ESCalate Developing Pedagogy and Practice 2009 Grant Project Interim Report

Date submitted	7 July 2010
Project Title	Developing NQTs e-pedagogies for inclusion
Project Leader	Dr Nigel Beacham
Institution	University of Aberdeen
Project Start date	1 December 2009
Project End date	31 May 2011

Progress report: Developing E-pedagogies for inclusion

June 2010

Nigel Beacham

School of Education

University of Aberdeen

Introduction

This report presents details on the current status of the project 'Developing e-pedagogies for Inclusion'. E-Pedagogy refers to the ways in which digital technology can be integrated into teaching and the learning experiences in the classroom. Inclusion refers to inclusive education and has been defined as "*a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, community and curricula of mainstream schools*" (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Inclusive practice has been defined as "*what people do to give meaning to the concept of inclusion*" (Florian, 2009).

The purpose of the project is to study and develop the preparedness of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to use e-pedagogies for inclusion. The twelve-month project conducted within the School of Education, University of Aberdeen, started in January 2009 and will be completed by December 2010. To date, over the initial six-months, the project has achieved its outcomes and met its targeted milestones (See table 1). Whilst the project has experienced a number of challenges, such as a poor uptake of the website and a small response rate to the survey, these have been effectively managed in order to ensure it remains on target by targeting a cohort of postgraduate students. As a result the project will meet its overall aims and objectives in time and on budget.

Project aims

The project aims are:

- To raise NQTs awareness and understanding of e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- To develop the use of e-pedagogies for inclusion with NQT's.

- To explore the impact of using e-pedagogies for inclusion on NQTs.

The work intends to address the following research questions:

- To what extent are NQTs aware of the impact e-pedagogies can have on inclusive practices?

- To what extent is ICT considered and used in inclusive pedagogies by NQTs?

- What are the barriers preventing NQTs from using e-pedagogies for inclusion?

- To what extent is the use of e-pedagogies for inclusion by NQT's improved when based on an approach to develop e-pedagogies for inclusion?

The aims of the project were to be achieved by:

- Targeting NQTs from the 2007 and 2008 cohorts of initial teacher education courses within the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen.

- Using pre- and post- surveys to obtain NQTs' awareness of e-pedagogies for inclusion and the extent of their use in their teaching practices.

- Using focus groups to obtain insights from a sample of NQTs' experiences using e-pedagogies for inclusion and their opportunity to reflect on such practices.

- Using classroom observations to explore a sample of NQTs e-pedagogies within their inclusive practices.

- Using Web 2.0 technologies to record a sample NQTs' development of and barriers arising from the use of e-pedagogies for inclusion.

The project planned to produce the following deliverables:

- A project website and support network in the form of a Special Interest Group(SIG) for discussing e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- A survey on e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- A workshop for participant NQTs on developing e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- A set of case studies demonstrating the use of e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- A participant focus group obtaining experiences using developed e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- An external workshop for educational practitioners on e-pedagogies for inclusion.

- Reports, bulletins and publications presenting progress and findings.

These deliverables had planned to be produced over three phases as shown in Table 1.

2

Completed activities

A project website (http://e-inclusivepractice.ning.com/) was set up using the Web 2.0 technology Ning (see table 1: D1). The tool provided free access to Web 2.0 tools and facilities and could be managed remotely via the Web. The main feature of the site was a password protected group area which project participants could use to discuss issues.

A survey was created to obtain information about the extent to which NQTs have an awareness and understanding of e-pedagogies for inclusion, and how NQTs use digital technologies in their inclusive practices (see table 1: D2). The survey was first piloted as part of a workshop with ten NQTs studying the postgraduate MSc course in Enhanced Professional Practice at the University of Aberdeen (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/programmes/EPP.shtml). Following the pilot the survey was distributed electronically to two groups of NQTs (n=237). One group consisted of NQTs who were in their first year probationary period as a teacher and the second consisted of NQTs who were in their first year teaching position after their probationary period. The survey was distributed to a total of 237 NQTs (39 NQTs who had taken the PGDE secondary programme during 2008-09, 69 who studied the secondary programme during 2007-08. 70 NQTs studied the primary programme during 2008-09, and 59 who studies the primary programme during 2007-08). All NQTs receiving the survey had studied the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) course at the University of Aberdeen either between 2007-2008 or 2008-2009 (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/programmes/graduate.shtml). The survey was also used to invite respondents to take further part in the project.

