



M level PGCE

The following ideas are presented by delegates who attended the ESCalate ITE M level PGCE seminar at John Moores University, Liverpool on March 2nd, 2007. Many thanks to all delegates who for their contributions. If you would like to comment or add suggestions, please contact a.g.jackson@ucsm.ac.uk.

The theme of the seminar was 'Mness' and the student experience. Discussions covered the following topic areas:

- In search of Mness
- Looking after the students
- CPD
- Quality assurance of assessments
- What does/should an assessment look like?

There was lively debate around 2 headings for each theme:

- Challenges and opportunities
- Ideas for effective practice

The search for Mness is certainly not over as colleagues continue the debate. Here are a few ideas which we hope will be useful to guide your discussions and continue ESCalate ITE's exploration of this important area.

In search of 'Mness'

Challenges

- Articulating Mness
- Time
- Matching QAA M level descriptors
- Some tutors' attitudes

Ideas for effective practice

- Modelling Mness
- Slimming assignments (combining)
- Providing stepping stones – discovery/application/integration
- Setting an M ethos
- Re-constructing the nature of what a PGCE is

Looking after the students

Challenges ...

- The 'M level' word is very scary for students
- Students come with a variety of backgrounds
- Overcoming institution and 'training' culture – 'fill 'em up and send 'em out!'
- Can the students challenge each other?

... and opportunities

- Independent learning and less face to face teaching
- Giving students the chance to support each other (paired placements)
- A variety of assessment methods to support a variety of learning styles
- Online learning

Ideas for effective practice

- Reduce M level group sizes to 12/13
- Confidence building at the beginning of the course
- Creating a positive seminar group culture

CPD

Challenges...

- Change of culture in schools
- Some resistance to M level
- Next TDA PPD bidding round challenges emphasis on generic CPI
- Widening participation
- Resource intensive – money and workload
- Complex legacy of development – negative history

... and opportunities

- Chance to work together (CDP and ITE)
- Rethink links with MA programmes
- Chance to shift recruitment process
- Raise recruitment onto MA courses
- Widening participation
- Joint ITE/NQT conference
- LAs in collaborative role
- Mentors see M level modelled – recruitment
- Enhanced mentor pool

Ideas for effective practice

- Supported 'writing' workshops
- Links to NQT CPD programmes
- Creation of 'reader' to support engagement with literature
- Creation of e-learning community (eg webCT)
- Mentors on accredited CPD - opportunities

Quality assurance of assessments

Challenges ...

- Diversity of entrants
- Different institutions – different models
- School-based work – Masters!
- School-based mentors' knowledge of M level
- What is 'Mness'?
- Relationship between QTS and academic work
- Differing models of assessment
- Teams/staff work and assessment at M level
- Different subjects = (?) different assessment

... and opportunities

- CPD and ITE
- Collaboration across subjects/courses
- 3 year Masters in teaching!
- CPD and PPD

Ideas for effective practice

- Differing models – same criteria
- Involve external examiners
- Have comparable assessments
- Think carefully about addressing M level criteria
- It does not always have to be research

What does/should an assessment look like?

Challenges and opportunities

- Reading – scope of literature and strategies for supporting this
- Clear understanding of what research means – enquiry/case study
- Free versus restricted choice of subject – manageability for tutors
- Staff development for assessment
- Fewer, larger assessment rather than smaller items

Ideas for effective practice

- Provision of reading material
- Use of digital resources
- Linking assessment criteria to specific assignments – not generic
- Keeping subject of enquiry within limits that would enhance development as practitioner