
PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION STATEMENT

The following statement evaluates varying elements of my practice. Square brackets denote supporting evidence. For context, Huntington is an 11-18, mixed school with a fully comprehensive intake, including the 6th Form, where the entry requirements are five Grade 4 GCSEs. Huntington is also a Research School.

HISTORY TEACHER

My teaching has developed beyond recognition in the last four years, largely due to the Huntington CPD programme and external influences, including the major curriculum changes. A good example of this is my recent work on the OCR/SHP GCSE Site Study unit. Delivering this course on Fountains Abbey has involved significant professional development, not least reading and synthesising a wide range of materials about the site, [1.1] and multiple visits to work with Emma Manners, Fountains' brilliant Education Officer. After exploring the Abbey with our GCSE students, the site evidence became the spine of the subsequent scheme of learning. [1.2] This organises our study of the site into four enquiries, developing students' substantive knowledge and technical vocabulary before mastering the Fountains story and the remaining site evidence of it. To evaluate the effectiveness of a metacognitive approach to teaching writing skills about the site, my 2016-7 Inquiry Question focussed on developing extended writing skills about the site. [1.3] The lessons and learning produced by this process [-exemplified by evidence 2.1, 2.2] were memorable and effective, judging by the outcomes of recent mock exams.

Similarly I have overhauled GCSE, A-level and schemes of work in Years 8 and 9 to develop knowledge-rich and challenging enquiries. These topics included Science and Superstition [6.2], The Norman Conquest, the long history of American Women's and Workers' Civil Rights and Tudor England. These developments have all followed the process described above, combining developed subject knowledge with current disciplinary pedagogy. Many have been welcomed by colleagues in other schools as part of ongoing collaborative work. [3.1] Our results for the new A-level demonstrate the impact: ALPs rated our progress in the top 10% nationwide, and further detail about student outcomes is available on request. These changes have engaged more of our students with historical study. Last year, 88% of my 57 Year 9 students opted to take GCSE, from across cohort. Indeed, there has been wider growth too over the last two years, without changes to school numbers or options requirements, from a cohort of c.100 at GCSE to one of c.150, our largest ever. The pattern is repeated at A-level, rising from four to six teaching groups.

DEVELOPMENT AS SUBJECT LEADER

As Subject Leader of seven talented history specialists my core role is to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning. My first 18 months in post provided a rare opportunity to significantly accelerate this improvement, as it has been dominated by the requirements of planning new curricula from scratch. Here my role has been to engage with external CPD, the work of the Research School and wider reading to design a c.36 hour programme of Teaching and Learning Forums, our fortnightly two-hours CPD sessions. [0.2] This process is the driving force behind our consistently strong teaching in History.

Outside of the classroom, and having taken part in the First World War Centenary Battlefields Tour programme in 2015, I have refocussed our Battlefields trip. I now help the students going research the stories of their relatives before telling these stories at the respective sites. This was well received by the students and one such story was used in my school Remembrance assemblies this year. [5.3, 5.4]

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WIDER HISTORY TEACHING COMMUNITY

Increasingly I am working with colleagues beyond the school. The significant reflection on my practice and further engagement with the research before delivering sessions for the University of York PGCE course [4.1] has benefited my own classroom teaching. Running a programme for teachers and subject leaders in Doncaster [4.2 and 4.3] has had similar impact and despite being in the early stages, the need to clarify my pedagogical understanding is directly benefitting my teaching and subject leadership. Additionally, I am starting to contribute more to the wider history teaching community, sharing my practice on a wider scale by leading workshops at the Historical Association's Northern History Forum in 2017 and at Historical Association and Schools History Project national conferences in 2018.

My work with students from beyond the Huntington community has been primarily within York's Independent State School Partnership (ISSP), which offers academic enrichment for the most able and interested students across the city. I deliver ISSP Masterclasses, which offer historical perspectives within a broader enquiry. For example, within the umbrella question of 'What is Beauty?' I collaboratively planned and delivered a 9-hour Masterclass on 'Beauty in Dark Places,' which was rated as 'excellent' by 100% of the participants. [5.1, 5.2] Furthermore, I co-organise the ISSP 'Breakthrough' debate for Year 7 students, exploring the greatest breakthrough moments in history. Finally, along with other members of YorkCLIO, our city-wide history teaching forum, I have helped establish a 'History Nerds Club,' providing enriching subject experiences for students aiming to study History at university.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

1. Develop students' use of high-level vocabulary to communicate historical thinking and knowledge.
2. Build more rigorous teaching of historical thinking into the curriculum across the key stages.
3. Continue to share practice and contribute to local and wider development of History teaching.

4. Start working as an examiner for OCR to develop my understanding of summative assessment.
5. Above all, strive to develop ever-better history learning in every lesson, every day, based around intriguing, knowledge-rich enquiries.

Two recent lessons are included, exemplifying my work towards this final objective of everyday excellence. One asks whether a WW1 propaganda poster or a Google image search gives us greater historical truth. [6.1] Another explores the wonderful detail and long-term consequences of Robert Hooke's pioneering work. [6.2] Each has many of the qualities I want all my lessons to have. Therefore the central purpose of my professional development is ensuring students access deeper understanding of the past each time they enter my classroom.