Newsletter

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From the Chair

A new academic year and a new chair for ITTE. I am looking forward very much to working with and for the membership of ITTE during the next two years. My view from the chair as I start my term of office is pretty foggy – I can see no clear horizons ahead. We are experiencing an unprecedented period of radical change in education at all phases from early years to higher education.

Those of us working in universities are experiencing increased pressures from both budgetary constraints and, for many colleagues, the requirement to produce high quality research outcomes. Change generates work and so the list of tasks-to-do grows, but the overall time and energy available for teaching, research and admin do not. It is a tough time to be working in a university. It is a doubly tough time to be in teacher education in a university as the Government seeks to shift the control of teacher education away from higher education and into schools. Initial Teacher Education

quotas will be increasingly diverted into school-based training as the capacity of schools to manage ITE programmes builds. Recently published research shows that for a study group of Newly Qualified Teachers their induction year experiences and mentor support in school focused on behaviour management and procedural matters at the expense of further developing pedagogical knowledge and reflective practice. That is a worrying finding if it can be extrapolated across other subjects and into initial training experiences. My personal view is that there is the significant and important role for university tutors to play in developing new teachers' skills and understanding away from the immediate pressures and constraints of a particular school context, while recognising the crucial role that school partners also play in the process. Effective working partnerships between schools and universities are the key to effective teacher education. I worry that the balance of existing successful partnerships is being put at risk by the implementation of Government policy.

There is also a major revision of the National Curriculum under way. Although the Government rhetoric emphasises the importance of subjects in the curriculum, the approach is a highly selective one. The future of ICT as a curriculum subject in its own right is at risk. A new awareness of the importance of computing skills is welcome, but the danger is that this is seen as an alternative to the wider knowledge and understanding encompassed by the broader curriculum area of ICT, and not as an important constituent of the IT curriculum on offer. The 'C' in ICT seems to have been dropped from much of the documentation - and I've just done it, too! We might debate the significance of this, but at another time and in another place. We will do all that we can as a member of the Council for Subject Associations to bring pressure to bear on policy makers to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum.

The new Professional Standards for Teachers have now been confirmed. I do not want to comment on them here other than to regret deeply the omission of any mention of the importance of the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Unless we have teachers in all phases of education who understand the affordances of digital technologies, then opportunities to enrich the experiences of both learners and teachers by using technology will be missed. The disappearance of the online ICT skills test, whether you love it or hate it, is another signal that the current government

does not value the contribution that technology can make to education if used thoughtfully and creatively. I'm delighted to say that Sarah Younie and Marilyn Leask have been successful in bidding for funds from HEA/JISC to develop Open Educational Resources in ICT. This Digital Literacy and Creativity project will run alongside the redevelopment and revival of the resources on our ICT-Tutors website and brings an opportunity to provide a rich online environment to promote and enhance the use of IT for teaching and learning. The original idea for the bid was created during a conversation after this summer's ITTE conference when three of us sat down and talked about the effects of the removal of the ICT skills test. We explored the possibilities for an online environment where teachers could develop their use of ICT in the classroom and share their experiences in a structured and creative way, with the possibility of academic recognition for their efforts and outcomes.

2012 is going to be an interesting and challenging year for all of us involved in teacher education.

Kate.E.Watson@exeter.ac.uk

Your Committee-here to help!!

Ex-officio members

Kate Watson	University of Exeter	Chair	2011-2013
Chris Higgins	Oxford Brookes University	Treasurer	
Margaret Danby		Secretary	
Steve Kennewell	Swansea Metropolitan University (retired)	Journal editor	

Elected members

Pete Bradshaw	Open University	2009 - 2012	
Andy Connell	University of Keele	2009 - 2012	Vice chair
Andrew Csizmadia	Newman University College	2011-2012	
Alison Hramiak	Sheffield Hallam University	2010 - 2013	
Helen Boulton	Nottingham Trent University	2010 - 2013	
Mike Richardson	Liverpool Hope University (retired)	2010 - 2013	
Lynne Dagg	University of Sunderland	2011 - 2014	
Moira Savage	University of Worcester	2011 - 2014	
James Bird	Oxford Brookes University	2011 - 2014	

Co-opted members

Ken Powell	Canterbury Christ Church University College	Ex-chair
Sarah Younie	De Montfort University	Collaboration with external partners
Graham Jarvis	Leeds Trinity University College (retired)	Communications co-ordinator
Rik Bennett	University of Chester (retired)	Consultations co-ordinator

From the Editor

In a fit of madness I agreed to, or volunteered to take on the editorship of the Newsletter. So here is my first attempt! I think this was on the basis that as a newly retired person I would have plenty of time!!! Well all those people who say they do not know how they found time to go to work would get my agreement. Well less of me and more of guiding you through this issue!

We have a new Chair in Kate Watson and in her report she talks about the changing times in which we all work and live and so it is interesting to see Terry Freedman's report on the **Westminster Forum Conference** that took place back in September. It raises interesting issues relating to the place of Technology in Education and how Initial Teacher Education responds to, as Terry puts it; "an educational ICT landscape which is shifting beneath our feet." Judging by recent discussions amongst members and press reports it would seem that policy makers are some distance away from coming to any conclusions.

Christina Preston's article: **Digital Initiatives in UK education since the election of the Coalition** identifies the worries felt by many of us where she states: "Thailand, Uruguay, Argentina and the US are moving forward swiftly to take the high ground on digital technologies in education, whereas in the UK the argument for maintaining education towards multiliteracy in the curriculum hangs in the balance."

A second piece from Christina is information about a series of sessions at BETT in January with the introduction to the English language of '**unconferences'!! If you want more information then please contact Christina.**

Sometimes it can seem 'doom and gloom' but the report from Sarah and Pete on evaluating the BBC News Report really shows the potential for engaging young people in the use of Technology for a worthwhile purpose as well as giving an understanding of the world of the media and the world of work.

Whilst on positive notes it is always great to welcome new tutors to the ITTE community and so thanks to the 'newbies' for giving a few thoughts with a longer reflection on the summer conference by Sue Sentance.

Thanks to Helen and Alison for their report on the ECER Conference in Berlin and their travails. I have to admit there should have been photographs with this article but they seem to have disappeared into the ether. So apologies to both for my disorganisation!!

Vanessa Matthews reflects on an App. which her niece was using and considers how appropriate it was for a young girl. What are your thoughts? Perhaps something for future newsletters!!!
AND FINALLY!!! Our newsletter would not be the same without Neil's web wanderings and from the bookshelf. Plus this time there is a bonus about 'His Latest Toy'!!

Thanks to all contributors and I look forward to those for the next Newsletter. If I could receive them by the end of February that would help get the next edition out for Easter.

Please send to g.p.jarvis@btinternet.com.

