

The STeP Journal
Student Teacher Perspectives

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Editorial

Welcome to this issue of the STeP journal. This is an interim issue of STeP; four student teacher contributors have sent in their high quality work to share with current students and to spur them on in their studies. Most submissions for STeP arrive in the summer so it is good to be able to present this issue in December to keep the momentum going. I think you will find these papers indicative of deeply reflective student teachers – as in fact all our contributors show themselves to be. There is also a new dimension to this issue; STeP is pleased to welcome a guest lecturer who would like to share a useful discussion and thought piece with student teachers.

Laura Hadley from the University of Bedfordshire starts us off with her case study examining the relative roles of teacher pedagogical beliefs, pupil attitudes and provision for writing in the emergent writing experiences of boys and girls in the Early Years classroom. Her fascinating results in an admittedly small sample found that boys were committed writers despite them having lower attainment in writing than the girls. Laura concludes with possible reasons for a dis-junct between practitioner beliefs and pupil realities and suggests recommendations drawn from her findings.

Mike Carthew from Cornwall SCITT is also looking at boys; this time it is an investigation at secondary level into the use of writing frames and structure to encourage boys to write in geography lessons. Mike found through a study of relevant literature that there seems to be a trend for boys to be reluctant to write and that this can lead to underachievement. In his study he compared scaffolding methods and found a gender-based variance in response to writing frames against writing structures. The paper ends with recommendations for practice.

Tilly Jackson from the University of Cumbria presents our next paper where she explores theories of learning in relation to her initial teaching experience of English. She evaluates both cognitivism and constructivism as approaches to learning and discusses meaning-making, memory and preparedness to learn within the context of the two theories. Her conclusion is that a multi-theoretical approach is to be recommended for the teaching of English; social constructivism fits well, but there must be elements of behaviourist and cognitivist teaching and learning in order to facilitate dialogic interaction, and in order that pupils have a secure cognitive framework.

Our final student paper for this interim issue is from **Andrew Clark from the University of Cumbria**. Andrew takes us on an intriguing journey through the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. He suggests how conversance in the language of both theorists prompts the trainee teacher or Newly Qualified Teacher to look beyond the mechanics of each theory and carve their own valid methodologies. He goes on to show how this has enabled him to envision a radically reformed version of religious education where the holistic development of children takes precedence over governmental agendas aimed at tailoring education to serve industry and the economy.

Finally we welcome our first guest lecturer, **Sophie King-Hill, a lecturer in Education and inclusion from the University of Worcester**. Sophie offers student teachers her reflection on Maslow's

Hierarchy of Needs which she explains and problematises. Sophie has an interest in social research and asserts that the critical questioning of popular approaches and theories that are used in education is an important element of evidence based teaching. She suggests how Maslow's theory could be applied to practice but, most importantly, considers the dangers of accepting 'popular theories' without due reflection. Sophie has worked in education in a number of settings, ranging from work with adolescent ex-offenders and teenage parents to education management and the development and evaluation of educational courses. She is passionate about the importance of a fair and accessible education system that embraces diversity and fosters growth.

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