Welcome to the PGCE Partnership Newsletter: English and History Special Edition

This edition of the PGCE Partnership Newsletter is focusing on the excellent contribution that English and History trainees, mentors and tutors have made to the profession over many years.

We are aiming to thank and celebrate many of the excellent teachers, tutors and trainees who have been involved in successfully training English and History trainees with the University of York Partnership.

We have Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Directors of Initial Teacher Training, SENCOs, advisors, expert classroom practitioners, Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Assistant Heads and Museum Education Staff amongst our Alumni.

The Value of Mentoring

Mentoring trainee teachers is time consuming; the paperwork can be a drag and supporting someone in the very first stages of their career is a daunting responsibility to take on. I was dreading the prospect. Here’s the but...everyone benefits from having a trainee teacher in the department. I’ve benefitted as a mentor; I’ve had far more high quality discussions and debates about teaching and learning than can be achieved with other forms of CPD, and discussing teaching and learning in a reflective and meaningful way is central to our profession and the development of pedagogy. The department and staff benefit - trainees bring energy and enthusiasm that is needed in a profession that feels under attack. Students benefit - trainees provide ideas and approaches to teaching that renew and rejuvenate tired schemes of work. At its simplest level, having more adults in schools means more time and attention for the students which more than anything makes the biggest impact on their progress. Those of you reading this will more than likely know all this already, but the bigger picture is easily forgotten when you’re going through Form M, N, X, Y or Z so it’s perhaps worth reminding ourselves occasionally not just how important mentoring is, but how beneficial it is to us all.

Philip McTigue
History Teacher & Mentor
Harrogate Grammar School
History Trainee 2010 – 2011

Our Legacy: Impact on Pupils

These past four years leading the PGCE English course have been truly wonderful and have cemented my long standing association with the course. Arriving at Malton School in 1996 as their new Subject Leader for English at the grand old age of 28, I found myself immediately mentoring English trainees from York, along with just one or two other responsibilities. Six years later I moved to a post at The Joseph Rowntree School and, in addition to hosting trainees in my classroom and facilitating training sessions for groups of trainees, I was lucky enough one year to be given permission to accompany Year 10 students to the English PGCE Gifted and Talented Day. It was a memorable experience for all the right reasons, but don’t take my word for it, here’s what Tess Ellison, one of my former pupils, remembers about it even now:

“I attended Joseph Rowntree School in York a as pupil from 2001-8. English was always one of my favourite subjects, but the Year 10 English Day at the University of York was an extra special treat, an experience that will always stick with me. A group of pupils judged as Gifted and Talented, including me, got the opportunity to work with trainee teachers in exciting, innovative workshops on topics complementary to the GCSE English syllabus. It was great to be welcomed into a vibrant university environment at the age of only 15. We were encouraged to jump the academic age-gap and offered activities that were models of creativity, led by imaginative young teachers. I have a particularly vivid memory of two sessions exploring Shakespeare. The first was ‘Dressing Lady Macbeth’. After a brainstorm of her traits, small groups could create a scratch-costume for the character from a range of junk and glitz – think a slit bin bag dress with added feather work and gems! It was a fun, different way to tap into the character. The second exercise was based on interpretations of King

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Lear. We discussed the ending of the play and its range of acting decisions in detail and were then tasked with performing it, just thrown into the breach of delivering the ‘never, never, never’ speech. I remember so enjoying the opportunity to get to grips with a great piece of text with similarly-engaged peers, as well as bright (and inevitably cool!) university students. The whole day was a testament to the imagination and enthusiasm of the English PGCE students at York – a real highlight of my GCSE experience.”

Reading Tess’ words, I am struck again by the powerful legacy of the PGCE course at York, but also the power of teaching. One day, one hour really can make a difference in the lives of young people when talented, committed and creative York trainees weave their magic. For the past four years I have been well and truly entranced.

Catherine Shawyer, PGCE English Course Leader 2010-2014

Vim and Vigour

Trainees bring a renewed sense of vim and vigour into departments. Their energy, enthusiasm and curiosity challenge us to re-think our lessons, and there is nothing more likely to make you teach better than seeing them sitting at the back of the class, earnestly writing down everything that you unthinkingly say or do. Trainees can make you feel like a fraud, as you try to think of critical comments to make about their pristine resources and immaculately crafted lesson plans. Trainees, in summary, make us the teachers that we want to be, and add enormously to departments. It is an old truism to say that the best way to learn something is to teach it. However, in training trainees, I feel that I, and the rest of my department, have had an amazing opportunity to critically review our own practice. With York University we have had the privilege of working with some of the best young teachers in the country, and I am exceptionally grateful for this. Not only have we had the pleasure of discussing some of the most current academic positions on pedagogy, but we have also gained some beautiful resources that I know I would never have made. If this is the end of an era with the PGCE, then I, as a Head of Department, mourn its passing.

