

## **Teaching – a Masters profession? The continuing conversation**

The following ideas were given by delegates attending the 2009 UCET conference. Delegates were asked 4 questions:

- What is Masters?
- How do/should you teach it?
- How do/should you assess it?
- Should teaching be an all-Masters profession?

Share their ideas below.

### **What is Masters?**

- A Masters? Masters level? A university concept? Little reality to messy reality of schools. Surrounded by jargon – criticality, agency etc. Gold currency, paper currency.
- A level of professional accomplishment. A disposition towards enquiry and the use of research to inform teaching. A recognition of complexity and the necessity of engaging in ongoing standards of complex matters. Mastery of a professional repertoire – attests to professional and academic accomplishment.
- Masters level is a development of an undergraduate degree. Consequently I don't believe it is possible/likely to achieve Masters level at PGCE – since this is a top-up qualification and not a development of prior learning or study per se.
- It is wrapped up in notions of change agency and professional dialogue. Many of the features identified on the slides shown would be in my non-Masters expectations!
- Is a level of accomplishment in teaching which involves critical engagement with leading edge teaching (?) and research on teaching and learning; the capacity for evidence-based /informed teaching' the willingness to evaluate professional action systematically as a prelude to enhanced performance as a teacher. i.e. Masters level work represents a high level of skilled performance.
- An ability to master knowledge and skills etc. whether in the workplace or outside. Mastery as a concept involves adopting an analytical and critical approach to that knowledge and skills etc.

### **How do/should you teach it?**

- Input from specialists who can point to theory and recorded good practice. Sometimes overtly linked to school-based action research but not necessarily. Often didactic
- In dialogue. By posing as problematic most of what is known. By encouraging further reading, critical analysis and the use of practitioner enquiry.

- If it is to be taught it should be taught with a group of students aiming at Masters level and being exposed to Masters level content. It cannot be taught in my opinion simultaneously with other levels of study.
- Is there a presumption here that it needs to be taught differently? If your programmes don't do it already then I would suggest that increased opportunities for collaboration, project based learning and student led learning sessions would foster the Masters attributes.
- You teach to Masters level by ensuring that your repertoire and strategies are in line with the definition of Masters given above.

### **How do/should you assess it?**

- Assignments as specified for the programme and modules. Assessment based on published criteria. Some exemptions (Appealing) allowed.
- Against QAA descriptors of M level work – assessed presentation – dissertation on enquiry into aspect of own practice – critical engagement with existing research paper – reflective log/portfolios
- It should be assessed as masters work from the outset – not as a piece of non-Masters work that retrospectively is considered as being at Masters level.
- Depends on your definition. This needs very careful examination. How do we make the attributes we seek visible/tangible?
- You assess Masters level work by addressing evidence that the level and quality of professional performance is in line with the criteria of Masters level performance given overleaf.
- Through a demonstration of Mastery- this may be written but need not be. Engaging with theory and showing Mastery of knowledge.
- You can't teach it – you can help people master knowledge etc.

### **Should teaching be an all Masters profession?**

- Yes. To raise professional esteem, raise and improve quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.
- Yes – as long as teaching is a research based profession.
- No it should not be an all-Masters profession. There should be room for teachers at different levels. Some work in teaching requires little more than the functional knowledge and skills required to induct students into a subject – other work requires much more breadth and depth of knowledge/skill.
- Is this our decision to make? Any case must be founded on benefits to children and schools and the profession at large. At the moment these benefits seem to be perceived rather than proven.
- Of course. In the interim we should use the slogans as a spur to improved teaching and improved teacher education.
- Yes! I think all teachers should be masters of their profession. Skilled performance – mastery.