Of the 24 NQTs who had completed the survey, five participants were identified to take part in the follow up phase of the project on the basis that they had agreed to take further part in the project (see table 1: D3). Carrying out this activity resulted in the completion of the initial phase.

Support was then offered to participants who requested help implementing digital technologies within their classroom practice. The support involved helping the NQTs make "a shift in pedagogical thinking from an approach that works for *most* learners existing alongside something 'additional' or 'different' for those (*some*) who experience difficulties, towards one that involves providing rich learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available for *everyone*, so that all learners are able to participate in classroom life" (Florian & Linklater, 2009). This took the form of a workshop, email discussions and two Glow[1] Meet[2] sessions (see table 1: D4). Whilst all the participants attended the workshop and were involved in email discussions, the optional Glow Meet sessions were held with one particular participant.

A set of follow up visits were planned and conducted. The purpose of the visits was to observe NQTs using ICT in their classrooms and to explore afterwards their experience. From the visits, examples were sought which showed the extent to with NQTs beliefs and attitudes to inclusive practices reflected their use of ICT. Examples also sought to show how the ways NQTs used ICT reflected their beliefs about inclusive pedagogy. These visits took place in two secondary and three primary schools

---

[1] **Glow is** the world's first national intranet for education managed by Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and delivered by Research Machines (RM) – See Glow Scotland for further information http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/glowscotland/index.asp.

[2] **Glow Meet is** the web conferencing tool which allows people to interact using video, audio and a shared whiteboard space.

in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The follow up visits involved observing the NQT and their pupil's use of ICT in a lesson followed by an interview with the NQT about their use of ICT within their inclusive practice during the observed session.

Current status

Having had interest from 17 NQTs who reported that they would like to take further part in the project it was decided that two further schools would be visited. Both were primary schools. One has been visited and the other will be visited before the end of summer term.

The project is currently documenting the observations in the form of case studies and cataloguing the data ready for analysing where ICT was used for '*everybody*' as opposed to '*some*' or '*most*' children in the NQTs class. Once finished, this will have resulted in the completion of the interim phase (See table 1: M2).

Successful outcomes

Overall, the project has progressed as planned and although there was a disappointing response to the electronic survey, the participants have taken part in the interviews and observations enthusiastically. The development of the website was very easy and quick to design and implement. Instead of arranging a separate workshop on e-pedagogies for inclusion, it was decided to incorporate the input units into the postgraduate MSc EPP course, since one aspect of the course covered aspects of Inclusion and all the participants were members of the course.

Glow Meet with participant

Glow is used by the course tutor as a virtual learning environment (VLE) for the MSc EPP. Consequently, the Web 2.0 technologies available through Glow, such as Glow Meet are familiar to the participants. The lead researcher was given rights by the course tutor to access the EPP Glow Group. This improved collaboration with the participants since the participants regularly used Glow Meet as part of regular EPP course sessions in the evenings.

Development survey

Piloting of the survey was carried out with members of the Inclusive Practice Project team, PICTAL research group and with a subgroup of ten NQTs studying the EPP course (Appendix A). The Piloting of the survey with the EPP group took place during one of the course workshops held on Campus. Piloting the survey with these different groups ensured the survey was well designed. All the EPP students thought the project was essential and the majority (80%) were keen to be part of the follow up study. One NQT who was an ICT secondary teacher even decided to change the topic she had chosen for her project to research ICT for inclusion.

Identifying participants

Seventeen of the 24 (approximately 70%) participants who completed the survey reported that they were interested in taking further part in the project. Five participants were chosen (2 secondary and 3 primary schools) on the basis of school location being close to Aberdeen.

