Author guidelines for practitioner blogs

Aims of the blog

- Act as a catalyst for dialogue between teachers, other educational professionals and researchers on matters related to the science of learning; in particular, the specific issues they, as teachers, wish to raise

- Provide a forum for teachers to share their thoughts and raise questions about issues related to learning, from a practitioner perspective, that they feel require further research

- Contribute to facilitating a more teacher-led / classroom informed research and development enterprise where research addresses the needs of teachers

- Highlight teacher expertise within the learning sciences

Content and structure guidelines

- Approx. 500 – 1000 words

- Blog submissions should describe issues related to learning from a teacher perspective that develop into 'why' or 'how' questions - questions that would be valuable for teachers to have more guidance on

- Issues could be specific (e.g., children's understanding of a particular concept, or process; or topics that relate to particular groups of children) or broad (e.g., whole-school policy, examinations etc.)

- Try to explain points with concrete examples where possible

- Images and diagrams can be used to illustrate points

- Focusing on one topic/issue will allow greater depth and nuance to the explanation

- No need to describe existing research findings unless necessary

- Possible blog content/structure: Description of the focus; why it is important; description and examples of the problem; questions that emerge from the problem – the answer of which would be valuable to know. See examples on the following page

- Title: Phrased as a question that links to the question/s developed in the blog

Contact for queries and blog proposals: Matt Slocombe, Learnus Council, email - msloco01@mail.bbk.ac.uk

Topic examples

Why do primary children find classification difficult when learning about evolution?

Description of the topic

- Classification trees that are used to learn about evolution

Description of why it is important

- Children produce classification trees to help them understand similarities and differences between different life forms, in addition to understanding evolutionary processes

Examples of the problem

- Children often struggle when classifying X and X. The often make the following mistakes…

Possible questions

- Why do children make these mistakes?
- What is the best way to introduce classification in the context of evolution?

What is the best way to encourage children to generate multiple initial ideas within a design and technology project?

Description of the topic

- Generating multiple alternative ideas that address a design brief in different ways

Description of why it is important

- Children need to produce and evaluate multiple ideas as part of the design process – the more they do, the more creative and sophisticated their final designs become

Examples of the problem

- Children often tend to fixate on their first initial ideas rather put them to one side and explore alternative ideas

Possible questions

- Why do children fixate on their initial ideas?
- Are there factors that make it easier or difficult for children to explore ideas?
- What strategies would support children's creative exploration?