

Teaching in Poland:



**An Initial Teacher Education
initiative to develop skills in
meeting the needs of learners
with English as an Additional
Language**

Aims

To present some ongoing research which seeks explore a project that we have developed over a period of time with our Secondary pre service teachers (trainee teachers) undertaking the PGCE course at Liverpool Hope University.

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Drivers for establishing the project

- Teachers in England need to be prepared to meet the needs of learners who have English as an additional language (EAL learners)
- There can be limited opportunities to work with EAL learners within our Schools / University partnership

This led to the development of a collaborative partnership with Nicolaus Copernicus University (Torun , Poland) who facilitate our trainees teaching for a week in Polish school.

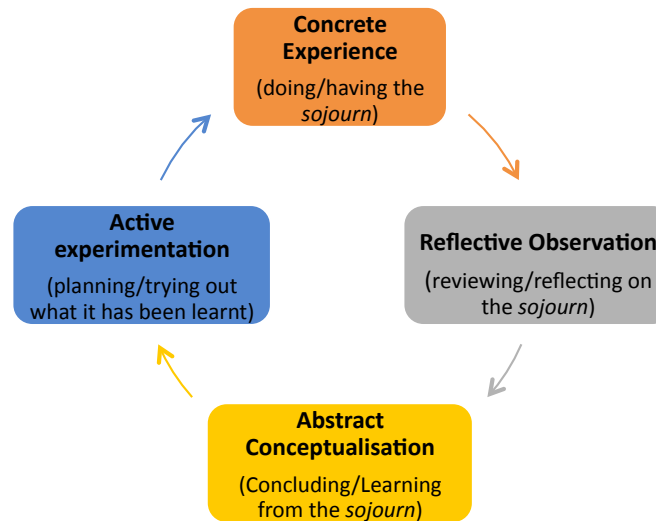
Design of the project: our pedagogical model

A rationale was based on Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), Situative Theory (Putnam and Borko ,2000) and Dewey's (1938) ideas about active deliberate engagement with problematic situations for learning.

Kolb describes as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

Experiential Learning Theory “...provides a model for educational interventions in study abroad because of its holistic approach to human adaptation through the transformation of experience into knowledge” (Passarelli and Kolb , 2012,p.138)

Design of the project: our pedagogical model



Design of the project: our pedagogical model

- Situative theory - A central tenet of situative perspectives is that the contexts and activities in which people learn is fundamental to that learning process
- Problematic situations for learning – unknown classes , EFL learners with varied levels of English language confidence, having to reflect in action and adapt

Design of the project: our pedagogical model

- Trainees received guidance on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methods before the project (Coyle et al, 2009,p3)

“...an educational approach in which various language supportive methodologies are used which leads to a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given to both to the language and the content”.

- Trainee teachers work collaboratively , co-teaching in pairs, observed and supported by peers and a tutor.
- Teams meet on a daily basis to discuss and evaluate their teaching.
- Reflection is led by the trainees, with tutor support.

The research methods

Quantitative data collection :

- Questionnaires used with the whole PGCE cohort before the project (n=73)
- Questionnaires used with the participants immediately after the project (n=60)

Qualitative data collection :

- Interviews with participants a few months after the project (ongoing analysis of these)

Findings

- 93% participants claimed to have an increased confidence in their ability to teach EAL pupils
- But there were some other benefits which we hadn't anticipated would be so evident

Findings: perceived enhancement of skills

Teaching skill	% greatly or sig. enhanced
Ability to adapt lessons	89
Team teaching skills	70
Peer observation skills	82
Non-verbal communication skills	58
Range of EAL strategies	83
Ability to demonstrate enthusiasm for subject	71
Ability to reflect in action/during teaching	78
Ability to reflect on action/after teaching	87

Qualitative data

Open questions were used to probe:

- the wider skills and understanding gained by participants
- how participants perceived the experience would impact upon their future practice as teachers
- 179 comments were analysed by coding

Findings: Theme, “EAL skills”

- *It has given me a lot more confidence in teaching EAL pupils back at home*
- *If future practice includes working with EAL pupils, I feel much more confident in this aspect and will be able to address the issue better*
- *Use of EAL activities such as non-verbal communication, use of images and getting pupils to repeat words*
- *I had not had any real EAL experience in my first placement. I feel confident working with EAL in my next school*

(16 comments)

Findings : Theme, “ Clarity of verbal communication”

- *I am aware that I need to speak slower*
- *I have learned about scaffolding for language not just subject content*
- *The need to reinforce key words and explain tasks clearly*
- *Simplification of vocabulary*
- *I have taken away useful hints and tips that I have learnt from peers, e.g. hand gestures and how to chunk information and explain things in easy to understand pieces.*

(38 comments)

Findings : Theme, “Adaptability”

- *I have improved my ability to adapt lessons during teaching*
- *It has given me a great ability to adapt lessons as and when necessary...thinking on the spot of different strategies to get pupils to understand*
- *When lessons need to be adapted I will be more confident with this*
- *Being able to adapt and change quickly working with others team teaching*
- *My skills as a teacher have broadened in having been forced to move away from teaching with powerpoints*

(45 comments)

Findings : Theme, “non verbal communication”

- *I now have more ideas of how to explain key terms visually*
 - *Incorporate more body language*
 - *Recognised the importance of non-verbal communication*
- (9 comments)*

Findings : Theme, “learning from observing outside of subject specialism”

- *I have learnt a lot from watching other subjects and how they approached teaching in an EAL setting, such as envoy tasks and using visuals on the board*
- *I have developed my teamwork skills and I think team teaching is rewarding and a lot of fun*
- *The ability to observe different lessons from multiple subjects is a really good aspect of the trip*

(7 comments)

Findings : Theme, “capacity to reflect upon teaching”

- *How to observe lessons and key things to look for*
- *Ability to adapt and reflect on lessons/activities*
- *My reflective practice skills have been greatly enhanced, and through observing/being observed by my peers, my ability to adapt and improve lessons has developed*

(10 comments)

Summary of findings

- As we anticipated trainees appear to be benefitting from this experience in terms of their confidence to teach EAL pupils, their EAL teaching skills and generally communication skills.
- More unexpected findings are that trainees claim there were benefits in terms of their adaptability and ability to reflect on the teaching of others and their own teaching.

Conclusions

- Trainees development during the PGCE is mainly in the form of experiential learning and trainees develop proficiency using the 'plan, teach, reflect, adapt' cycle.
- A short, focused international experience such as this Poland experience amplifies this effect, due to the new, unfamiliar, challenging nature of the context.
- Additionally, a carefully planned model in which structured reflection is built in to the pattern of the day ensures that maximum benefits can be attained.

Next Steps

- Analysing the interview data is ongoing and will provide an insight in to the longer term perceived benefits
- Planning further research linked to the next Poland project which will take place in December 2017.