

Reflective student exchange as a collaborative and complementary academic activity:

Preliminary results from a cross-national peer-to-peer mentoring scheme with primary teacher trainees

University of Gloucestershire
Festival of Learning, 2-4 June 2020



The underlying goals of this work were three-fold

1. To provide students at both institutions an opportunity for reflective student (knowledge) exchange as a collaborative and complementary academic activity
2. To embed an understanding of cultural literacies among students
3. To stimulate a new international research and practice agenda that promotes student collaboration and support across countries and Higher Education Institutions



The case for cross-national peer-to-peer mentoring

**It makes the strange familiar
and the familiar strange**

Cultural cross-over



Encourages 'deeper' learning





Sharing best practice

16 second year teacher trainee students from Gloucestershire & Girona





Learning takes place when we are most challenged

- The scheme operates:
 - At the individual level*
 - At the team level*
- The importance of critical friends
 - Benefits accrue to the students through opportunities to critically compare and contrast differences (e.g. cultural; policy) in approach to their teacher training, placement practices and teaching settings/ environments*
- Collaborative reflective practices act to *disrupt* the students' professional perspectives during their school placements through a deeper questioning of taken for granted 'norms'





Phase 1

UK Visit: 3-day Agenda, workshops, cultural visits, bonding opportunities

School of Education and Humanities, Francis Close Hall, Gloucestershire





February 2019 - Workshops and key themes

- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- How to make the most out of collaborative Working
- Overview of Primary and Early Years Education in the UK
- Co-creating the E-Learn VLE
- Awareness of your Digital Tattoo
- Question Time panel with EdD doctoral students





School visits, cultural activities and events

- The workshops provide an opportunity to meet and bond
- A purely online experience unlikely to elicit the same level of commitment
- This requires some investment – but able to think creatively about costs



Phase 2

- Cross-national (individual and team) working through co-created VLE *E-Learn* Platform and other media
- Working together at individual level (in pairs) and at team level (in groups) in virtual spaces to share best practice, offer peer support and reflect on their respective training and placement experiences through different cultural and policy lenses.



ELearn

Topics Forum Area

Chat forum

Use this forum for informal chats about your placements, your studies, etc.

Chat / Informal Forum (All)

The 4 Topics

Social and emotional learning: behaviour and class management

Languages teaching and teaching methodologies

Digital literacies and gamification

School projects and innovations



Placement and training reflections

Cross-National Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Scheme (2019)

Dashboard / My courses / EDU_P2P_MNTR / Useful Resources / A Glossary of Useful Terms



A Glossary of Useful Terms

Printer-friendly version

Use this glossary to share and explain important terminology, phrases and words.

I was really excited to finally go back to Balandrau (where I'm doing my school internship this year). I'm in love with this school and with everybody who works there. My group (5 years) is fantastic, they are always happy, they work really well together and we never have important problems between them or with their behaviour. And although I had been thinking about them and I was really happy to come back, I was not expecting them to be waiting for me too.

In my first day they were waiting for me, Belen (my teacher) told me they had been talking about my return, and they wanted to show me a lot of things, like the caterpillars that had become butterflies or their new project.

I love this school because my first days there were not "normal days", we have worked on a lot of projects and in a lot of different ways, and I'm sure I can learn a lot about this way of working. I'd seen two days of activities with groups with students of different ages (3,4 and 5 years all together). These activities take place in different places like the playground, the library, the classroom... And they work together on projects like painting with salt, traditional games, stories... This way of working is really good for the students, because they can help each other and they learn all together regardless of age. I've also seen activities to learn to blow in a controlled way with balls, corks... Another different project they have is a vegetable garden in the playground where all the school is collaborating with activities like watering the plants, planting vegetables...

I also know about other projects in the school I will be able to see during these days like outings to the school environment or projects with the families.

Seeing my first days here I'm sure I can learn a lot of things and I can find some interesting ideas and activities.

Let's manage the different children ages in good ways of managing. I took projects, attitudes in front of the different ways to teach foreign languages.

P2P_Ingrid.pdf

Share our management strategy, teaching techniques, school environment, language teaching.

P2P_Neal.pdf

Share experiences in the best areas and methods that we can use together with the kids that we can share in any management strategy of the early aged kids in the classroom.

P2P_Laura.pdf

Not only in the classroom, work methods, good ideas use it in class? How notions and talk about it, to

P2P_Harlene.pdf

and experiential forum - good ideas from UK and Catalonia arising from courses - Easier to see studies, lesson plans and activities from practice

P2P_Patry.pdf

Activities

- Drawing school projects
- Traditional games
- Music therapy
- Social and emotional learning
- The future of education
- History in early ages
- Art in early ages

P2P_Silvia.pdf



Phase 3

Spain Visit: 3-day Agenda, workshops, cultural visits and further bonding opportunities

Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Girona





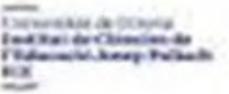
Girona programme – key themes

- Cooperation between Universities
- Inclusion and sustainability
- Language learning in a bilingual community (the immersion model in Catalonia)
- Cooperative work in higher education



