

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; we have six papers from five students for this issue.

The issue starts with a paper from **Polly Alden, Nottingham Trent University** who poses an intriguing question: Can tinkering benefit pupils' learning? Quoting Doorley (2016) she tells us that a 'tinkerer' is one who experiments with materials and ideas to fully understand their capacities, and who further iterates on their learning to find better solutions to current problems. Her study was with a secondary school textiles class and she confidently tells us that pupils' knowledge did improve after a tinkering lesson.

Another interesting topic is introduced next by **Bradley Pay from Canterbury Christ Church University**. Bradley presents the Thinking Together programme to see whether it enhances pupil-pupil talk. He is concerned about excessive teacher-pupil talk and his study looked at pupil progress in GCSE PE theory lessons. His results imply that when pupil-pupil talk increases and teacher-pupil talk decreases, engagement, behaviour and decision-making are enhanced. However, he also found that more difficult work did require more teacher-pupil talk because teachers need to support and guide pupils in the correct direction.

James Cullen from the University of Cumbria investigates Philosophy for Children with particular reference to the use of a Question Quadrant to help Key Stage 1 children ask higher-order questions. His study challenged the assumption that younger children cannot use abstract higher-order thinking skills and suggests that learning and applying such skills should be central to primary education in the information age. His data demonstrate that Question Quadrant can have demonstrable positive effects on children's critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking, even in the short term.

Yasmin Ensor from Nottingham Trent University wondered how to promote the benefits of studying Art and Design in the secondary school. She reminds us that the introduction of the English Baccalaureate has narrowed down GCSE options which could lead to Art and Design being neglected as a viable choice. Her study looked at how to demonstrate that Art and Design does offer both career prospects and transferable skills, and the resulting poster from her research can be displayed in classrooms to indicate these benefits to students.

Vivienne Kenyon from Cornwall School Centred Initial Teacher Training concentrates on mathematics GCSE where new reforms in England promise to test in problem-solving and worded contexts to a greater degree. She realised that the need to understand mathematical vocabulary would present a barrier to many students and prepared a study using the Frayer Model to help these students. Her results showed clear improvements although for participants with a low reading age it was not as effective.

Finally, we return to **Bradley Pay from Canterbury Christ Church University** who investigated within-class mixed ability groupings by perceived ability. He concentrates on more able pupils'

views of their progress in Physical Education. Findings demonstrated that mixed ability within class groupings worked best in social situations although opportunities to progress in technical based activities for example were hindered due to the lack of 'stretch and challenge' opportunities. He recommends that teachers should become more flexible with their groupings within-class to maximise pupils' opportunities to progress.

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