Disciplinary thinking through collaborative practice: Considerations and reflections for a secondary history ITE (initial teacher education) curriculum.

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A fundamental aspect of history teaching is the teacher's knowledge, understanding, and ability to shape historical understanding through second-order concepts (also known as disciplinary concepts). These concepts bridge the gap between academic history and school history, as they help teachers shape disciplinary knowledge within the classroom. It was Katharine Burn's dissatisfaction of the teaching of two second-order concepts, historical evidence, and historical interpretation, which led a small-scale action research study on developing beginning teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (Burn,2007, p.449). A key theory at the core of Burn's (2007) study is the development of PCK, with a focus on how beginning teachers form this knowledge through university sessions and school-based practice. PCK, developed by Shulman (1986), is unique to the teaching profession, as it explores how teachers relate their subject-specific knowledge with their pedagogical knowledge, thus the integration of the two creates a teachers' PCK (Shulman 1986, 1987; Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer 2001).

This influences their teaching to make decisions to enable deep learning and understanding in their pupils (Loughran et al., 2007, p.2). Burn (2007) acknowledges that there is one aspect of PCK where there is an acceptance across all theories and models; PCK is an integrated process, which is developed in classroom practice. Burn (2007) argues that although some aspects of beginning teachers' PCK will be developed on their undergraduate degrees and the university sessions of an ITE program, the PCK of the beginning teachers can only be development through classroom practice. Furthermore, this practice is developed through observation, discussion, collaboration of planning and teacher-focused support provided by the school-based mentor (Burn, 2007, p.447). The implications this has on a secondary ITE program is significant; the school-based mentor is crucial to the

development of PCK in beginning history teachers. Therefore, collaboration between the University and school-based mentor is vital, especially when introducing beginning history teachers to second-order concepts.

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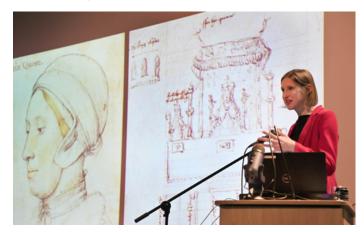
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Talking point: How important are our learning communities?   Jean Wood

A recent paper by Sánchez-Tarazaga et al. (2023) discusses an important social element to teaching and teacher education. The paper draws on research by García-Martínez et al. (2021) and Murillo and Krichesky (2015) to identify four important elements to education: learning *from* the community, learning *with* the community, learning *in* the community and learning *as* a community.

Do we, in current British education, value these learning communities sufficiently? Do we invite family members into schools to share their experience and knowledge? Do we invite others into our learning spaces to share learning, or reach out to share our learning with our communities?

Above all, do we foster a 'Community of Learning' ethos, where everyone learns together, collaboratively and actively? And if we don't, how might we seek to do this more effectively?

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García-Martínez, I., M. Montenegro-Rueda, E. Molina-Fernández, and J. M. Fernández-Batanero. 2021. "Mapping Teacher Collaboration for School Success." School Effectiveness and School Improvement 32 (4): 631–649. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2021.1925700.

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Student Wellbeing

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We all know that our wellbeing matters, but it's worth pausing to look at the reasons why we should prioritise taking care of ourselves. It can feel like we are 'taking' time but it's not just self-indulgence. The evidence tells us that wellbeing is time well-spent that contributes towards our daily successes more than it takes away. Research shows that students' academic achievements are greater when their mental health is sound and when students feel well and have strategies for managing stress. It comes as no surprise to learn too that teachers' fitness goes hand-in-hand with pupil wellbeing. When teachers learn ways to relax, to find fun or comfort in stepping away from the To Do list even briefly, they are developing skills that will help them to guide pupils and to create classrooms that are calm and safe for all.

Mental health and wellbeing attract lots of research interest, and there has been significant post-pandemic funding in this area including joint initiatives between the Departments of Education, Health and Social Care; the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (2022); and the creation of the Teacher Wellbeing Index. We know that certain factors contribute to a teacher's mental health: being faced with realistic demands, feeling respected, feeling part of a culture of wellbeing, having positive relationships with peers and having autonomy.

At BGU we offer weekly wellbeing sessions as part of our PGCE course. Forthcoming activities include making a notebook, walking through the Cathedral Quarter, and djembe drumming. Students and staff are invited to drop in and escape from the demands of day-to-day life for 30 minutes.

They bring their lunch along and join an activity that has nothing to do with the university course.

For more information or to suggest ideas for future sessions, please contact **sarah.reeve@bishopg.ac.uk.**

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