George Hollis
Head of History Lady Lumley’s Assistant Headteacher at Thirsk School from September 2014
History Mentor

Trainees who Make a Mark

Huntington School has hosted countless PGCE trainees from the University of York over many, many years. Most passed the course; a few dropped out and nobody failed (though a few were advised to consider an alternative career path). There are many trainees’ stories and anecdotes – too many to count – but one story stands out as a great lesson in life. It is an example of the Partnership at its best, giving an opportunity to a talented young woman who went on to enrich the lives of everyone she encountered. Jess Thompson was a sparky young lady full of enthusiasm and spirit. Her devotion to teaching and learning - that every student really mattered to her - was unquestionable. She was a team player and in many instances, the team captain. As her school mentor at the time, I recall with crystal clarity our first Mentor’s Meeting in 2008, when she said, ‘Geof, I think I should tell you, I have a terminal illness and the prognosis is I have only ten years to live at the most.’ Speechless at this news, there were hundreds of questions I would have liked to ask, but all seemed trivial and unnecessary. Through the support of The University of York and members of the English Department, she completed a very successful placement at Huntington School, secured a teaching position at Fulford School and, fortunately for us, returned to teach as a member of the English Department at our school, in 2010. Jess battled valiantly with her illness, never allowing it to get in the way of her classroom teaching and departmental responsibilities. She lived for teaching and loved the students she taught. Sadly, Jess died in February of 2012, but left behind a legacy for us all. In PGCE as in life, she taught us to appreciate each and every day. Live life to the full, one and all.

Geof Walker
English Mentor (now retired)
Huntington School

An Incredible Journey

The PGCE course at The University of York has been the most amazing thing I have ever done. In July I found out that I had been awarded my QTS. I am so excited starting my teaching career. During my PGCE I taught and planned lessons, marked work, wrote assignments, delivered presentations, read lots of books, dressed up as literary characters and even donned a pig mask in Whitby…and all of these experiences have moulded me into the Newly Qualified Teacher that I am. My tutors were unbelievably skilled at getting to know each trainee on the course as an individual, and at providing each of us with the care and support needed to succeed on the incredible PGCE journey. This rewarding and challenging course has equipped me with a rich set of skills as a new teacher embarking on my NQT journey. I am eternally grateful to the PGCE co-ordinator, David Rash, and every single person that I worked with during my PGCE. You have all helped to shape me into the teacher that I have become. Thank you.

Jo Day
English teacher at Archbishop Holgate’s School
English trainee 2013-2014
Why should a Department be involved in Teacher Training?

We have been involved with the PGCE History partnership for more years than I care to remember! We have had a fabulous variety of students train with us at Fulford. We have loved having students in the Department (even when they have needed lots of extra help!) They have brought endless benefits: enthusiasm; new ideas; a fresh outlook; fun!

I hope that they have also enjoyed and benefitted from their time with us. Many would describe us as scary, opinionated and emotional but I would describe us as experienced, passionate and caring! I think we have shared our experience, passion, enthusiasm and (sometimes stress) and given them a great grounding for their future career in teaching History.

Kate Jenner
History Teacher & Mentor
Fulford School

The Best Possible Professional Start

I have such fond memories of my PGCE at York. We were a particularly ‘social’ cohort: lots of banter in and around seminars, a real ‘shared’ experience. There is something joyful about being with like-minded people and we learned a lot from each other. I loved the variation of the course: the subject specific and general teaching sessions; building up our expertise, our confidence and sharing resources. We were challenged, invited to question and encouraged to develop our own style of pedagogy. Upon reflection it was a rounded experience that allowed me to start my career feeling confident within my subject area, but also as a new employee negotiating the complex requirements of being a teacher. How do you teach ‘Outstanding’ lessons and deal effectively with a distressed adolescent, angry parent, disgruntled caretaker, data-savvy manager? Of course there are good and bad days in teaching, but even though my career path has moved towards a specialism in Drama, my PGCE was a comprehensive grounding that allowed me to trust my own judgement. When I was asked to deliver Drama sessions for subsequent cohorts of English trainees, I was delighted, but I totally underestimated how important it would become to me. It’s exciting to be around enthusiasm and commitment. There’s a sense that you’re at the start of an adventure and I found that my own teaching was inspired by the experience of preparing those sessions and working with those English trainees. Recently an ex-pupil wrote me a note:-