Report on the Westminster Forum Conference on Technology in Education

By Terry Freedman
Future of Technology in Education took place on the 13th September 2011. This article is a report on the main themes emerging from it rather than a blow by blow account of the event, which would serve only to bog us down in details.

It seemed to me that three themes were apparent, in most cases regardless of the actual topic under discussion. These were:

- Information
- "Localism" and
- The future of ICT.

Let's take each of these in turn.

Information

Lord Knight, who was at one time the Minister for Education with the ICT brief, drew a distinction between what he called "supply side reform", and demand-led reform. The former is the stuff that Government does because it can, such as focusing on accountability and incentivisation. The demand side, however, is more to do with consumer choice, and consumer voice.

"Technology gives us the opportunity to start to create a more informed consumer of education", he said, going on to mention online reporting and smartphone apps which can give parents access to more information about their own child. In his view, a more informed consumer will lead to a more demanding consumer.

This tied in with a statistic mentioned by Bob Harrison, Education Adviser at Toshiba, later in the conference:

"Sony produced some evidence that if kids don't get feedback on their performance within 3 seconds, not the two weeks Kieron, my stepson, takes for him to get a piece of work marked and given back, 3 seconds they'll put the kit down."

Jim Knight was talking about demand-led reform based on parents, but it's clear that there is an increasing demand – or, shall we say, expectations – from the youngsters themselves.

The theme of information was also raised in the context of procurement. Sheyne Lucock, General Inspector for IT at Barking and Dagenham, said that it was imperative for schools to assess the impact of technology, so that they can focus spending on the technology which will have the greatest impact. He strongly recommends applying cost-benefit analysis to future capital spending.

As an aside, I found this interesting because, depressingly often, when I ask people if they will be measuring the impact of their wonderful new investment or innovation they reply, "Oh, that's a good idea."

How you measure the impact is, of course, a challenge in itself. One way is to attempt to prove a causal relationship between the investment and the standards achieved in tests and exams. But this is difficult, and in any case, as Steve Connolly, from Hodder Education, pointed out, standards don't support rich data, i.e. not so much the final score in a maths test, but where your child is doing well and where they need help.

Providing rich data of this type is clearly possible with technology, which these days can make it readily available to the "consumer".

Localism

By "localism" I am referring to the idea of local solutions rather than centrally-imposed ones. Ian Potter, of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, believes that while centralisation can achieve economies of scale, it robs schools of their individual freedom.

This point was also made by Lucock, who suggested that centralisation (of procurement) is unpopular, expensive and liable to stifle innovation. This was echoed by Stephen Crowne, the former Chief Executive of Becta, in the context of procurement, and by Mike Allen, of RM, who informed us of the model adopted by the Harris group of Academies, in which there is a central ICT strategy which is customised to suit individual schools.

The future of ICT

This remains as unclear as ever, not least because different people understand different things when they think of ICT. Neil Hopkin, an Executive Headteacher, declared that, as old

fogeys, we're killing the excitement of technology for young people, and that we should listen to them more. He went on to give examples of how even very young children are using technology.

Simon Peyton-Jones, from Microsoft, promoted the idea of computer programming, which colleagues will know is a suggestion found more and more frequently.

And, as might be expected, several speakers mentioned the need to teach pupils "soft" skills such as collaboration, often referred to as "21st century skills".

Conclusion

Although I have described these themes separately, they are, I think, different aspects of the same thing. In the UK there is a trend in education in general, and ICT in particular, to less prescription (at least in theory), less hand-holding, more freedom for schools to decide for themselves what to do with ICT and, indeed, to decide what they mean by "ICT" in the first place.

The challenge for initial teacher training, I think, will be to prepare new teachers for an educational ICT landscape which is shifting beneath our feet.

An independent educational ICT consultant, Terry Freedman publishes the ICT in Education website at www.ictineducation.org and the newsletter "Computers in Classrooms" (www.ictineducation.org/newsletter).

Comings, Goings and Congratulations

As Kate and others have said we are in a time of great change and this means various changes to those in the community.

Some of us have chosen to retire and some have had retirement or change forced upon them.

So we should thanks to Mike Richardson for all his work for ITTE and for Helen Smith who tells about life after the University of Cumbria later.

We should also congratulate:

- Keith Turvey (University of Brighton)
- Pete Bradshaw(Open University)

for successfully defending their doctorates and to Christina Preston for her Professorship.

Andy Connell (Keele University) who becomes Vice Chair.

Claire Moore from the TDA has chosen to develop her passion for health and fitness alongside some teaching. We should thank her for her support for ITTE and her work alongside Tim Tarrant. The picture below is the night 9 of us were able to say thanks to Tim for his great work with ITTE. A great night and music!!!

DON'T FORGET
SUMMER CONFERENCE

5TH – 7TH JULY 2012

ST ANNE'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

Pastures New-Helen Smith

Graham's call for newsletter items, prompted me to put pen to paper for the cause. I am in the fortunate position of having time at the beginning of September to undertake this task. How can this be possible? Answer = I took voluntary redundancy from my full time employment at University of Cumbria on 31st July and have had a leisurely summer with no thought of forward planning, emails, module handbooks, validation panel training, training for AER (Annual Evaluatory Reviews), student problems, marking, resit marking, timetabling, clearing, freshers week …..etc. Please do not worry that I will be bored, as I have promptly signed up for the Genealogy Studies Postgraduate Programme with Strathclyde University – see
http://www.strath.ac.uk/genealogy/
I have also moved back to Scotland, as my husband is still working up north (well someone has to bring in the money) but we have also retained our home in Lancashire. On a more serious note, it might be helpful for ITTE members to hear from time to time about developments up north, where the old Computing Studies subject is now 'Computing and Information Science'. See web links below. Having had the privilege of working in Scotland and England, there is a wealth of resource with which to collaborate. I have enjoyed my 6 ITTE conferences and wish all my friends and colleagues the very best for whatever future awaits in this ever changing climate.
Helen M Smith – I can now be contacted on helenmcasmith@sky.com
In Scotland, the subject is now Computing and Information Science (at National 4, National 5 and Higher levels). See examples at
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/26824.html
http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/nationalqualificat ions/subjects/computing.asp
http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/usingglowandict/ roleofictinlearning.asp
http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/computing /index.asp

http://www.kelso.scotborders.sch.uk/departme nts/computing/adv_higher.htm
and an interesting history at
http://external.cis.strath.ac.uk/schoolscomputi ng/downloads/FutureOfComputingTNC.pdf

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ITTE Newbies!!!-some thoughts
James Bird (jbird@brookes.ac.uk)

I'm sat here thinking of my first experience of an ITTE conference. As I suspected I'm writing this quite a few months after the event – however certain key areas are coming back to me about the experience.

Friendly and Social
Right from wandering out for the new tutors' social on the first evening I was struck by how friendly and welcoming everybody was. We all seemed to be from quite different backgrounds – however still with the uniting bond of being largely the technology 'champions' on our respective courses.