Conducting follow up study

Carrying out the follow up study was also successful. All the participants were well prepared and delivered sessions using ICT which were for everybody as opposed to most and some children in the class. In most of the cases four of the five NQTs provided time after their session to be interviewed about their e-pedagogy for inclusion. The individual that was unable to provide an interview, due to attending a staff meeting, was sent an email of the questions. The individual has subsequently replied to the email with answers to the questions. This has resulted in obtaining a relatively large and rich data set.

Challenges

Lack of NQTs' use of website

Unfortunately the project website has not been well used because the target audience was using Web 2.0 technologies provided as part of Glow. In hindsight students do not wish to use various types of systems; they prefer to have just one with all the resources at hand. They do not have the time to monitor and use multiple systems and like to use systems which take up the least amount of time and effort. The project is considering alternative ways to disseminate and promote the project information. Unfortunately the option to publicise the Ning website is not an option. Recently Microsoft has announced that they are removing these free facilities and introducing a new pricing scheme. Therefore the website will need to be relocated. One option is to move the materials to Glow since the majority of the participants have access to this Scottish Government supported facility. Another option is to implement a new website using an alternative Web 2.0 technology to allow all NQTs who are interested in accessing the materials. A third option would involve moving the materials to either the Inclusive Practice website (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/ipp/) or the PICTAL Research Group website (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/pictal/PICTALHome.shtml).

PICTAL is an active community of professionals, based in the School of Education at the University of Aberdeen, engaged in innovative practice in learning, teaching and research enhanced by, or focused on, digital technologies. A final decision will need to be made in the coming month before entering the final phase of the project.

Poor response from scoping survey

Having successfully piloted the survey, a poor response to the survey was received from the 237 surveys distributed, with only 24 NQTs responding (approximately 10%) in spite of reminders. Due to the poor response, it was decided to focus on the NQTs taking the EPP course who were members of the selected cohorts. This decision proved successful and resulted in the seventeen participants agreeing to take part in interviews and observations in their schools.

Questions about using ICT within inclusive practices have also been incorporated into the PGDE exit survey. This larger survey obtains information about student teachers' views towards becoming a teacher. In addition to questions about using ICT within inclusive practices, this survey obtained information on student teachers' attitudes and beliefs to inclusive education and practice. Such information was obtained for each of the targeted cohorts. This will provide valuable contextual information regarding the respondents' views towards inclusion and ICT before their probationary year.

Lessons learnt

Involving NQTs working in schools is extremely difficult. Many NQTs are pressed for time and are finding adjusting to life as a teacher challenging; particularly in the present climate. Retaining contact with NQTs particularly after their probationary year has proved very difficult. Because of financial constraints in local authorities, many teachers who had successfully completed their probationary years were unable to find permanent teaching positions.

Access to resources and opportunities play a key factor in inclusive education. Preliminary findings for the research seem to suggest that there is a wide disparity between schools in the level of ICT available. Allowing children to use their own ICT in school like they do outside school is the only viable solution. Whilst schools are grateful for any support in using ICT and inclusive practices, it is evident that some schools do not encourage the use of mobile phones and children's own digital technologies. Indeed, in many schools they are banned. This is understandable because digital communication has the potential to be misused, but mobile technologies have the potential to improve pedagogy and inclusion.

Final thoughts

The work has begun to raise many more important issues and areas for further research, such as whether school policies to ban the use of mobile phones is limiting the types of inclusive pedagogies available to teachers. This work is leading the way in preparing NQTs for inclusion using digital technologies by raising the awareness of using e-pedagogies for inclusion and using well founded principles of inclusion to reflect on how NQTs use ICT in their classroom; an area of research which has received little attention to date but nevertheless is becoming increasingly important with the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland.

Financial statement

The majority of the expenditure will be incurred as part of the next phase of the project, which involves entering, coding and analysing the data and disseminating the project's findings by attending conferences and holding workshops.