“Thanks for being that teacher, the first one. The first one to say ‘You’re good at something, do it, do it more’. Thanks for inspiring me ”

We should never underestimate the role we play in shaping young people’s lives. I am very lucky in that I had the best possible start and my connection with the PGCE Team since qualifying has continued to enrich my own teaching adventure.

Bev Veasey
Formerly Subject Leader & AST in Drama at Huntington School.
Currently working for AQA as an Examiner and Trainer
English Trainee 1996-1997

PGCE Partnership Newsletter
The Web of Support

One of the greatest strengths of the York PGCE is the web-like community that has built up around it. The trainees are the heart of this, forming the threads that link the partner schools together. Working with York trainee teachers has been an absolute highlight of my first three years of teaching. I have had the opportunity to mentor trainees for long and short placements and to deliver sessions to groups of trainees at the University. This has proven to be incredible CPD for both myself and the department. It has helped me push my practice forward as trainees have brought new ideas, techniques and resources into the school. Without fail these have been wonderful people: committed, energetic and enthusiastic. This has a less tangible effect on the school of injecting renewed vigour and commitment to the departments they work in and for me as an individual. Some trainees even come close to challenging the 2010-11 cohort for the coveted “Best Ever” award. Keep an eye out for them in schools. They’re easy to recognise for two reasons - firstly there is probably a slightly haunted look in their eyes and secondly they’re likely to be absolutely fantastic teachers.

Hugh Richards History Teacher
Wetherby High
Moved to Huntington School in September 2014
History Trainee 2010-2011

A Lifetime of Memories

The York English PGCE course was a thoroughly enjoyable experience – it provided not only the academic rigour and pedagogy required to be an outstanding teacher, but created a wonderful environment to make lifelong friends. Through the excellent guidance of Catherine Shawyer, I think all of my peers would agree that we gained confidence in ourselves as well as learning how to become the best learning-facilitators possible. Back in 2010-2011 we also had the intriguing presence of Nick McGuinn to teach us Drama and the delightful Nicola Towle to brighten up our afternoon! Our tutors were an eclectic bunch who made us the teachers we are today.

The training did not stop at the classroom, but extended to help us find suitable jobs too. The Interview Experience Day, hosted by one of the Partnership Schools, which I then went on to work in as an NQT, was eye-opening and extremely valuable, if not a little terrifying also! Workshops on completing the application letter, preparing for the interview lesson and sitting a mock interview with members of the Senior Leadership Team were all fantastic experiences to help us with the real thing! I was privileged to have been both on the receiving end of the Interview Experience Day in my trainee year and then involved in running sessions for new PGCEers in the two years that followed. In this respect, York PGCE has given me valuable CPD experience several years after I had qualified as an NQT! As the York PGCE for English draws to a close, I just want to say thank you to all those who were involved in my initial training. The course may have only lasted nine months, but it has provided me with a lifetime of memories and a repertoire of effective and creative teaching strategies.

Helen Saunders
Second in English
Carmel College, Darlington
Formerly English Teacher at St. Aidan’s C of E School
English Trainee 2010-2011

Who to Thank?

Not going to lie, it breaks my heart a little to reflect on the end of an era for the History PGCE since for me it remains a moment that is still so fresh and sweet in the memory! This makes reflecting on the course and my experience of it rather tricky. On the one hand do I focus on recognising the amazing tutors for continuing to prove to me that teachers are some of the kindest, supportive and most influential people I have the pleasure of meeting? Or do I recognise my course mates, who show me that teachers are still some of the most fun and bonkers of individuals? Or do I single out the fantastic schools in which I was placed? Equally, I could pay tribute to every music video, dance off, Friday afternoon of cake inspired gluttony, random escapades to the beach or my own personal satisfaction from working with truly inspirational people. But overall, perhaps these words are best suited to saying a huge thank you to everyone at York whom I had the great privilege of meeting. You gave me some hugely memorable moments and helped get me to where I am now, making a positive difference in the lives of others. Thank you.

