

University of  
Worcester Teaching  
Award Scheme  
2021/22

**Vignettes of Practice**





# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Foreword from the Editor .....   | 3  |
| Innovation in Pre-registration Allied Health Professional Student Placements. - Teaching Award - Rebecca Lees, School of Allied Health and Community .....   | 4  |
| St Jude's Virtual School: An Innovative Response to COVID-19. - Team Teaching Award - Judy Miller, Isabelle Schäfer, Dave Hunt and Suzanne Lawson; School of Education.....  | 5  |
| Embedding Real World Learning Through Inspirational Guest Speakers. - Team Teaching Award - Dr Kay Emblen-Perry, Senior Lecturer and PRME Coordinator; Dr Paulo Mora-Avila, Lecturer and School Liaison Coordinator; Rachel Cooper, Lecturer and Accounting and Finance Course Leader; Worcester Business School ..... | 8  |
| "Not another three-hour lecture": A Blended Delivery Approach. - Team Teaching Award - Richard Pepperell; Dr Christian Edwards; School of Sport and Exercise Science.....  | 9  |
| How a Team Approach to Practice Education Combatted the COVID-19 Effect. - Leading Teaching Award - Terri Grant, School of Allied Health and Community.....  | 11 |
| When the World Shuts Down: Delivering a Successful Teacher Training Course. - Leading Teaching Award - Dan Hughes, School of Education .....   | 12 |

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Realising teaching excellence at the University of Worcester blog  
<https://rteworcester.wp.worc.ac.uk>

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## **Foreword from the Editor**

The University of Worcester Teaching Award Scheme (UWTAS) invites applicants from University of Worcester staff and associates to demonstrate evidence of impact of their innovative, inspiring, and excellent practice to enhance student learning. The UWTAS aligns with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

The Scheme has seen yet another successful year as colleagues have navigated the challenges of transitioning to a new normal following the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen submissions in each category (Teaching Award, Team Teaching Award and Leading Teaching Award) and from across four Schools. Submissions have evidenced a range of innovative, inspiring, and excellent practice which has led to positive impact upon student engagement, outcomes, and experience. Several of the Case Study themes outline innovation in response to the pandemic and the successes of the pedagogic approaches that were adopted during that time. Examples include an innovative hybrid-model delivery for health-based practice placements; an innovative approach to secondary teacher training through a virtual school; the delivery of scientific principles in physical education using a blended cyclical approach; utilising guest speakers to inspire and enhance learning in education for sustainability and, innovative primary teacher training enhancing partnership working and developing an online community of practice. Furthermore, Leading Teaching Award submissions have demonstrated successful co-ordination, support, supervision and mentoring of others in relation to teaching and learning innovation and excellence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Successes of and from the Scheme have been disseminated nationally and internationally including at:

HEA Annual Conference (July 2017) Beijing Sports University (May 2017) Palma EDULEARN Conference (July 2018).

The [2016/17](#), [2017/18](#), [2018/19](#), [2019/2020](#) and [2020/21](#) booklets appear on the Realising Teaching Excellence at University of Worcester blog: <https://rteworcester.wp.worc.ac.uk>.

We look forward to building upon 2020/21 successes into 2021/22, the seventh year of the Scheme. We welcome enquiries and submissions for this next round of the Scheme.

Dr Kerry Whitehouse & Dr Peter Gossman  
UW Teaching Award Scheme Co-directors 2022

## Innovation in Pre-registration Allied Health Professional Student Placements. - Teaching Award -

Rebecca Lees, School of Allied Health and Community



Shortages of good quality placements for Allied Health Professional (AHP) students has been a significant issue in recent times and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this as local health and social care networks have been put under immense pressure. Traditionally, practice-based learning has taken place in clinical settings to learn *clinical skills*. However, service redesign is being driven by such strategies as The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) which identifies that the health and societal needs of the nation are changing and, as such, traditional services need to adapt in response. It is therefore essential to develop graduates who can be innovative, adaptable, show leadership, research, evaluate and promote service improvement (V4).