Support group
Discussions about appropriate uses of technology in education were easy to start throughout the conference. To me this felt like some sort of support group for technology enhanced learning addicts – it was striking that it was so quick to get to a level of understanding and detail that would take much longer with 'other' staff.

Purpose
This conference did seem to have a real sense of purpose – namely making sense of the unfamiliar educational world that we are in at present. Due to the 'anniversary' element to the conference it was useful to see ITTE's history and its influence on education. This was in stark contrast to how potentially technology may be regarded in the curriculum. It will be good to be a part of these developments in the next few months and years.

Rachael Smith (rachael.smith@ntu.ac.uk)

I thoroughly enjoyed the 2011 ITTE conference at Keele University. As a new tutor, it was a bit daunting initially, however the new tutor evening managed to alleviate any uncertainty I had and I would strongly recommend attending this evening to any other new tutors who have recently joined ITT programmes but have not yet had the chance to attend the ITTE conference. The conference itself provided a great chance for new tutors to meet more experienced lecturers in other ITT programmes and share ideas/thoughts about the issues that are currently facing us all in this current economic climate. All the conference members were friendly and welcoming! However, for me, the most beneficial aspect of the conference was the workshops which took place on the second day. These workshops were a great way to enable me to see what good practices are going on at other universities and I found that they encouraged me to implement similar practices in my own programme.

Overall, the ITTE conference was a great event. Roll on the 2012 conference!

And in more detail.......

I was very fortunate to be funded by ITTE to attend the conference for the first time this year, as a new PGCE ICT tutor. New tutors arrive early, are fed and watered, and generally very well looked after. For me, this was very helpful in terms of getting to know a few people before the conference began. The conference was really interesting for me at a number of levels, and unlike any conference I had ever been to previously. In size it is small and friendly, and the participants obviously have good long-term working relationships, so it was reassuring to feel that ITTE was welcoming and willing to invest a considerable amount to give new tutors a good experience of the conference.

Of the conference content, I most enjoyed Stephen Heppell's visionary talk with his broad and refreshing views of education and

schooling. It was also fascinating to listen to Tim Tarrant and Graham Jarvis relate the changes that had taken place in their long histories in the area of teacher education in ICT. For myself, I am pleased that the topic of bringing more Computing into ICT education was raised as I feel this is a long overdue development and essential if we are to inspire and educate the children who will become the inventors and pioneers of new future technologies. Without devoting time in the classroom to teaching the essence of computation we will lag behind the rest of the world when it comes to producing brilliant technologists and computer scientists. These sentiments were echoed by Ed Schmidt of Google recently when he spoke to the Edinburgh Festival: "*I was flabbergasted to learn that today computer science isn't even taught as standard in UK schools. Your IT curriculum focuses on teaching how to use software, but gives no insight into how it's made. That is just throwing away your great computing heritage.*"

Learning Computing, however, is not always easy and teacher training should be a key focus in preparing new ICT teachers to be able to deliver computing across the key stages. We need to encourage more entrants to the teaching profession with Computer Science-related degrees, as these trainees have the depth of understanding of what lies behind the technologies we teach in schools. Computing is not just computer programming, but a rigorous academic subject, the study of which will hone students' logical thinking skills and stimulate creativity and inventiveness.

We also need to train our teachers to teach Computing as a discrete subject at key stages 4 and 5, in order to encourage young people to take up technology-related careers and to generate the Grace Hoppers and Tim Berners-Lees of the future. Where else can trainee teachers learn to do this other than on ICT teacher training courses? We all know that changes are afoot with the new National Curriculum approaching; this is a very exciting time for training teachers in the area of ICT and

Computing. It was really interesting at ITTE to be able to discuss these issues and their implications for teacher training, and as an organisation, ITTE is well-placed to encourage and stimulate debate within and outside its community.

To conclude, the ITTE conference meant a very enjoyable and stimulating few days for me. Most importantly, I met some new colleagues at the ITTE conference with whom I hope to keep in touch and also build up lasting working relationships. I look forward to the conference in 2012!

Sue.sentance@anglia.ac.uk

Digital Initiatives in UK education since the election of the Coalition

In the UK, innovative national projects in the use of computers in teaching and learning have been taking place since the late 1980s. These projects have moved in incremental stages from teacher training, to deploying educational software in classrooms and to introducing the internet. The new Coalition government are in a process of reassessing the impact of these national programmes and deciding what needs to be done next. So far the main pronouncement has been from David Willetts, UK Minister for Universities and Science, who wants to bring computer science back into the National Curriculum as a subject. Jim Norton, President of British Computer Society welcomed this move on the basis that this will provide pupils with the skills UK plc needs for the future. I am not opposed to drawing a distinction between digital multiliteracy and the academic discipline of computer science. MirandaNet Fellows have seen impressive presentations by young Czechs and Bulgarians in these two countries where computer science is still a school subject. But the challenge for the profession is that this initiative does depend on the constant updating of computer science teachers in schools if these skills are to be truly valuable in the jobs market. Is there the money or the will to do this well?

Although this computer science initiative is worthy it does not seem to follow on from the tremendous achievements that the UK have made in the field of digital technologies in education since the 1980s. The general consensus seems to be that we are still waiting for some more coherent pronouncements on the place of computers in the UK curriculum.

Disadvantaged learners in the UK

The negativity of the August riots in England, orchestrated with military precision through social networking, ought to provide yet a new an impetus for schools to engage with the social, ethical and cultural impact of mobile technologies.
In his blog, Chris Yapp, an adviser to the MirandaNet Fellowship, is concerned that Nick Gibb, the Minister of State for Schools, may not yet be persuaded of the value of multiliteracy for young people. Mr Gibb, UK Minister of State for Schools, has expressed his concern recently that many children are leaving school not knowing who Miss Haversham is. Some would say that a quick Google search will provide the information quickly enough if an acquaintance with Miss Haversham suddenly proves to be vital to a school leavers' success in life. But this may not be a fair view of Nick Gibb's focus. In this context, here he may be raising issues about the value of deep learning over a long period of time, in contrast to a quick internet fix to find immediate information. Indeed, there is much to be said for the social, cultural and historical value of reading Dickens in depth when time and other commitments make this possible. Indeed, the weekly distribution of a chapter as was Dickens habit, could now be recreated on RSS. My view is that the internet can provide the this kind of information quickly- but teachers still even better skills in helping learners in identifying provenance, prioritising, analysing and summarising copious layers of information for others. These deep learning skills can now be taught at younger and younger ages as well as the ethical and moral responsibilities of having so much information at the click of a mouse and so much power to publish.