Iain Hinchley
History Teacher, Mount St. Mary’s Catholic School
History Trainee 2013-2014

Aidan’s C of E School
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Aidan’s C of E School
English Trainee 2010-2011
An Amazing Partnership

A good word cloud, as many teachers know, can prompt, reflect, or summarise ideas. This one does all three: it reflects the opinions of mentors and other colleagues of mine about the contribution made by the English section of the excellent University of York’s PGCE course. It summarises the qualities and skills shown by all those we have worked with over the last decade or so. And of course, it could prompt us to cry, protest, and bewail the changes imposed on us by the PGCE and beyond. Yet another card sort, the last thing I want to do is spend another week at the same school to complete their Professional Enrichment. It’s a good job then that I didn’t have an average PGCE History student. During that week my student transformed the KS3 attainment criteria into a technicolour rainbow level free flightpath to success. The flightpath showed four different expected progress pathways for pupils, parents and staff to track their learning journey through History at Secondary School. Unbelievably they also managed to incorporate all of the above into a bespoke exemplar Scheme of Learning for the Local History Unit.

Key Skill: Organisation

When I started to reflect on my experience of teacher training I was overwhelmed with sessions and experiences which have since impacted upon my teaching practice. I am about to begin my 6th year of teaching and in this time I have worked in numerous roles at school. My teacher training has had an impact on every aspect of my career to date, but by far what has stayed with me most is the level of professionalism and organisation which was instilled in us throughout my training. I remember filling in purple sheets with lesson ideas I wanted to try, and yellow sheets for target setting. I recall noting after each lesson what had gone well, and what I would change, and filing everything carefully as evidence for the Standards. Now, whenever I am asked the dreaded interview question ‘What is your biggest strength?’ I always reply ‘Organisation’. Not only has it been essential to turn up to every lesson prepared and planned, it has been equally important in other areas. As an organised form tutor my tutees know exactly what to expect from me each day. When preparing a scheme of work for my team I ensure they can easily find all of the resources they need. Similarly, when coaching and mentoring other staff, being organised in planning a meeting or session is vital. When I begin the new term this September I will also be starting in my new post of Senior Tutor for KS4; a pastoral role which I have been wanting for some time. This is a role which I know will present many new challenges and demands on my time, and I am confident my greatest tool to tackle these will be organisation.

Fae Austin
History teacher
South Holderness School
History trainee 2008-2009

The Power of Professional Enrichment

Perhaps, after an exhausting main placement dealing with that post option year 9 group or laminating yet another card sort, the last thing your average PGCE History student would want to do is spend another week at the same school to complete their Professional Enrichment. It’s a good job then that I didn’t have an average PGCE History student. During that week my student transformed the KS3 attainment criteria into a technicolour rainbow level free flightpath to success. The flightpath showed four different expected progress pathways for pupils, parents and staff to track their learning journey through History at Secondary School. Unbelievably they also managed to incorporate all of the above into a bespoke exemplar Scheme of Learning for the Local History Unit.

Now on reflection it is obvious what I got out of it, but what about the trainee? Well, the opportunity to detach themselves from the classroom in a setting they know and understand, to tackle such a challenging task at the sharp end of teaching History in 2014 must have been invaluable. They are now well ahead of the preparation curve for life without levels and the new curriculum from September. The trainee is perfectly positioned to be a real asset in their new school in regard to the major challenges facing them in the new term and beyond. Average, most certainly not.

Steve Hardy
Head of History & History Mentor
York High School
History Trainee 2002-2003
A Saintly Sonnet: An Ode to the York English P.G.C.E Course

All Saints has been blessed from the very first day
We welcomed trainees from ‘up the hill’.
In times past they would have been met by Mrs Fay
Whose words of wisdom will be with them still.

Trainees have given us more than they’ve taken:
Enthusiasm; energy; laughter and joy.
Often they have re-kindled and indeed re-awakened
Our love for the profession we really enjoy.

A more lasting legacy the course has given us
Beyond resources lovingly kept on hard drives.
From Alys our inspirational drama goddess
To Amy our latest lovely alumni to arrive.

Nurtured by caring tutors the fledglings have flown the nest,
Inspiring students everywhere: they’re simply the best.

