**TEAN Commendation for practice in teacher education 2017**

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**WANTED! AGENTS OF CHANGE!**

We challenge our final-year primary education undergraduates to make real change happen in the professional workplace. One day a week over 4 months, self-selected groups of 3-5 students work to provide genuine end products for external clients. Schools and NGOs come to the university with ideas for projects and each year around 35 diverse projects happen. Groups are assessed mostly on the product for external users.

Examples of challenges include:

• Engaging EAL migrant families with school

• Learning approaches to engage children who are fire-starters

• Creating calm spaces for special needs children

• Achieving Green Flag status at an inner city school

• Hospital learning for long-term ill children

• Motivating disengaged secondary school pupils in literacy

• Helping schools understand how technology shaped the navy Does it work?

Students say:

‘I loved it. Really inspiring and got us thinking outside the box’

‘Grew in confidence and will use a lot in my own practice. We could be individuals!’.

‘Our communication skills are now awesome’

NQTs say:

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

‘I learnt to deal with different levels—from school governors and heads to other teachers’.

Employers emphasise end products as ‘uplifting and fascinating’ and stress their need to employ ‘motivated self-starters’.

Why does it work?

• The end product matters to the real world, so students set the highest standards.

• Students have genuine ownership

• Lecturers keep a distance, whatever temptation to join the fun

• We reward clear thinking, creativity and an effective outcome whatever form it takes. But once we relax conventions, we must take the consequences. Ask us how! Our pitch? You have a problem to solve. Anything goes. Solve it. This is the way the world works and what we reward. Now do it in your first job.