The ICT curriculum

These issues were raised recently at the Policy Exchange, Westminster, the 'think tank' set up by education secretary Michael Gove MP. Naace, a professional organisation for educators engaged in using ICT for teaching and learning, put together an August gathering of colleagues from universities, schools, professional organisations and companies. Sadly ministers of the three political parties were not represented to hear what was said by the experts. The debate was focused on a comment by The Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General in the Government ICT Strategy March 2011: "ICT is a fundamental tool that every modern state needs, but is it being used to maximum effect to raise standards in our schools -and in view of the significant transformational effect it can have, is there enough policy direction attributed to it? In their press release Naace expounded on the principles that had emerged:

- Research is required into how teaching and learning strategies, and thus workforce CPD and standards, need to be shifted in order to address the current mismatch between human web-influenced behaviour, and educational practice;

- Research is required into ways in which lessons can be learned from consumer profiling practice, in order to make education technology realise corresponding benefits with consideration for pupil data protection issues;
- Facilitation and support is required for the sharing of practice between schools of how to effectively and safely use students (and other stakeholders) own devices as part of their everyday learning practices;
- Facilitation and support is required for the sharing of practice between schools, of how to effectively engage parents in meaningful ways, through the use of technology, which directly

supports and impacts on student standards;
- Facilitation and support is required for the sharing of practice between schools of how to use technology effectively to reduce costs, emissions and workload;
- A single, clear, overarching vision should be articulated by Government that positions the centrality of technology as a vehicle for achieving much broader educational success.

Merlin John, who edits Merlin on Line (http://www.agent4change.net/) covered the Policy Exchange meeting from a political angle. He was certain that the Coalition will be not be persuaded to ensure that UK ICT remains world class where it has been since the 1980s. Merlin recorded the comments of James Groves, head of education at the Policy Exchange, who admitted that the new Government had made a mistake by ignoring ICT over the last eighteen months and Bob Harrison robust statement that there is a massive gap between what the community of educators in digital technologies believe and what the Government is saying. Merlin suggested that a compromise might be reached if "a linkage" was identified between the meeting's focus on classroom practice and Government's policy of autonomy for schools.

Bob Harrison was right to express frustration within the UK ICT community. After many years of agreement between UK educators and politicians about the value of digital technologies in education and the importance for UK plc of this industry, the educators seem suddenly to have lost their intellectual agreement on this matter with those now in power. Thailand, Uruguay, Argentina and the US are moving forward swiftly to take the high ground on digital technologies in education, whereas in the UK the argument for maintaining education towards multiliteracy in the curriculum hangs in the balance.
But in her summing of the debate, Bernadette Brooks, General Manager, Naace, issued a challenge to the professionals in the field to bridge the gap: "At The Policy Exchange today

we have witnessed some brilliant examples of how ICT has played a significant role in increasing student motivation and driving up standards. It's our joint responsibility to ensure that the use of technology in our schools is world class, leading edge and a source of national pride and achievement. I genuinely believe this is possible, with purposeful collaboration, connecting of minds and ingenuity, hard work and determined spirit". Strong words that need action if UK plc is to remain a vibrant force in the field of digital technologies in education.

Dr Christina Preston
Founder of the MirandaNet Fellowship
www.mirandanet.ac.uk.
Professor of Educational Innovation, University of Bedfordshire

Achievement for All- Unconferences
BETT12 11th – 14th January, Olympia, London.

Achievement for All is a national programme which raises the aspirations, access and achievements of the lowest attaining 20% of learners and those with special educational needs and disabilities in schools. (www.afa3as.org.uk). During BETT12 11th – 14th January, Achievement for All will be working with the MirandaNet Fellowship (www.mirandanet.ac.uk) and other partner organisations to host a series of eight 'unconferences'.

An 'unconference' is a generic term for a democratic event that aims to involve all the educators, parents and carers who attend, not just the main speakers. All the contributions are represented in a knowledge base reflecting the current position about the topic in hand. In this series of unconferences the topic is to identify how established methods, as well as new approaches to using digital technologies improve the achievement of vulnerable learners, students from disadvantaged

backgrounds and those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Achievement for All is funded is being rolled out nationally after a successful pilot by the new charity Achievement for All (3As) in partnership with Price Waterhouse Cooper and funded by the Department for Education (DfE). The aim of the eight sessions at BETT12 is to create an interactive, multimodal web-based resource that can be used in professional development programmes for teachers, parents, carers, schools and wider community members joining the national roll out of the Achievement for All programme. Responsible, positive and safe uses of social media for sharing knowledge will be one theme, for example, that extends to all members of society.

Each session will be opened by Achievement for All members who will explain the programme's aims and achievements so far. Invited experts and organisations will briefly explain the specific Achievement for All related themes for the session from their own perspective and outline the shape the discussion might take based on questions entered into a collaborative digital concept map (www.mirandanet.ac.uk/mirandamods/). Each contributor will speak for between 2 to 5 minutes outlining their key points. Presentation software is not encouraged in order to promote engagement with the audience, but accompanying resources will be given a place in the knowledge base so that those who are interested can access more detail. Achievement for All coaches and champions will be participating in all the sessions and summarising what has been learnt.

All contributors to the knowledge base will be eligible for a certificate for participation in a professional development event and access to the resources collected over the four days.

Trainee teachers' engagement in a cross-curricular news project: impact on professional identity

Pete Bradshaw (1*) and Sarah Younie (2)
(1) Open University, (2) De Montfort University

On 7th September at BERA, the above ITTE members presented the findings from their ITTE evaluation project, funded by the TDA into the impact of the BBC News School Report project on trainee teachers.

In short, the project found that the professional identity of trainee teachers, is, in part, defined by their relationship to those who mentor and tutor them. As teachers in training they are in a role with less power than those who are responsible for their training, support and development.

The ITTE evaluation focused on the impact of trainee teachers' engagement in the BBC News School Report project and how this helped to form their professional identity. This was examined through the roles taken by trainee teachers in the project while on placement in schools, the activities they were consequently engaged in and the types of evidence generated for their assessment against the Standards for Qualified Teachers in England.

The evaluation of the project for Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), the government agency responsible for teacher training in England, involved the following instruments of data collection - surveys, focus groups and written reports. Respondents included trainee teachers themselves, their tutors as representatives of teacher education providers and their mentors as representatives of schools in which they were placed. The methodological approach was interpretative and phenomenological with qualitative and quantitative data being analysed for emergent themes.

The paper presented at BERA focused on one of the themes found, that of the impact on the professional identity of trainee teachers exposed to taking up leadership roles. The research showed that their professional identity is enhanced through their being in a leading role in respect of curriculum and working with other staff. Their self perception of role was modified to one in which they saw themselves, and were seen, as equals to qualified staff rather than subservient or dependent on them. Furthermore, engagement in such projects led them to collecting richer, more holistic evidence for meeting the Standards as they took greater ownership for this process, situating it in their leading role in the project. Their identity became defined less by the articulation of Standards and by their relationship to others and more by their own notions of professionalism. A new more equal power relationship developed as they take on responsibility for the project.