Kate Vernon Rees
English Mentor & Professional Tutor
All Saints School

Lasting Foundation

I am just about to submit my final assignment for my Masters in Teaching and Learning at Oxford University. The work that I did at York and, in particular, the high standard of academic work that we were pushed to achieve has been absolutely invaluable to my Masters.

I have referred back to my PGCE notes a number of times and there were times in lectures and seminars that I was able to refer back to my PGCE knowledge to help both myself and to help others who did not have the same grounding.

This year my school was inspected. When preparing lessons for the inspection I went back to the basics that I had learnt on the PGCE, from structuring lesson plans to thinking creatively for lesson activities. The course has really provided a lasting foundation that I consistently use in my day to day teaching.

Doing my PGCE at York University I did expect the course to be of a high standard. What I did not expect was to have such an amazing cohort which still keeps in touch. I only need to put a brief message on Facebook asking for help and before I know it I receive emails from around the world with lesson plans, resources and offers of advice and help. Being part of the cohort at York continues to help me as a teacher.

Anna Fielding
History Teacher at St Edwards School
Oxford
History Trainee 2009-2010

The Most Significant Professional Step of My Career

I well remember my journey to York in the Spring of 1991 to an interview to become the PGCE course leader for English. The course was being re-established after a break of some years and I, Head of English at a comprehensive school in Harrow, was putting my hat in the ring.

I got the job and so began a journey which I still regard as the most significant of my professional career - devising the course, interviewing prospective students and teaching them how to become English teachers. I remember the excellent colleagues I worked with, both in the School of Education and those Heads of English across York, North Yorkshire and Humberside with whom I established such close working relationships.

But mostly I remember the students on the course. What an interesting and varied bunch they were in the five years that I taught them. I was so proud of their initiative, their commitment and their developing professional knowledge and skills. I know that many have gone on to extremely successful careers.

The closing of the York English PGCE course is a travesty - a waste of potential and excellent practice. I fear an emerging teacher recruitment and retention crisis. I do not believe that the School Direct method of initial teacher training can match the quality of a good university/school based partnership and I fear that the country will come to regret.

Mary Bousted, English PGCE Course Leader 1991-95
Current ATL president
Key Skill: Collaboration

For all trainee teachers, the PGCE student included, the Teaching Standards inhabit a compartment of the brain entitled: ‘Remember these, or you’re a goner!’ But for the History trainee, Standard 3 looms that little bit larger. I began my PGCE knowing an awful (perhaps embarrassingly) lot of stuff about the Greeks and Romans. But after 476 AD, things became more than a little hazy. The problem was not with me (I hope), but rather the nature of the beast. History is not one of the subjects that you ever know intimately. What if I was caught out? There were classrooms out there, full of students waiting to pounce with impossibly hard questions. And if I could not answer them, they would surely have no respect for me.

But on the day I started my PGCE, I quickly found myself in a room full of trainees with a very similar predicament. One was an expert in Black American slavery. Another knew women’s suffrage to bits. Yet another had about as unhealthy an obsession with Cardinal Wolsey as I did with Augustus. Most knew a little of the 20th Century. And no one knew about the Ottomans. But here the York PGCE provided something I don’t think other trainee routes could hope to do. We spent a year together, constantly sharing our knowledge and helping build up each other’s confidence. Everything I coerce my own students to do, I did myself with fellow trainees. I speed-dated. I made videos, timelines and infographics. You name it, we probably did it. And every session or task based on enhancing subject knowledge sought to channel our collaboration in a way that led to excellent teaching resources and methods. In fact, it would be hard to imagine even another PGCE dedicating as much energy to this. We were sent out through York, to learn from experts and use new found insight in an educational context. People were brought to us from English Heritage and the Centre of Holocaust Education, to name just a few. Each week, York PGCE provided more and more ways to build up our own expertise. And now I absolutely love it when I get questions from my students.