In January 2021, I was module lead for Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy first-year BSc students who were due to go out on their first placement. However, the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic ensured that there were not enough practice placement areas that could accommodate them. Therefore, rapid development and implementation of an innovative hybrid-model ensued where the students would complete a 50/50 split of practice and project-based placement. This hybrid-model gave rise to a further pioneering opportunity. A remote placement was designed for a third-year Physiotherapy BSc student to become a Student Practice Educator (SPE), to lead the first-year students through the independent project phase of their placement (V2, K2, K3).

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2016) highlights the need for improved digital literacy, concluding that there is a chronic shortage in the workforce of those with the relevant skills. This remote placement provided an excellent opportunity and was facilitated using MS Teams for file sharing, daily communication, supervision and reflective meetings. The student also used Blackboard to deliver online seminars and a digital survey platform to obtain student feedback for evaluation purposes (V4, K4).

The SPE commenced placement by participating in online Practice Educator Training, a course designed to equip external practitioners with the skills and knowledge to successfully support a student on placement. This training critically explores the roles and responsibilities of the student and SPE and provides instruction and enables discussion of adult learning theories. Participants explore the learning outcomes associated with each level of study and how they might support students experiencing challenges to achieve these and successfully complete placement. Participation in this course provided excellent scaffolding for the SPE to design and implement the launch of the project phase of the hybrid students to the first-year cohort (A1, A2, A4).

The SPE identified an appropriate project management plan and assisted in the production of a series of learning activities to enable students to complete their project. They were also tasked to review the learning activities within the curriculum for the existing practice module, demonstrating the value of the student's perspective in curriculum

design. Additional learning opportunities were provided for the student to expose them to the wider context of Practice Education, such as developing coaching skills and evaluation to ensure a quality learning experience for the first-year cohort (V1, V2).

*"I have been able to offer a unique student perspective to ideas which have been taken on board and implemented. The support that I received allowed me to direct myself and my learning to improve my critical thinking which allowed me to become more proficient. The skills I have learnt are invaluable despite the lack of 'clinical' exposure."*

- SPE

## References

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NHS (2019) *The NHS long term plan*. Available at: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf> (Accessed: 27 September 2021)

## **St Jude's Virtual School: An Innovative Response to COVID-19. - Team Teaching Award - Judy Miller, Isabelle Schäfer, Dave Hunt and Suzanne Lawson; School of Education**

Tutors in the PGCE secondary teacher training team created a virtual school called 'St. Jude's' to develop trainees' skills and attributes for those who were well but having to self-isolate due to COVID-19 during their school experience placement.

St. Jude's was an online innovation born of necessity but developed through genuine pedagogical approaches for teaching excellence. The online platform was a hidden area on Blackboard only accessible to trainees who had to self-isolate. St. Jude's registration provided a series of activities designed to support their programme of study (A1) with activities to teach and support learning (A2). Subject tutors interacted with isolating trainees to assess and give feedback (A3) as they completed a series of activities including observation of filmed lessons, planning, and delivering lessons virtually to other self-isolating trainees (A4) and were signposted to subject material (K1) that engaged them with professional practice, research and evaluation (A5).