Keywords: teachers, teaching, teacher training, professional identity, curriculum project

Project outline

The BBC News School Report is an annual project which aims to engage 11–14 year olds with news by helping them to set their own editorial agenda for a real audience (BBC, 2011a). Resources, including six lesson plans explaining the basics of journalism, are available on the School Report website[1]. Schools taking part work towards a national deadline on the news day in March. On this day all the

secondary schools involved became broadcasters and simultaneously publish video, audio or text-based news on their school websites. The BBC News School Report site links all the school sites together using an interactive map, and all BBC platforms – including Radio 4, BBC 1, BBC News 24 and regional news and radio – feature samples of students' work from around the country, driving a real audience to all of the work featured on the BBC site. In 2008 nearly 300 schools participated (ITTE, 2009). By 2011 this had risen to over 800 (BBC, 2011b).

The 2010/11 academic year was the fourth in which the TDA worked with the BBC on News School Report and provided funding to ITT providers to support their engagement with it. This funding was to enable working across the partnership and to provide assistant teachers access to training by the BBC. This was necessary as the normal BBC project model was that a school would take part (independently of other schools and HEIs) and in doing so the BBC had a lead teacher named in each of the participating schools.

For the ITE provider, however, engagement in the project meant there was a more complex interaction between stakeholders. Providers themselves liaised both with the BBC and with the schools in which participant assistant teachers were placed. The lead teacher contact for the BBC in a school was, in some cases, the assistant teacher. This resulted in a complex set of stakeholders in the use of the project in ITE – assistant teachers, schools, providers, students in schools, BBC, TDA.

Findings from the case study schools

School A

The ITT model at school A was an employment-based graduate teacher programme. Assistant teachers were placed at the school for the majority of their training year. The project co-ordinator was a newly qualified teacher (NQT) who had been a GTP assistant teacher the year before and participated in the BBC NSRP as a

assistant teacher. The NQT was an English teacher and she used her English class as the participants in the project this year. The pupils participating were one Year 9 English class who had three days off timetable for the project:

- Day 1 was a 'workshop' day. Three workshops were delivered by the assistant teachers, focusing on the skills required for the live day.
- Day 2 was a 'practice' day, where the pupils rehearsed in preparation for the 'live' day event.
- Day 3 was the 'live' day event, with news reported live on the day and uploaded onto the website.

All the assistant teachers in School A reported that they noted an improvement in their relationship with pupils as a result of being involved in the project. This had already taken effect prior to the live day due to their involvement in the workshops. They attributed this to extracurricular nature of the project, the situation requiring a more open approach to the pupils and the pupils' positive response to the challenge of the demanding situation. They all reported an increased respect for the assistant teachers from the pupils.

Assistant teachers reported that they felt more confident in using a variety of approaches and teaching styles as a result of being involved in this project. They felt freer to take risks in their approach and have fun. The assistant teachers reported that they became more relaxed and confident in their teaching as a result of their involvement with the project.

The drama assistant teacher reported that she felt much more confident in taking pupils out of school when she observed the improvement in their behaviour on a trip out to the local BBC radio station. She felt much more able to trust the pupils, having been very under confident about how she would manage the pupils before they went.

The school mentors reported that the assistant teachers *"...gained confidence through peer observation, feedback and risk taking. Trainees see each other teaching and value what they see. This improves [assistant teachers] confidence when hearing the feedback. [As a result of team teaching in the workshops] 'them' and 'us' barriers [between assistant teachers and mentors] were broken down."*

School B

The ITT model at school B was assistant teachers taking a PGCE qualification placed at the school by an HEI provider. This was their main placement and they had been in another school when the project was initially launched. The assistant teachers were English specialists with concomitant foci on English, drama and media as part of their training and their teaching practice. The project co-ordinator was the media studies lead teacher in the school, who also had a background in broadcast media.

The mentor had arranged for the assistant teachers to take part in the BBC NSRP assisting the lead teacher in working with a small number of selected pupils. The project was focused on in depth work with a few year 9 pupils to produce high quality output. This was done as an extra-curricular activity.

Assistant teachers in School B reported that it was useful to work with pupils they didn't teach. This was reinforced by the mentor and lead teacher. The mentor also added that where there were pupils on the project who were also in classes taught by assistant teachers it was useful for them to see each other in a different context. In particular, the mentor observed that pupils who were difficult in class responded better to the assistant teachers as they had seen them in a different context. The case of a boy who shone in the project but was not easy to teach in the classroom was cited. "*He would see the assistant teachers in a different light*", the mentor said. Assistant teachers, however, reported that they had not learnt anything about working with difficult pupils as they "*had*

them in their classes". Assistant teachers had been in other schools before the project started and had been involved in other extra-curricular activities. They confirmed that this type of activity brings the benefit of working with a wider range of pupils.

The assistant teachers in School B only had regular contact with one teacher (the lead). They also got to know a governor through the project but it did not involve any additional interactions with the school leadership. They saw that the experience would be seen positively on job applications/CVs and they would be willing to take a lead in it. They saw its importance in providing experience of learning in a project that was extra curricular, national, fun and had a product at the end.

> "*Any school leadership team should look on a teachers' involvement in the project as a very positive thing*" (pre questionnaire).

The mentor concurred with this view, adding that through such extra-curricular experience, pupils see them in a different light. It was also seen as preparation for the assistant teachers' involvement in other extra-curricular events – trips, open evening. This was seen as helping them to meet the standards for QTS. The mentor said that it "*Help[ed] us to view them as part of the department*" and that, as NQTs they will be able to "*take the lead in running*" the BBC NRSP.

Working on the project was seen as "*provid[ing] evidence that they have worked in wider school activities [and of] linking into wider world and other subjects*". This was seen as crucial for the standards. It was also felt by the mentor that working on the project makes assistant teachers feel valued and valuable to the department and school and that assistant teachers often have more flexibility (if not more time) to take part in such projects than teachers.

School C

The ITT model at school A was school-based GTP. Assistant teachers were placed at the school for the majority of their training year. The assistant teachers were English specialists with concomitant foci on English, drama and media as part of their training year. The project co-ordinator had previously been a assistant teacher at the school who had taken part in the BBC NRSP. This was a third year in which this 'cascade' model had operated with assistant teachers from previous years being appointed and then co-ordinating the project with new assistant teachers. The assistant teachers had responsibility for leading the project.

The project was run as an extra-curricular activity with assistant teachers and pupils working on it in school and in the adjacent City Learning Centre. One of the assistant teachers had previous experience of working in the broadcast media. Assistant teachers chose the class to work on the project and they had a whole day to prepare, extra curriculum time and then the live news day. Pupils involved in the project ranged from year 7 to year 9.

