

Task 1: Where I am starting from as a Maths teacher

This task is a starting point to your journey as a PGCE student. It will be followed up in maths sessions from the outset of the course. The task is also an opportunity for your tutor to provide **formative feedback** on your style of writing in advance of your submission of your first assignment.

There is not a rigid word limit, but as a guide you should aim for between 2000 - 2500 words. Do not get anxious about this! Since it is about *you* there are no right and wrong answers.

Under the heading - “**Where I am starting from as a Mathematics teacher**”, describe your personal philosophy and beliefs about mathematics teaching and learning.

We would like you to structure your writing around the following key areas. For each area, we have given questions to prompt your thinking. We are not expecting you to answer every question in detail and your writing should not read as a list of answers to questions – use those that most interest you to help you describe and reflect on your personal thoughts and feelings.

You do not need to do any extra reading for this task; it is your own implicit views that are important.

Mathematics

Try to describe what, for you, mathematics is about. In other words, what is your personal philosophy of mathematics? What sorts of things does one do when one does it? What is the purpose of mathematics? How do different people do or use maths in their daily lives?

Myself

Describe your own mathematical background. Include your school and higher education experiences. What do you feel about mathematics and why do you think you feel this? Have you always felt like this? What were your teachers like? **How** do you find that **you best learn** to master new skills, ideas or understandings (possibly different ways for each of these?) How were you taught? What did teachers **do** to support your learning? How did/do you feel about this?

Learning

How do children learn mathematics? Where and how might that learning begin? Why do some children find it so difficult? In theory, to the best of your knowledge, what helps children to learn in mathematics?

Issues in Teaching Mathematics

Why do we teach mathematics? What sorts of particular things ought teachers to be doing when they are teaching mathematics? Do the language we use and contexts we choose as teachers favour some social groups over others? Is mathematical attainment related to other factors: Social class; Gender; Ethnicity for example? How do you think pupils should be grouped for teaching maths? Should they be set by ‘ability’ (and is this a helpful concept in itself?) Why/why not? Do you think maths can be taught in a way that helps pupils better to understand their own lives? The community they live in? Global issues? Mathematics is often not a popular subject, why not? How do you foresee your role within the school community as a teacher of mathematics?

My Subject Knowledge for Teaching Mathematics

How did it feel to undertake the task of completing the Didactics Workbook prior to starting the course? What are some of the main distinctions between the knowledge needed to answer exam questions on a topic and **that needed to be ready to teach it?** Describe the “learning journey” of the workbook - what strategies, resources, people did you use, and how? How will you continue the process this year so as to be confident in your pedagogic subject knowledge by the start of your NQT year?

Reflecting

Comment on this assignment. How did you feel about being asked to do it? How did you tackle it? Was it easy? Have you learned anything by doing it? Why do you think you were asked to do it?

Assessment Criteria

- Evidence of personal reflection regarding:
 1. Your mathematical background
 2. The nature of mathematical knowledge
 3. The challenge of learning and teaching mathematics
- Structure (clear, logical), style (fluent, correct register) and presentation (accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation)

The task should be submitted by email to claire.clemmet@nottingham.ac.uk on or before the last Sunday prior to the commencement of the course.