

**Teacher Education
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Editorial

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Welcome to the ninth issue of the Teacher Education Advancement Network journal. The papers in this issue offer something of interest to a wide range of colleagues: teacher educators in the Lifelong Learning Sector; students using Virtual Learning Environments; postgraduate trainees in Initial Teacher Education coming from practical or vocational degrees; school and HEI colleagues looking to forge effective partnerships; and all those involved in employment-based routes. The sharing of ideas and experience from all involved in teacher education is something which TEAN is always keen to promote, and experience has shown that the universality of our joint endeavour can be of mutual benefit.

Sue Exley and Tanya Ovenden-Hope from Plymouth University start this issue by offering us ideas which examine the transition of teacher to teacher educator in the Lifelong Learning Sector. They investigate the possible creation of a recognised pathway, or pathways, for the professional development of teacher educators in the sector. They found from their research that the creation of such a pathway appears to be both desirable and achievable and suggest that their recommendation supports the aspiration of those seeking to become teacher educators to achieve academically and engage in research.

Jenny Barker and Peter Gossman from Glyndŵr University take us into the world of the VLE (Virtual Learning environment) through the eyes of students at a Sixth Form college. Their research questions asked whether the use of a VLE: has a positive impact on student learning; whether it helps develop independent learning; and whether it increases students' motivation to learn. Although their conclusions suggest that the student participants did report improvement in learning and motivation to learn, the paper also indicates areas for attention in promoting VLE use to enhance learning which will be of interest to tutors and teachers.

Matt McLain from Liverpool John Moores University tackles the question of the challenges experienced by Initial Teacher Training students who come from practical or vocational undergraduate degrees. His study looked at their perceptions of the difficulties of engaging with academic writing and the need for deep reflection and he suggests that this may contribute to a perceived uneven playing field. He goes on to ask how such students should be supported and suggests some answers in the form of effective assignment preparation and feedback. He also suggests interesting ideas for further study.

James Burch and Alison Jackson from the University of Cumbria turn their attention to the importance of strengthening partnerships between schools and Higher Education Institutions by building on good foundations, but employing a deeper interpretation of collaboration underpinned by Third Space activity. 'Third

Space', they suggest, means coming out of our normal working environment and into a neutral 'third space' to design, develop and deliver teacher education with jointly shared understanding and vision. Findings from a small-scale pilot study suggested that, despite the ambitious nature of this philosophy, this kind of partnership working has the potential to be transformative for all concerned. Finally Manuela Thomae from The Open University and Vivienne Griffiths from Canterbury Christ Church University present us with interesting case studies of teachers trained on an employment-based route. The subject area concerned was Modern Foreign Language. They report that the GTP training was evaluated favourably by almost all trainees but that the variability of the school environments in which the training took place could support or inhibit development. They conclude with some recommendations, especially relevant at a time when a new employment-based route, School Direct, is being introduced to take the place of the Graduate Teacher Programme.

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