Assistant teachers in School C reported that the project gave them an opportunity to think about matching media resources to pupil needs in a way that was not dictated to by the formal curriculum. The mentor reported that there were different interactions with the pupils on the project than in normal classes. These were to do with working with small groups (which one assistant teacher had previous experience of as she had previously been employed as a learning support assistant in the school).

Links were made with the City Learning Centre and local media organisations. This was seen as both a benefit for the authentic learning in the project – the links were with real journalists and a video company – and also for the school itself as a stakeholder in the local community.

A assistant teacher reported that the project gave the opportunity to *"raise my profile"* with these partners and, by extension, with colleagues in the department who saw her

taking a lead and using her own initiative to make links outside of school. She had been given an opportunity for making these links and the responsibility for doing it. These opportunities were not ones that would have occurred without the project. Being involved in the project *"puts [trainees] on the map"* and was something that was noticed by the headteacher who reported their work to the whole school.

The mentor concurred that the project provided opportunities for assistant teachers to "take control" rather than being handed tasks to do. It also allowed the assistant teacher who had professional media experience to translate this to the school context. In talking about the project and the way in which assistant teachers were perceived by the school leadership, the mentor said that *"the headteacher was more aware of who they were and their progress [than of other graduate trainees] because of it"*. Assistant teachers worked with *"people they wouldn't normally have [had] contact with"* including ASTs and the leader of applied learning. A mathematics teacher used the material produced in a tutor period as it was so impressive.

The school has an activities fortnight at the end of the school year. Assistant teachers would be able to bring the experiences of the project to helping plan and lead activities in the department and across the curriculum.

Concluding remarks

Throughout the three years of research into the involvement of ITE providers in the BBC NSRP, the value of the project to both the formal curriculum of assessment for QTS and the development of professional identity has emerged as a significant finding. This has been achieved for a very small input of supporting funds from the TDA. Such support is no longer available perhaps reflecting a more focused budget on core ITE activity. It is the authors' contention that given the benefits found in the research such a move is regrettable.

If teachers in training are given roles of responsibility in such projects then their self-perception of role is modified to one in which they see themselves, and are seen, as equals to qualified staff rather than subservient or dependent on them. Furthermore, engagement in such projects leads to them collecting richer, more holistic evidence for meeting the Standards as they take greater ownership for this process, situating it in their leading role in the project. Their identity becomes defined less by the articulation of Standards and by their relationship to others and more by their own notions of professionalism.

Acknowledgements

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Alison and Helen Go to ECER…

A few words on how Helen and I got on at the European Conference on Educational Research in Berlin this month on 'Urban Education'…Well to say it got off to a shaky start is a bit of an understatement. I set out at 6.30am on the Monday and joined the queue that is the M1 southbound (thought I'd got up early enough really…). Having made it to the plane, we then joined the tail end of the hurricane in order to leave Britain and landed with a bump in Berlin – apparently it saves fuel (?). We checked in and proceeded to find our way to the U station to try and find the Freie Universitat in the south west of the city. We were lucky – a mere 40 min or so from the conference…others, we discovered were not so close(!), some over an hour away. And there is only 1 line to the university and past our station, which is under construction – not so easy when you're not used to it. The S trains (sub trains?) seemed to go underground and overground (wombling free…?) and the U trains just under in very bright yellow. We even tried a bus but it took forever. Needless to say between getting to and from the university and some sightseeing we must have spent more than a few hours on trains in the three days we were there. It's a big city!

So, moving on from my rant about transport, it wasn't easy to find the conference even when we got to the university. And these signs, scarce as they were, had only been put up after we had registered. It's a big university – the corridors went on for miles (technicians have scooters inside to travel the length of the corridors), the rooms were large, roomy and there were lovely leafy quadrangles with art and statues (or both) everywhere. And, more importantly, the coffee was both cheap and good – something Helen insists on…We spent the first day attending sessions, it's a big conference. There were loads of sessions to choose from and it's not easy to make sure you get to all you want to (especially given the size of those corridors, the corridors off the main corridors are called streets, to give you some

idea of how big it is). Can anyone spot the theme to this article yet? Luckily for us, there was a drinks reception later that evening to recover from being all 'educated out' .
It really is a big conference!!

The second day then, up at the crack of dawn to get over to the university for our 8.30am presentations (I kid you not). We expected no-one and were pleasantly surprised by the number that turned up and the discussions that ensued from our presentations on e-portfolios in teacher education and feedback research with trainee teachers. A great session, informal and informed, with us learning much about teacher training in Europe from the delegates that had come to listen to our research.

We shared our session with Karen, a lecturer from Newcastle University, who just happened to be one of our external examiners – small world – ask Helen…All went well with the three talks merging into one single discussion centred on teacher training and feedback and the use of e-portfolios. Following this, we attended more sessions on teacher training and CPD, and then used lunchtime to work - they gave us free WiFi to go with the cheap good coffee.

Being teachers who teach early on in the year, we then had to come home, but don't worry, we did manage to see some of Berlin: the Reichstag, Brandenburg gate and the absolutely fabulous Pergammon museum, where whole sections of Babylon (as was) have been reconstructed within the walls of a very big (get the theme now?) museum.
Overall, a very informative, positive and pleasant experience. Next year ECER is in Cadiz…now where's my Spanish phrase book…?

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Top Girl App

Whilst visiting my sister recently my eight year old niece explained to me the App she was playing, one that her school friend had told her about. In Top Girl you are an aspiring model, earning money and buying nice clothes. It's a bit like Star Doll but that is where the similarity ends. Later on, whilst my niece slept peacefully I downloaded the same App for a closer look. In the App Store the first thing that caught my attention was the 12+ rating. My sister hadn't realised this and the App has since been deleted from the family's iPad. With glass of wine in hand I began my modelling career in Top Girl as an assistant, using all of my earned currency to buy clothes in the boutique next door to the modelling agency.   My next challenge was to try and bag a boyfriend in local club. To do this I had to flirt with a choice of three gents, by using my hard earned currency to buy them a drink. I was gutted when they all turned me down as I did not meet the required level of 'hotness'. Back to work I went to earn some money, progress in my career and buy nicer clothes to attract these potential dates. It worked, and I was given the opportunity of dating Chad the window cleaner or Paul the pigeon fancier. I chose Chad, and I paid for us to go on some lovely dates, dressed in my hottest clothes. I could kiss Chad, and talk to him intelligently, humorously or sexily to help improve our relationship. It was going so well but he became demanding, wanting me to buy him gifts of game machines, cologne and power tools. I eventually dumped him and went to look for a new boyfriend. I had better clothes by now and my choice of potential dates had changed, including a high end car thief and a prime minister.