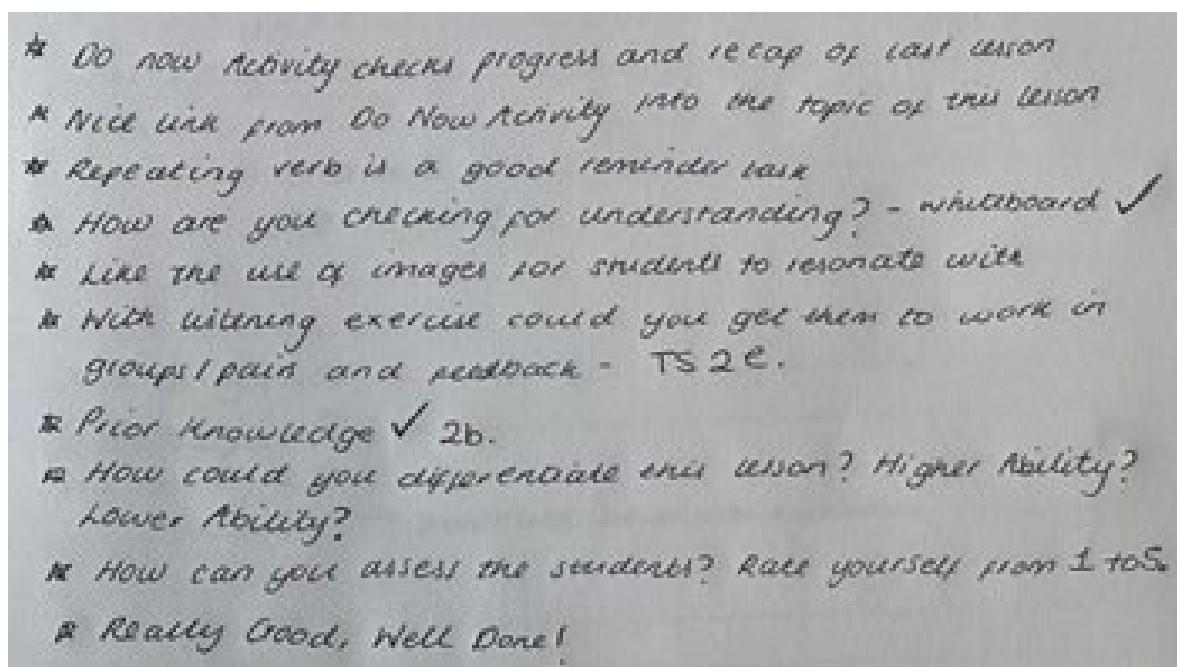
Over the two-week enrolment, trainees (who were well) taught each other once, completed at least two tasks and observed two lessons as shown in the figure below.

Over a two-week period , if you are well and in addition to what you may be asked to do for school , you will follow the online\* school timetable:  
 \*However, your school placement always takes priority. Please let us know if you are asked to teach online while self-isolating and if your weekly review falls on a Monday period 1 or on a Thursday

|                  | Planning and teaching  | Tasks  | Observations   | Contact your school mentor   |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                  | <b>PLAN AND TEACH</b> a 60 minute lesson to your peers online in the second self-isolation week . We will introduce the task on the Monday of the second self-isolation week.                  | <b>COMPLETE</b> at least two skills-based <b>TASKS</b> from the list supplied on Blackboard and create a subject related resource. | <b>OBSERVE</b> at least two lessons- pick lessons from the list supplied and carry out a focused lesson observation. |  |
| <b>Monday</b>    | In the second week of self-isolation, go to St.Jude's virtual staffroom to be briefed about the planning and teaching task (see individual timetable that matches your first day of isolation) | Complete at least two tasks over the two week period<br><br>Update the self-isolating tab on PebblePad                             | Complete at least two observations over the two week period<br><br>Update the self-isolating tab on PebblePad        | Contact your school mentor regularly to set tasks for pupils/ create resources / to have your weekly review meeting<br><br><b>AND</b><br><br>5 working days before you are due back in school so that you can schedule a time to discuss what you need to plan for next week<br><br>Update the self-isolating tab on Pebblepad |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | Email your lesson plan and your resources to your University subject tutor by 5pm  |  |  |  |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | Your University tutor will send you feedback by 5pm  |  |  |  |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | Teach your peers<br><br>Take part in lessons   |  |  |  |
| <b>Friday</b>    | Update the self-isolating tab on PebblePad<br><br>Write your weekly review   |  |  |  |

**Figure 1.** The 'St. Jude's' timetable

Activities mirrored school experience. Clear guidance was given to access university subject tutor support on draft plans (K5). A preliminary online meeting between St. Jude's staff and trainees was an opportunity to welcome and set the scene. It was important for isolating trainees to carry on feeling part of a community of practice and to support each other emotionally (V1). Trainees had access to the St. Jude's staffroom, an informal online space for fellow isolating trainees. They also met formally once over a two-week period to teach each other a 60-minute lesson of their choice (A1). This consolidated trainees' understanding of planning and teaching as lesson plans were looked at by subject tutors (A3) and trainees also had a post lesson discussion (PLD). This process was beneficial to both reviewer and reviewee as it developed their 'feedback literacy' (Mercader, Ion and Díaz Vicario, 2020, p. 1178) (V3) (see Figure 2) after being introduced to the principles of PLDs by school mentors and subject tutors (K5).