Dissemination

The workshop to debrief the participants that took part in the follow up study will take the form of a Glow Meet and is planned to take place next term at a mutually convenient date. Given the timing of the ESCalate 2010 conference it was felt that it would be difficult to present any conclusive findings. Therefore, conference papers are planned for the E-Learn conference to be held in Orlando, Florida (18-22 October, 2010 – Final call for papers 27th August 2010) and ESCalate 2011 (call for papers not currently available). Advice and support will also be sought in order to submit papers to one of the following conferences: ALT-C 2011, SERA 2011 or BERA 2011.

Table 1: Work plan

Activities	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
					2010							
Set up project	■											
Develop and circulate e-pedagogy for inclusion survey to NQTs		■										
Recruit 5 NQT participations for study			■									
Hold NQT workshop on e-pedagogies for inclusion				■								
Support NQTs develop and implement learning capacity activities				▓	▓	▓						
Collect NQTs journals on their experiences				▓	▓	▓						
Observe NQTs using e-pedagogies for inclusion					▓	▓						
Hold NQT focus group (including debriefing)							▓					
Analyse NQT data (surveys, focus group, observations, journals)									▓	▓		
Hold external workshop for NQTs and QTs										▓		
Milestones	M1						M2					M3
Deliverables	D1	D2	D3	D4		D5	D6		D7	D8		D9
Dissemination	WS1	WS2		WK1	CP1	PR	WK2		CP2		JP	FR
Evaluation	PC			NQT1	ES	PC	NQT2	ES			ES	PC
Project management	TM PM	TM	TM	TM	TM	TMPM	TM	TM	TM	TM	TM	TM PM

Appendix A: Survey

E-Pedagogies for Inclusion Survey

Nigel Beacham (n.beacham@abdn.ac.uk)

This project explores how teachers use (or do not use) digital technology in their classrooms. This is sometimes called 'E-Pedagogy'. E-Pedagogy refers to the ways in which digital technology can be integrated into teaching and the learning experiences in the classroom (including the internet, digital cameras, mobile phones, interactive whiteboards, discussion boards, blogs, wikis, video conferencing, e-learning materials and assistive technologies such as AlphaSmarts and screen readers). The following questions aim to obtain information about the ways you use digital technology within your classroom and the impact digital technology can have on your *inclusive* practice.

The survey should not take more than 15 minutes to complete, however, please take all the time your need to complete it. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence. Identification data will be used only by project staff to make contact with those who indicate that they are willing to take further part in the project.

If there is insufficient space available for your answers, further space is provided on the back page of the survey.

Part A: This section explores how you use digital technology in your classroom.

1. Do you use digital technology in classroom teaching?   Yes ☐   No ☐

If you answered 'Yes' please go to question 2. If you answered 'No' please turn to question 7.

2. What types of digital technology are used in your classroom teaching?

3. What types of digital technology have you found most helpful in supporting learning?

PTO

4. How have you used digital technology in your classroom? (*Please include examples.*)

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

5. Are you changing your practice to incorporate digital technology?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

If '*Yes*' how have you changing your practice to incorporate digital technology?

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Part B: This section explores your use of digital technology as an aide to inclusive practice.

6. Have you used digital technology with pupils with additional support needs? (*By additional support needs, we mean all pupils who are perceived to be having difficulties with learning and participation.*)

    Yes ☐   No ☐

If '*Yes*' how have you used digital technology to include pupils with additional support needs in your classroom?

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                         │
│                                                  PTO    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

7. What are the difficulties in using digital technologies in your classroom teaching?

8. Do you have any other comments about using digital technology to promote inclusive learning in your classroom?

Part C: This section requests your further involvement in the project.