If taken with a pinch of salt Top Girl is the type of App you could have a giggle about but for young, impressionable children the messages are not age appropriate. In addition, there is a

Eric and I at the Movies, 13/09/2011

constant pressure to use real cash to power up sooner, buy better clothes and go on better dates, in a private jet! I am pleased my niece no longer has access to this App but how many other children are being influenced by similar games? I make a point of investigating most of the ones I hear about as we encourage parents to. In reality, keeping up-to-date is difficult, especially when you are a successful catalogue model with handsome boyfriend (Eric the Ambassador) just waiting to hang on every word of your intelligent conversation. Top Girl is also quite addictive ;-)

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European Survey of Schools: ICT in Education (ESSIE)

For the first time, teachers and students in schools throughout Europe are being systematically surveyed on their use and views on technology for learning.

Technology is increasingly used in schools, is a 'must-have' for young people, and its contribution to educational, social and economic goals is recognised in national and European policies, It is therefore important to have a clear understanding of the extent of its provision and use in schools across Europe. That is why the views of head teachers, teachers and students are being collected, through online questionnaires (also a first), for the European Survey of Schools: ICT and Education (ESSIE).

ESSIE aims to provide answers to questions such as:

• How do young people's experiences of ICT compare in and out of school? Do they vary ?

• How many classrooms are really online, equipped with interactive whiteboards, and laptops? How many teachers are at ease in them? What do they do, and what are the outcomes for learners?

• What are the school and teacher factors associated with different patterns of ICT use? Can explanatory models be identified to inspire policy recommendations to support the development of 21st century teaching and learning methods and curricula?

ESSIE aims to benchmark progress in ICT availability and use in 31 countries (the 27 countries of the European Union, plus Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Turkey). Some 1 200 primary and secondary schools have been selected in each country and head teachers of these schools should expect emails about the survey in their in-box this month. European Schoolnet's Executive Director Marc Durando said: "We hope for a high response rate to ensure that the findings are based on a solid evidence base. All information obtained will be used solely for the survey and no individual will be identifiable." In each country a national coordinator nominated by the ministry of education is working on ESSIE. The UK National Co-ordinator, Bill Gibbon, said: "I will be working with ESSIE schools to help them complete the survey. We recognise that schools are busy places and every effort is being made to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible." More at:
http://essie.eun.org/homepage
M:07961 123 710
E:bill@billgibbon.net

My Latest Toy
Neil Stanley, LJMU

The photo should tell you all – yes it's a white iPad 2. Now this hadn't been on any wish list of mine but my wife (a dedicated iPhone user) decided that I needed one – and as this is a very rare state of the world I was happy to run with it. I opted for the 16Gb wireless version (I'll get a wireless 3G modem if I need to – more flexibility).

At the time of writing I've had it for about 5 months. Interestingly I thought I'd easily find a catalogue of recommended apps but my experiences indicate that outside of a few commonly enthused about titles this doesn't exist – though there are many personal 'top tens' - and I'm open to suggestions (and I'll make some below). I did find *AppStart* which is a quite helpful app on apps. It's also quite hard to find new apps via the official app store as you can sort via category and price but just flicking through the titles by date gives you everything, many of which are in languages I can't follow. But I do like the serendipity of browsing the new titles.

I suppose the most frequently used app (now there's a useful app – what have you spent time on your iPad doing?) would be *Kindle,* as I located some books and have been using it as an e-reader (using Calibre to convert stuff if needed). This helped me cut down the weight and bulk on the Ryanair flights to and from holiday.

The essential for many of the apps is something to up or download with and as I already use *Dropbox* I'm pleased that I can access that, plus I can reach my *PogoPlug* devices. Of course the *iCloud* will also help with this. I have upgraded to iOS 5 – only took 1 day of no-use and 90 mins to finally sort as I let it happen on the first day it was available. iCloud seems to not yet fully integrate with Windows.

When I first got it I had a few pennies on my iTunes account so I bought the iWorks trio *of Pages, Numbers and Keynote* though I'm a bit disappointed about the limitations of Office document transfer to these (I use 'clever' Word documents on a tablet PC and they get extremely dim when transferred to *Pages* and

merged cells in Excel get the thumbs down from *Numbers*). However I'm happy with *iAnnotate*

as this let me process some pdf files of information for an examination board s well as being a good reader for all pdfs.

There's no native clock so I invested in *Countdown* (add ryu to search for a speedy find) – this gives a big clock face and a countdown facility (also works on iPhone/iPod). Dual apps just do a 2x scaling so can appear a bit clunky. *BBC News* is brilliant and I also subscribed to the *Guardian* app – both not too pushy. The Guardian has just launched its *Newsstand* app – much better than the iPhone one and as I subscribe to the paper should remain available to me for nothing extra. However if you have current internet access the Guardian website is more complete.

JotNot Pro lets you take a photo and turn it into a pdf (useful if you need to make a quick record of something on paper) – it includes a tool to help you square off the image. Unfortunately *EasyBib* is yet to be versioned for the iPad camera. But *Scan* and *i-nigma* work fine. *Dragon dictation* seems like a wonderful free app – still need more time to play with that one, though one of the trainees swears by it for lesson reflection write-ups . I've a set of earphones with a mic on so that should improve sound collection. (I originally bought those to use with *Skype* on the iPod Touch). I've put *Skype* on iPad too but don't often get calls.

Facetime works well and feels natural to use. I've also joined *Twitter* as it's easy to use on a device like this.

I like to have a weather app too and I'm still considering between *Met Office, Weather+, TWC Max+, Accu Weather* and *iWeather Lite.* Some magazines have found their way into the kit –*TRVLmagazine* (travel). *iGIZMO* (gadgets) and *Zite* (personalised news). *Gagosian* and *Fancy* both amuse me.

Our off-campus service uses Citrix – it was somewhat scary to discover I could run my remote Windows desktop from my iPad – on the old university system it worked but was a bit touchy – took about 3 goes each time to get on, but now we've had an upgrade it's quite reliable. Could be helpful if I need to email myself a file from work.

I've also bought the camera connection kit. This will copy or transfer photos (and it's happy with the Nikon RAW files I shoot in). Until iOS 5 it was hard to move transferred shots into iPad apps but now seems quite happy to let them go into *TiltShiftGen*, *Photoshop Express, MySketch, Paper Camera* and *Snapseed.* These photos can also be uploaded to *Instagram*. The cameras in the iPad are ok but my SLR is much better. *Canon iEPP* lets me print wirelessly to my Canon printer.

I have been trying to make full use of it – bit of TVCatchup and 4OD; quite a lot of multi-task surfing; the reading; annotating pdfs; making notes whilst on external examiner visits (but not lesson observations yet as the forms didn't behave); and a few more odds and ends. Can't say it's making me more productive (well work didn't buy it) but it's probably making me differently productive. Find the transfer of stuff the most annoying (and I want multiple camera rolls! – a recent upgrade seems to have made some sort of change here though). I also like the satisfying 'off' click when you close the designer cover. I bought *TuneIn Radio* as it offered to record programs for later, but you can't get them out of the app for use elsewhere.