**Figure 2.** Trainee's feedback on a lesson in November 2020

One trainee commented:

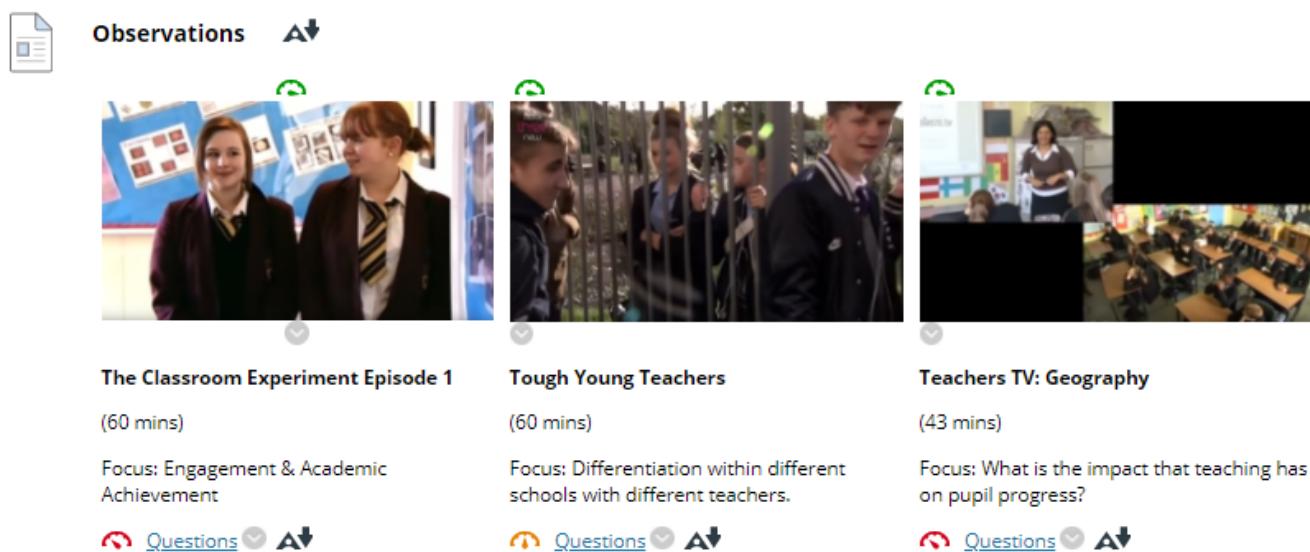
*"I worked well with St. Judes. I confirmed to myself that I am self-motivated and I received great feedback in regard to the online lesson I had taught."*

The team were keen to ensure university tutor engagement with the trainees as part of the St. Jude's experience, as this was fundamental to the adopted pedagogy of the experience (McGuire et al., 2020, p. 35) This is supported by trainee comments:

*"Having a weekly meeting with my Tutor... The tasks, the observations and teaching online lessons. It was a good experience."*

*"Chatting with other students and hearing about their personal school experiences".*

One key aspect of the formative stages of teacher training is the observation of expert colleagues so opportunities to observe quality recorded lessons was built into the structure (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Recorded lessons allowing observation

St. Jude's was designed as the bridge between school experience and enforced self-isolation. Continued communication and engagement with the school and mentors was given priority so that trainees were guided on their reintegration into the school placement (V4).

