachers and impact strongly on their induction year as the following examples demonstrate.

Leeds University Student Placements

In a partnership between YMLAC and Leeds University School of Education, two students on the PGCE art and design course, Claire and Rosie, were offered placements at Cartwright Hall in Bradford and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park respectively. It was considered to be a high priority for good mentoring to be made available to these students. A week was spent with the staff at each of the two settings planning a unit of work which was undertaken in the students' final school practice. This comprised a series of lessons at the settings during the course of a day which represented the culmination of a significant aspect of art and design curricular activity to be exhibited at the venues of Bretton Hall and Cartwright Hall.

Claire gained experience of the video conferencing of an artist at Cartwright Hall to a local school as an interactive art activity. She has since gained a full time teaching post from September in a sixth form college. Rosie benefited from shadowing the

freelance sculptors at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and was involved in the workshops for pupils who visited for the day. She was able to plan in depth for a series of lessons with her own pupils on her final school practice rather than just take them on a trail. Rosie visited with Year 8 able and talented pupils for whom she had arranged practical workshops around the sculptures in a way that challenged the groups. She has been appointed to a teaching post in a large comprehensive school in North Yorkshire. Like her colleague, Claire, this recent project featured prominently in the interview, with much encouragement given to them as prospective NQTs to pursue further the development of museum and gallery links.



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The benefits for students as they move into the NQT Induction period are significant and include:

- Increased awareness of the role of museum, libraries and archives (MLA) in learning;
- Experience of settings outside the classroom;
- Knowledge of resources which MLA have to offer to teachers;
- Evidence of a range of work to demonstrate QTT Standards are met and for use as a portfolio for NQT Induction Standards and future CPD;
- Understanding of the power of learning in informal contexts;
- More effective school visits;
- NQTs with specialist skills and experience, with new ideas, creativity and innovative approaches to learning.

Claire and Rosie spoke very positively about gaining a wider view of education and learning beyond the specific outcomes of the National Curriculum. They were able to analyse, observe and critically assess the learning in the park and museum contexts and compare it to the classroom experience. This involved discussions with teachers and other staff about how pupils are prepared for visits and how learning is consolidated back in school. Both students worked collaboratively via joint planning with MLA staff and volunteers in delivering teaching and enhancing learning opportunities for pupils. Experience of working in beautiful and inspirational settings has possibly been the most beneficial aspect, together with the confidence gained and personal kudos resulting from the success of the project.

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