

Beyond Subject Knowledge: How do trainee teachers in Design and Technology prove that they are 'outstanding' in relation to the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)?

David Wooff (Wooffd@edgehill.ac.uk) and Dawne Bell (BellD@edgehill.ac.uk)
Department of Creative and Applied Technologies, Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QP

Introduction

The work presented here is based in the statutory requirements for the award of QTS for trainee teachers in the secondary education sector in England. Initially the resources discussed here have been trialled with Design and Technology trainees on a variety of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses; PGCE, KS2/3 and B.Sc. (Hons.) programmes. Following successful implementation of the resources discussed here the resultant work has now been adopted across all phases and ITE programmes at Edge Hill University.

The work presented goes some way will to also illustrate internal (to Edge Hill University) documentation and publications used by staff with trainees, that has been specifically designed to guide and support trainees in the production and collation of high quality evidence against the teaching standards.

"I like the use of an electronic portfolio, this means I can simply upload my lesson plans, resources, schemes of work and other things which I have written whilst on my teaching practice – all of these are electronic anyway so it makes sense. I do have to scan some pieces of evidence but that doesn't present much of a problem"

Respondent 83

"The list of things that I could use as evidence against the standards was really helpful. I liked the way that it listed which things to use for which standard so it gave me help with where to put things like minutes of mentor meetings...of course I still had to do the critical reflection bit for my evidence file"

Respondent 41

Literature Review

The Training and Development Agency (TDA) for schools, produces a variety of information to support trainees in demonstrating their ability to meet the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). These are published on the TDA website and detail, in a narrative fashion, evidence that can be used in support of trainees meeting the standards. This information was published on the TDA website in November 2007. Other English institutions such as: Bath University and Brunel University produce and publish lists which can be used by their trainees as simple checklists to help trainees gather evidence for their professional portfolios. The TDA itself does not publish nor endorse such lists of material. Consequently, the relevant literature that exists considers development of e-portfolio's in general.

There has been much written, commented on and published by commentators and researchers within Design and Technology on the topic, content and validity of minimum competencies appertaining to subject knowledge for Design and Technology teachers, these include; Lewis (1996), Atkinson (2006), and Mitchell (2008). However, there appears to be a dearth of work specifically looking at how Design and Technology teachers evidence the thirty three standards laid down by the TDA to demonstrate professional competency required for teachers in England and Wales.

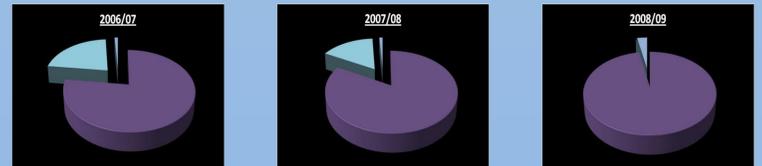
Methodology

The methodology adopted in this work is that of a piece of on going action research, originating from work initially analysed and presented as a case study at the Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN) conference in 2010 and developed into an electronic format and presented at the 2011 TEAN Conference. It is evident that the supporting documentation produced from this work is organic in nature and it will continue to evolve over time as more trainees complete their studies and provide yet further suitable evidence in pursuit of the standards for QTS.

It has been possible to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of this form of evidence and its collation after completion by the current cohort of trainee teachers undertaking their relevant Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course. Interviews have taken place with trainees and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) to seek opinion about the validity of work covered and the range of evidence used and the format in which it has been presented.

Results and Discussion

A cohort of trainees who successfully completed their training at Edge Hill University were contacted during their first year of full time teaching and asked a number of questions relating specifically to the documentation produced and discussed here. 100% of those that responded to the request for data stated that they had used the documentation provided to help them gather a range of high quality evidence suitable to demonstrate that they had met the standards for the award of QTS. Respondents in the research sample also provided feedback about the suitability of the documentation, this is summarised thus:



Cohort	Cohort Size	Highly Suitable	More Detail Required	Other
2006/07	18	72.2%	22.2%	5.6%
2007/08	24	83.3%	12.5%	4.2%
2008/09	34	97.1%	0.0%	2.9%

Responses were grouped into overarching categories to aid analysis. Convincingly, a significant majority of respondents said that the material produced was highly suitable to aid them in collating and presenting their evidence in pursuit of QTS. Other noteworthy comments included; could this be adapted for online submissions and could this be produced differently showing a sorted list of items and which standards they could be used against, so it is organised by item rather than QTS standard.

Current trainees are working with a metamorphosed version of this resource in an electronic format, and their opinions and perceptions will be used to form the next phase of this study. It is also recognised that the current UK government is in the process of reviewing the minimum standards of competence of teachers and this will have a direct influence on the work being undertaken here.



"Secondary NQTs rated the overall quality of assessment and feedback they received, and support and guidance they received to achieve the standards for QTS, higher than in the previous survey".