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Research and Teaching – correlated or co-related?

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Abstract Template

Contextualised Learning: An Alternative Way To Synthesise Theory and Practice

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Theme: Learning in research mode through enquiry-based learning

Type of contribution: Presentation

Abstract:

Having received funding from the LTSU, Contextualised Learning in Undergraduate Initial Teacher Training, a problem-based learning pedagogy, is being trialled by Scarborough School of Education (SSE).

Building on the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model used by HYMS, contextualised learning has been designed specifically to meet the needs of students training to become primary teachers. The term *contextualised learning* has been deliberately chosen as it is vital that student teachers do not see children or schools as *problems*. This kind of enquiry based learning has transferability to any subject or course in which students are required to integrate theory and practice and need not be restricted to degrees leading to a professional qualification such as law, nursing and teaching.

Within other teacher training institutions PBL, however is not yet widespread and is typically restricted to 'Professional Studies' elements of vocational courses. At SSE contextualised learning has been implemented in a module entitled 'Integrated Core Curriculum' which focuses on the generic teaching issues to be used when planning and teaching high quality lessons. Within two week blocks, introduction to a topic through a lead lecture is followed by small-group facilitated discussion of a scenario, leading to students deciding on the outcomes they want to research further through additional academic reading was set. In this way the module encourages students to integrate theory and practice.

The aim of this research is to uncover whether students feel more engaged with the subject matter through this approach, whether it aids preparation for school experience and ultimately impacts on their performance during school teaching experience.

Findings gathered in a 'data diary' thus far suggest that contextualised learning could provide a new way for training teachers and also possibly for other professional qualifications.

The presentation will share the model of a PBL pedagogy and research findings to date. A short overview of research in the PBL field, both in education and other academic disciplines will then be followed by our rationale for introducing contextualised learning, exemplification from scenarios undertaken by students and early findings from student questionnaires and tutor perceptions of the model in operation.