One work area that I found an app for is keeping registers and *Attendance* is brilliant. You can include photos and email missing persons.

I've just found *AwesomeIdea* which looks like a useful list manager.

One important note – on USB the trickle charge is not enough to top up the battery – you need to plug in via the super plug unit provided in the pack to ensure a good charge. That's a bit of a pain – surprised no one has worked out how to build a desk stand that will let you do both. Mind you I don't seem to need to dock the device as often as I have been doing with my iPod Touch. Of course email and diary interface from Outlook with no issues (except I can't add flags – my to-do method of choice).

Ok so now I want to hear recommendations from you – maybe we'll get enough to fill a column in the next newsletter.

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New on the bookshelf
Neil Stanley, LJMU

Lots of new books this semester: We've been using *Developing Professional Practice 7-14* for over a year now and it's been very well received by our KS23 trainees. After a delay the companion *14-19* volume has arrived (by Andrew Armitage, Gina Donovan, Karen Flanagan and Sabrina Poma and published by Pearson) – this looks to offer the same support but for our Applied trainees. Our chum Alison Hramiak and Terry Hudson have edited *Understanding Learning and Teaching in Secondary Schools* (Pearson) this has a clean and clear layout giving a visually enriched introduction to the key issues for the intending secondary teacher and covering some aspects (such as using feedback and children learning theory) which are scantly addressed in other texts. Learning Matters has also produced the 4th Edition of Viv Ellis's *Learning and Teaching in Secondary Schools* – it's a real pity that it'll have to be changed again to reflect the new standards.

For Primary courses Learning Matters also has *Primary Professional Studies* edited by Alice Hansen. I particularly note the chapter on Transitions which would make useful reading

for teachers at any key stage. This also has the standards embedded so will need updating soon. Phil Spencer has written *Surviving your Teaching Practice* (OUP/McGraw-Hill) which, as you might guess, covers the stuff we all do before sending our emergent teachers into school but as it is printed in a real book they may believe it more!

Also from OU/McGraw-Hill is Debra McGregor and Lesley Cartwright's *Developing Reflective Practice*. This provides several models of reflective development with a strong emphasis on teacher identity. Justin Dillon and Meg Maguire have edited the 4th edition of *Becoming a Teacher: Issues in Secondary Education* (OU/McGraw-Hill). This covers 29, what might be termed, 'big ideas' and contributed to by well-recognised authors and certainly includes chapters that I would use as lead articles or key readings for sessions I deliver – chapter 12 on group work particularly caught my eye. In places this book is clearly more politically aware than many other texts which suggests that my colleagues teaching Education Studies would find it useful too.

A couple of Pearson's *Smarter Study Skills* series attracted me too. *How to Argue* by Alastair Bonnett and *How to write Essays & Assignments* By Kathleen McMillan & Jonathan Weyers. Study skills books tend to be needed to solve specific problems with specific trainees and I can see both of these being very useful. With *Argue* only running to 108 pages it provides a succinct approach, whilst at 245 pages *Essays* is longer but divided into sections addressing the key elements that constrain success, though not quite having sections that exactly replicate tutor feedback they are sufficiently similar to enable it to be used in that way.

Just as I cover Language and Literacy in ICT with our PGCE along comes a copy of *Developing Writers: Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age* by Richard Andrews and Anna Smith (OU/McGraw-Hill). Mostly addressed at English specialists, I need to mine this further to determine how much could be of use to ICT subject specialists. In the same mailing I got *Becoming a Reflective English Teacher* edited by Andrew Green (OU/McGraw-Hill).

You'll know I like books that delve into how we learn so I leapt onto the recommendation made at the e-Assessment conference at the end of August in Dundee: this was for *Now You See It* by Cathy N. Davidson (Viking) but as I'm still reading *The Information* by James Gleick (4th Estate) 500 pages of connections and ideas so I've yet to move on to this.

I've been reading e-books on my Kindle iPad app – I could never parallel read printed books but I'm starting to do this as it's too easy to do in this format. Having heard David Sedaris on Radio 4 I picked up one of his books, *Me Talk Pretty One Day,* which makes for an excellent short punctuation read between stiffer stuff. I discovered Steven Saylor's *Gordianus* series in the shape of *Roman Blood*; Lyndsey Davis's Falco with added sex really and I feel not as well written, but I'll try another. I enjoyed *Blood from a Stone* by Donna Leon. I also read two Anne Zouroudi's, *The Taint of Midas* and *The Doctor of Thessaly,* both gentle detective stories based in Greece.

The real find though is Victor Mayer-Schönberger's *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age* (Princeton) – one to join the reading list for anyone who needs to realise that nothing gets forgotten when you publish it and the past can easily reappear to catch you out.

Web Wanderings

Whilst searching for app recommendations I found *42 Digital Resources for Students & Parents* (mashable.com/2011/08/16/back-to-school-student-tech/). One of those useful compilations.

Also found this interesting blog on assessment ideas www.maggiehosmcgrane.com/search/label/Assessment. Edutopia also feature an assessment thread, one item is at www.edutopia.org/stw-assessment. Another Edutopia strand is about teaching Maths as a social activity (www.edutopia.org/math-social-activity-cooperative-learning-video).

For Computing enthusiasts there is the coding challenge at pex4fun.com and LightBot armorgames.com/play/6061/light-bot-20. Also CodeAcademy www.codecademy.com. Don't forget the CSTA newsletter at csta.acm.org/Communications/sub/CSTAVoice.html and Teaching Kids Programming at teachingkidsprogramming.org/. Free text book *Foundations of Computer Science* at infolab.stanford.edu/~ullman/focs.html.

The New York Times article celebrating the birth of the IBM PC (www.nytimes.com/2011/08/01/arts/the-clunky-pc-that-started-it-all.html?_r=3&ref=arts) is worth a view. And the LA Times has a good issues starter at www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-herman-class-size-20110731,0,3910343.story.

Scot Baker's web advice at https://plus.google.com/102431068097019314437/posts/4DyWsUdac9K should be on the walls in every computer room.

Hate PowerPoint? Prezzi make you feel drunk? Then try Spicynodes www.spicynodes.org.

Fancy yourself as the next Julian Opie? Then take a look at www.designandtech.com/fotoshop/tutorials/julianopie/julian_opie_tutorial.htm.

The History of Education in England site (www.educationengland.org.uk) looks really useful. Alan Newland (ex of the GTC) has a blog on professional issues at newteachersblog.wordpress.com.

And the silly ones – Teen Chat Decoder (www.teenchatdecoder.com) and www.nerdydaytrips.com.

WISHING

EVERYONE

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

A

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!