Joshua Crosby
History teacher at Gateways School
History Trainee 2012-2013

Key Skill: Creativity

It is difficult to condense what I learnt on my PGCE, but if I was to highlight three things they would be: to work collaboratively, to take risks and to reflect. I feel it is these which have underpinned my teaching every day since I left the University of York. Collaborative projects on my PGCE showed how a collective approach can be more effective. Our A’ Level day, teaching the holocaust to Easingwold students and producing a project on York 800, all showed me the benefit of working together, something that is not instilled in you during your undergraduate degree. I learnt that it is not about what lesson you can produce but what you can do for others to share, and what you can learn in return. Taking risks has been another vital aspect of teaching, especially when using technology, as many PGCE sessions (Dave West’s session on using videos in the history classroom and Paula’s session on podcasts to name a couple) showed me the versatility of teaching and to not be afraid to try new techniques. Progressing my use of technology from my PGCE year, I am now part leading an innovation group on teaching with 1:1 technology. I feel my PGCE has shown me that new teachers can have a CPD input into a school system where people have taught for years. It is also important to get involved in the wider picture of teaching and learning across the school and not be confined to your department. The final and most valuable lesson I learnt was to reflect. If I take one thing away from a bad lesson, it is not what has gone wrong but how I can ensure it goes differently next time. This was the most valuable lesson of all from my PGCE.

Rebecca Duerden
History Teacher
Manor C of E Academy
History Trainee 2011-2012
My PGCE Made Me

My PGCE in History at the University of York gave me so much – but the biggest lesson it taught me was that hard work really does pay off. I used to be the self-appointed 'queen of the last minute'. At school and during my undergraduate degree, I was 'lucky' enough not to have to revise for more than a day beforehand, or spend more than roughly thirty-six hours writing and referencing an essay, to get top grades. I was mistakenly proud of this ability - believing it meant I was more naturally gifted than my peers - and it did mean I didn’t have to sacrifice my social life, or my extracurricular interests, which I thought could only be a good thing. I didn’t realise, however, that I was trading something else - the satisfying process of doing history, and the time-management, research, and organisational skills that come with it. Naturally, when I started my PGCE at Masters-level, I assumed I could play the old tricks and get top grades in all my assignments. Of course, I had matured, and knew I couldn’t risk the 'last-minute' approach when planning or doing any work for my placements - and so I definitely put in the hours, managed my time well, and ensured that all of my actual teaching practice and work in a school setting was top-notch. That was crucial to my development away from the 'entity theory'. I was beginning to realise that nobody is born' a teacher - they are made, through determination, hard work, and constant reflection and evaluation on your practice. However, when it came to the assignment part of the course (three 4000 word essays on educational theory and practice), I am now ashamed to admit that I maintained the approach I had always taken to my academic work. Unsurprisingly, for both these assignments, I did not get my desired Distinction grade - and even did worse in the second essay than the first! Something had to change. The game was up, and to make matters worse, the third assignment was a 'special study' on a topic of my choosing. I wanted to do justice to my chosen topic, but more importantly, the time had come for me to practice what I was preaching on a daily basis to the pupils I taught - that hard work is the key to success. After consultation with both my tutors, I came up with a simple plan. Start the assignment well in advance, work on it steadily every week, and leave myself two clear days for proof-reading at the end. This was all novel to me, but I knew I had to start working hard if I was going to teach children to do so. To cut a long story short, it worked. Of course - my tutors were truly two of the wisest women I’ve ever known! I achieved a comfortable Distinction, but it was not the grade itself which delighted me. It was the satisfaction - that feeling people had told me about, but I hadn’t experienced - of working incredibly hard, for a sustained period of time, on a project you intrinsically care about, and that effort being recognised. The PGCE gave me so much - it helped me start a career I will love, gave me confidence and independence, and helped me really grow up. However, it also shook off a thought pattern and set of beliefs about education and academia that I had held since the age of 11 - for more than half my life. It replaced my self-denigrating, empty attitude with a positive and truly fulfilling one. Now, when I tell pupils that hard work really does pay off, I am speaking from a truly personal experience – and I only have the PGCE History team from the University of York to thank for a lesson I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Laura Horton
Ruislip High School
History Trainee 2012-2013

Leadership Skills

My second year of teaching has thrown new challenges and responsibilities my way. Most importantly, I have been responsible for a large number of exam classes across KS4 and KS5. It is my first year at the school and the first time teaching either of the specifications. All of this is going on, without a Head of Department. Training at York certainly equipped me to handle these situations. Under Paula, Helen and Ian’s guidance I was developed into more than just a classroom practitioner and the transition into NQT year and beyond has been seamless thanks to them.

Next year I am moving on to a Second in Department job and I know that I am able to progress already due to the base I was given. The chances to challenge myself were varied and often and gave each of our cohort the chance to take leadership roles as well as instilling in us the ability to work as a unit which is paramount in a school environment. Looking back on my training, I can safely say I am extremely glad I chose to complete my PGCE at York University and would make the same choice over and over again.

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