Enhancement activities

- Poster presentation
- Conference attendance
- School Visits
- Science Festival
- Festival of Flowers



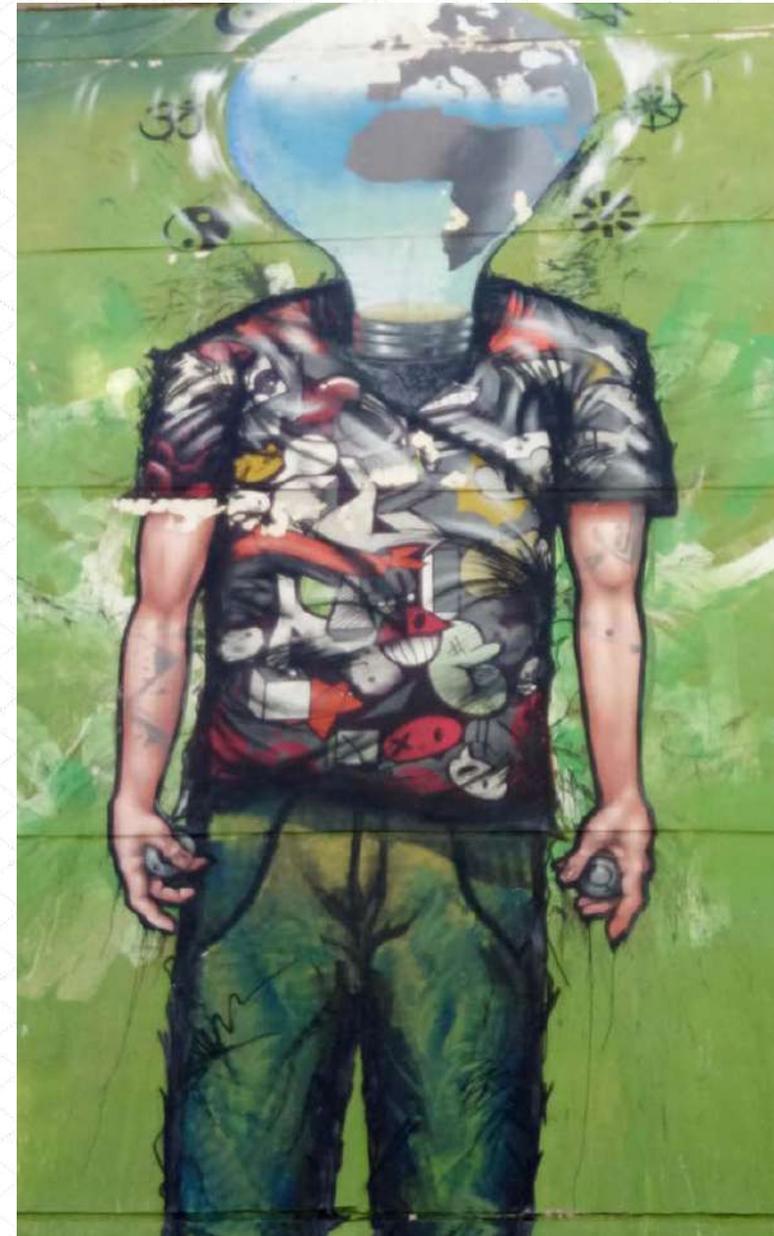
Phase 4 and Phase 5



- Period of ongoing cross-national working through VLE and other media
- Evaluation (ongoing throughout)
- Using a new Rubric for Narrative Reflection Assessment (NARRA) (Alsina et al., 2017)
- Sustainable peer feedback (Canabate et al., 2017)
- On-line questionnaires; Focus groups; On-line VLE /artefacts
- Sustainability of model - Widening participation students/Your Future Plan

Preliminary results divided in four areas

1. Motivations and expectations about the project
 - What the students hoped to achieve
2. Cultural benefits
 - Sharing of knowledge, norms, expectations, cultural contrast
3. Peer learning
 - *I think therefore I compare*



Results *cont*

4. Reflective practice

Categories for analysis adopted from Alsina *et al.* (2017):

- Professionalising experience
- Ideas and prior beliefs
- Inquiry and targeting
- Transformation



Reflective student exchange

- The role of reflective learning in the development of critical thinking and learning transformation
- A way of thinking that accepts uncertainty and acknowledges dilemmas
 - Concepts such as: *Boundaries; Risk*
- Supported through the use of digital technologies





Looking forward

- With the massification and marketisation of higher education, developing new forms of partnership working are essential; not least in the context of internationalisation and cross-national collaborative working.
- What we offer here is a model for supporting such student collaboration in the future, not just within the context of teacher training but across a whole portfolio of courses and subject disciplines.
- With a particular focus on professional degrees (i.e. degrees that prepare students for a specific profession such as social work or nursing, where the field of work focus is on practical skills)

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Questions?

**Do please join us for the 45-minute synchronous
Question and Answer live webinar
11.30 -12.15**