Are you willing to take further part in the project by being involved in workshops and/or follow-up visits?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If you answered '*Yes*', please provide the following contact details:
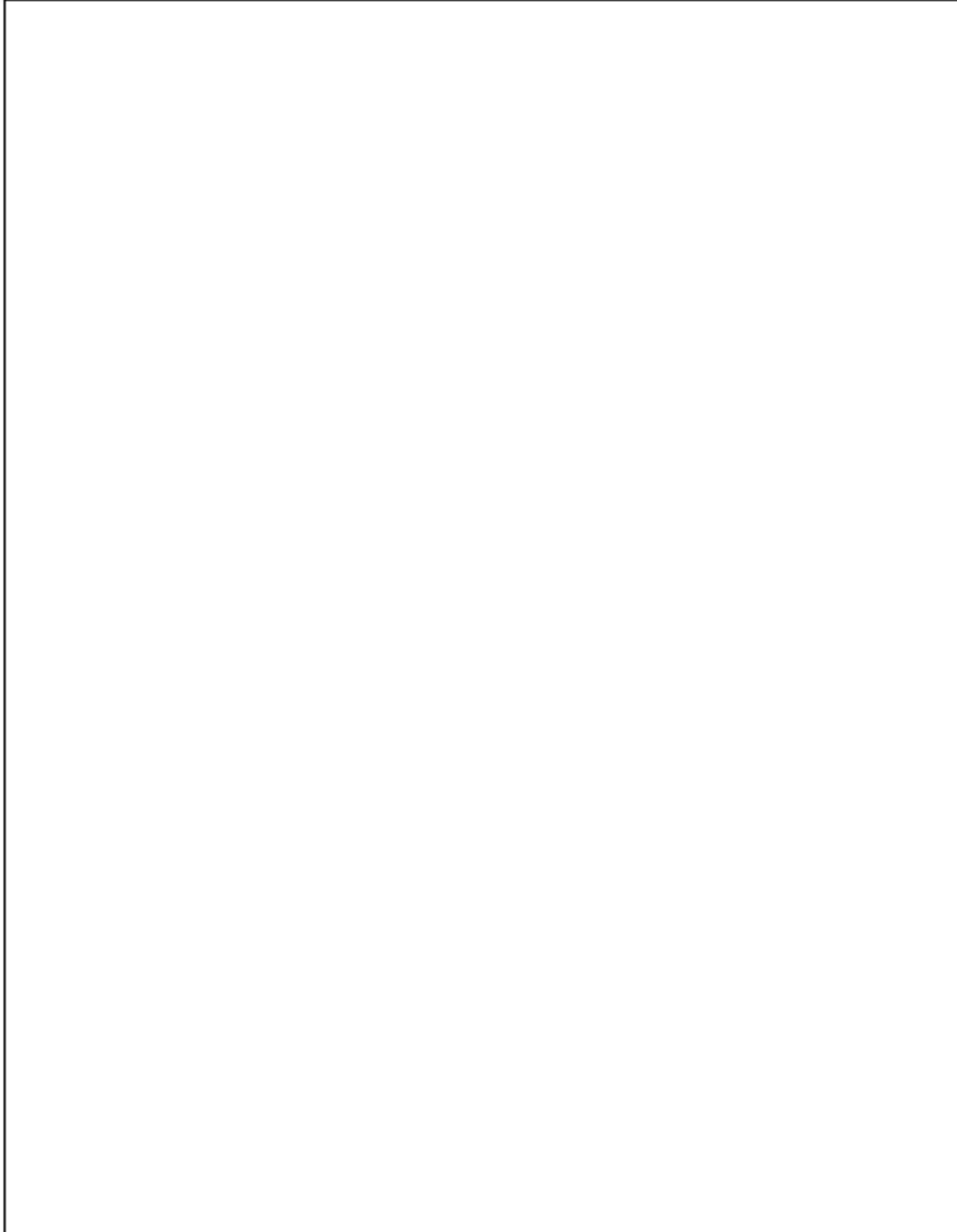
Name: _____

Email: _____

Telephone/ Mobile Number: _____

Name and address of school where you teach: _____

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this survey.

Survey created as part of the *Developing NQTs E-Pedagogies for Inclusion* project, in association with the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre ESCalate

Please use the space below to continue answers if needed.