



PGCE Secondary English 11-18: Pre-course task

What does it mean to be a teacher of English?

“So what does it mean to become a teacher, especially a teacher of a subject so loosely defined as English and one that attracts such constant political and media attention?” (Goodwyn, 2010:19).

‘What does it mean to be a teacher of English?’ is the central question you will address across the PGCE year; you will then carry this question into your Early Career Teacher phase as your teaching career develops. Your first version of an answer to this question is a non-assessed written piece of about 1000 words.

Task: What does ‘being a teacher of English’ mean to you?

On the first day of the course you should bring with you a printed version of your answer to the question above. The topic picks up on your pre-course reading in part, including your thoughts on the Davison and Daly chapter included in your interview preparation pack, but of equal importance is your educational life so far. This piece of writing invites you to consider the experiences and influences which have shaped your sense of what it is to be a teacher of English. In the tradition of teaching English, there is no ‘right or wrong’ answer to this question, and we will return to the question as the course progresses and your experience grows.

This piece of writing will receive a response from your tutor which will contain:

- A personal response to what you have written
- Advice on written expression
- Advice on scholarly matters such as Harvard referencing as appropriate to what you have written
- Formative commentary to support your future academic writing

It will not be marked, graded or levelled. It will “count” in the sense that it is your provisional starting point; the statement from which your subsequent professional position will be developed. We will return to this central question at key moments in the course. This task is also important as it is a first opportunity for your tutor to get some purchase on what kind of a writer you are.

Reference

Goodwyn, A. C. (2010) “Becoming an English teacher: identity, self-knowledge and expertise”, pp18-36 in Davison, J., Daly, C. and Moss, J. (eds.) *Debates in English teaching*, Abingdon: Routledge