One trainee commented:

*"I think that I handled my self-isolation period as best as it could have been. I planned classes for cover teachers, supply teachers, and taught three live lessons. By my third, I felt that it was much better and smoother, and the pupils learnt the topic well without falling too far behind which was great to see as I was worried about this."*

A review of the trainee experience provides the opportunity for this innovation to be developed and used within teaching beyond the pandemic by the PGCE secondary team.

**Embedding Real World Learning Through Inspirational Guest Speakers. - Team Teaching Award - Dr Kay Emblen-Perry, Senior Lecturer and PRME Coordinator; Dr Paulo Mora-Avila, Lecturer and School Liaison Coordinator; Rachel Cooper, Lecturer and Accounting and Finance Course Leader; Worcester Business School**



In the Responsible Business L5 module, we include weekly guest speakers [A1]. This approach is inspirational to students, module tutors and the guest speakers themselves, as we will explain. The use of guest speakers each week is unique within Worcester Business School (WBS) and is innovative, as it is not seen elsewhere within education for sustainability. Our practice frames our pedagogical approach to the module which involves students exploring a live case study, and in 2020/21, this was the University of Worcester (UW); weekly guest speakers allow the live case study to be brought into the classroom. This is integral to the learning, teaching and assessment for this module [A1]. Through our approach, we provide high-quality learning opportunities that are fundamental to all students' successful outcomes [A2, V1], the delivery of the [UW L&T Strategy](#) [K6], and achievement of Graduate Attributes 1-5 [V4].

Guest speakers are invited from UW business support functions such as Estates, Procurement, H.R., etc. We also include the wider student voice through Students' Union speakers. [A1, K3]. This offers the opportunity for students to explore the live case study from business and operational perspectives [A1]. Student feedback highlights that guest speakers are highly relevant to their learning, promote engagement and assist with enhanced module outcomes [V4]. Students recognise that they gain knowledge through different experiences and perspectives shared by expert practitioners in the classroom [K2]. Satisfaction scores for 2020/21 for learning and teaching were 100% [K5].

The use of weekly guest speakers has a significant impact on students, staff and the guest speakers themselves. With students, we see positive engagement through increased participation and attendance [V2]. We also recognise students' interest and confidence is promoted through this approach [K3]. Guest speakers' activities, such as the exploration of the mobile phone supply chain, are highly relevant and students relate to these well [K1]. This leads to the development of students' self-reliance and self-efficacy, encourages attendance, and has resulted in enhanced outcomes (in 2020/21, average grades increased from C+ to B- and attendance increased by 17% to 79%) [K5].

Guest speakers also recognise that participating in lectures is a positive experience and valuable opportunity [K5]. They tell us that hearing the student voice has enabled them to gain new perspectives on operational activities and make improvement interventions which would not otherwise have been possible. As a teaching team, we have gained insight into the real context of the guest speakers, and we have gained an appreciation of the benefit to student outcomes [V3].

On our module, we are personally and professionally inspired by our guest speakers and their impact on students' learning; therefore, we plan to share our pedagogic approach with the wider academic and business communities [A5, V4]. Through this, we will support UW's goal of knowledge transfer and encourage others to contribute to the

University's golden triangle of education: well-motivated students, inspirational educators, and expert professional mentors who collaborate to deliver excellent learning experiences and outcomes [A1].

**"Not another three-hour lecture": A Blended Delivery Approach. - Team Teaching Award - Richard Pepperell; Dr Christian Edwards; School of Sport and Exercise Science**



## Introduction

Our case studies focused on the development (case study 1) and delivery (case study 2) of two new scientific principles modules in the undergraduate Physical Education (PE) curriculum. Here, we focus specifically on case study 2 demonstrating our use of a blended approach to the delivery of these modules during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Background

The Wolf report (2011) prompted several UK Government policy changes across the 14-19 education sector that were designed to increase the rigour of accredited courses. Within the PE and sports sector, these policy changes led to an increase in the sports science content required within PE course specifications at level 2 and level 3. Around 80% of students from the PE pathway progress on to teacher training courses in the 14-19 sector. During course revalidation, it was concluded that the PE course contained insufficient scientific content to meet the new teaching requirements. In turn, we developed our PE pathway introducing two new modules on scientific principles (i.e., case study 1).

