What does creativity look like in Teacher Education?

Creativity 3 at the University of Chichester has a simple goal – to challenge student teachers to make change happen so they develop the skills and confidence to do the same in their first jobs. ‘Creativity 3’ is a module that gives final year student primary teachers the chance to develop skills and confidence in creative problem-solving in their professional world. They address real world problems over realistic timescales and, by the end of their projects, provide genuine end products for external clients, typically schools or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as museums or environmental education centres.

One project that has had a significant impact on all involved was ‘Raising Attainment in Literacy’. New motivation for disengaged secondary school pupils was created through their involvement in the production of their own radio station. Choice and purpose were key in captivating children’s imagination and interest. Challenging students teachers to provide real life solutions outside of the primary classroom enabled them to take risks in their approach to raise pupils attainment in literacy.

What impact do these projects have on NQTs?

To assess the impact of the projects, we collected information from last years graduates. All of the NQTs stated that Creativity 3 has influenced their practice during their induction year.

4/5 of those questioned cited collaborative working skills as one of beneficial outcomes of the project.

[It] brought home how the things that children learn in the classroom impact the wider world. I try to give this message to the children—that what they do matters in the big scheme of things.

I learnt to deal with different levels of position—from school governors, heads and other teachers.

It prepared me for taking responsibility...and made me feel more confident in tackling issues in school.

I think it will give me an edge as many of the jobs I’m applying for place emphasis on outdoor learning.

Where next for creativity in Teacher Education?

The ideology behind the module cannot be faulted. It provides opportunities for student teachers to take control, take risks and take the initiative in managing projects which have a real impact and make change happen.

NQTs and student teachers seem to be unanimous in their belief that the creativity 3 module provides them with skills that can be transferred to the work place. Evaluating the inclusion of “creativity” modules on this basis would suggest that the module has a positive impact. However, it is hard to quantify whether these outcomes are exclusively the result of these modules. Student teachers who are actively engaged in their project may do so in other university modules.

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Teacher Training Institutions would benefit from giving students projects which encourage autonomy both within and outside the classroom. This seems to work best with large scales projects where students can truly make change happen in creative ways.