## Our innovative blended approach to module delivery (case study 2)

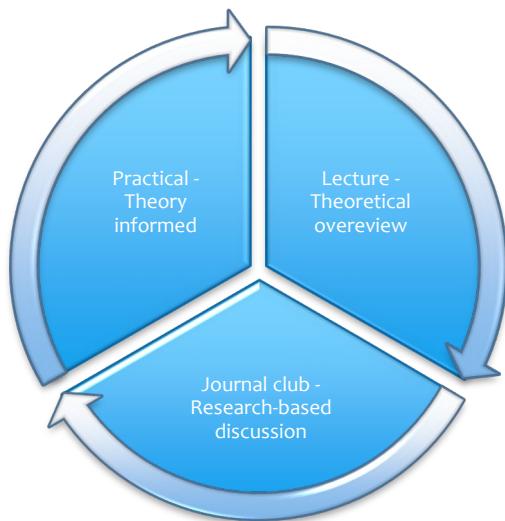
Sports science principles and research have often been described as inaccessible and confined to work laboratory settings (e.g., Meyers, 2006). Mindful of this, we aimed to teach these new scientific modules where students saw the relevance of the content for informing, and challenging, their PE practice. During module design (A1), we were guided by the literature surrounding supportive approaches to learning, which guided our blended delivery (e.g., Reeve, 2016).

To provide students with a rationale for scientific taught content (K1), we initially engaged students in discussions with qualified teachers. Following this, we moved into our blended delivery, which included face-to-face seminars, online seminars, online lectures, and in-person and virtual practical sessions (as required in line with COVID-19 restrictions). In all scenarios, a blended non-linear carousel-based approach was used in session design. Each week students would

engage in three fifty-minute sessions, with three different staff members, focusing on three key areas, including (1) practical, (2) theoretical, and (3) research-based (see Figure 1). This approach enabled students to experience a variety of learning activities within one three-hour delivery. Our non-linear approach to these sessions enabled students to enter the learning activity at any stage of this cycle, finishing with similar content as any other group/starting point.

The carousel of theory and practical learning activities continued during online delivery. We replaced laboratory-based sessions with at-home online practical sessions (e.g., using online fitness applications), which provided opportunities for students to continue to collaborate and use theory in practical activities. At both levels 4 and 5, students commented positively on our blended delivery, highlighting that “the lecturers taught in a variety of strategies and locations which helped [us] become engaged with the module as it was not [just in the] classroom...” (Level 4).

End of module evidence suggests that our blended approach positively influenced the student learning experience. We continue to use this blended approach within these modules, and others, to challenge and inform the practice of future teachers. We would be happy to discuss this approach with any member of staff wishing to incorporate a blended delivery in their practice.



**Figure 1.** Carrousel learning activities

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## How a Team Approach to Practice Education Combatted the COVID-19 Effect. - Leading Teaching Award - Terri Grant, School of Allied Health and Community



This case study demonstrates how effective leadership has led to increased placement capacity that resulted in occupational therapy and physiotherapy students at the University of Worcester meeting their placement requirements as the country went into lockdown in 2020. In addition, it demonstrates how we have prepared for a 350% increase in placement capacity over a 6-year period.

The Practice Education team was developed in 2018 after the professional regulatory body identified the need for an increase in staff dedicated to placement development. I saw the opportunity to develop a more integrated strategy, suggested the creation of an integrated team to my line manager and agreed to lead its development. Staff recruited into the team came from clinical practice with little to no education experience. I developed the team vision as innovative and positive whilst keeping quality at the heart of the team, ensuring that no-one ran away with their ideas to the detriment of the students (K6). I encouraged the team to adopt the approach of not rejecting any placement idea, but instead asking, "How can we make this work?" Each team member learned to take on a role of supporting new placements that they had helped to generate, providing them with a sense of ownership and pride in the work.

Crucial to maintaining quality was the ability for all team members to challenge one another. This was achieved by working closely together and I took care to present myself as someone who was prepared to be challenged by the team on my decisions. This enabled the team to develop robustly whilst remaining supportive of one another to deliver quality learning experiences for the students.

The impact of this positive team development was that no occupational therapy or physiotherapy student had a placement cancelled during the Covid-19 pandemic, in contrast to common practice in other HEIs. Students who were due to commence their final placement in April 2020 were able to do so, with some adjustments, in order to graduate on time and join the workforce to support the NHS response.

As the new team developed its identity and began to increase placements, student module feedback also improved. Frequency of negative qualitative comments about the variety of placements reduced and feedback from placements, particularly non-traditional ones, about the impact of student involvement on patient care increased.

To capture this and celebrate the positivity of engaging in an unusual placement, I developed a placement blog titled "[Interesting Therapy Placements](#)", which showcases some of the more unusual student experiences in a positive

manner and is publicly accessible, with the aim of encouraging more innovative placement opportunities. Some of the placements the team have innovated include student lecturers, 100% virtual overseas placements, corporate NHS placements, and development of an interprofessional student-led clinic within a private physiotherapy practice, amongst others. Engagement with the blog via Twitter analytics demonstrates a broad reach, including retweets by professional bodies.

### **When the World Shuts Down: Delivering a Successful Teacher Training Course. - Leading Teaching Award - Dan Hughes, School of Education**



I was the course leader for PGCE Primary when the COVID-19 pandemic forced a lockdown in March 2020 and the challenges for the course were significant. The impact was that our 2019/20 trainees could not go into school for their final placement and face-to-face lectures were stopped. Placements are fundamental to professional courses; they give the trainees time to put theory into practice. The third placement of their year is also where they are assessed against the Teachers' Standards (Department for Education, 2021). This could not happen, and the question was simply, what do we do?

We delivered an entire nine-week online curriculum, supported by coaches/mentors, that focused on different Teachers' Standards that the trainees needed to meet at the end of the course. Our trainees needed strong professional development and personalised support (V2). Members of staff were allocated to deliver specific weeks that suited their strengths and expertise. I led the first week with two other colleagues. We wanted to provide a suitable model and identify any challenges. This led to the creation of an individual plan for the week, including aims, launch lectures, indicative content, Collaborate lectures, a final reflection lecture, student tasks and wider reading (A1, A2, A4, K2, K3). This format and model were evaluated positively by the trainees, demonstrating a strong impact on their progress:

*"It has been challenging; however, the shutdown gave us time to dig deeper into various areas of teaching...The team managed to switch over to online learning quickly and training became more demanding as time went by. The learning curve for the training team was steep and they did splendidly."*

Further qualitative comments demonstrated how the enforced shift enhanced their understanding:

*"It is clear how much the staff, mentors, lecturers etc. have helped produce worthwhile, productive weeks to aid our training. They have really put effort into supporting us and providing us with excellent material...The time has allowed me to put a focus on CPD and excel in areas I probably would not have without lockdown. I feel that I have met the standards in a wholly different manner and learnt more because of it."*

For the course and the team, the impact of the programme was improved confidence for everyone in terms of online delivery and we demonstrated how a sense of community could be fostered online. It led to weekly updates linked to

research, innovative online lectures and greater involvement of the wider partnership in delivering courses. 100% of all trainees on both university-based and school-based pathways felt that the course would help them to secure employment. This was a 5% increase from the previous year. As challenging as it was, the shift resulted in satisfied trainees where the team had come together to provide an impactful training programme in the most trying of circumstances (A1, A2, A5).

Through leading this, I have increased confidence to lead and support the team, knowing that we have succeeded before. The good practice that we put into place will continue to be used in future delivery and will empower all of us to strive for the best for all trainees' whatever obstacles come before us. It was founded on research and being creative and adaptable. At the centre was strong communication, which is key to scaffolding a positive learning experience for all learners (Rasmussen, 2001).

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