

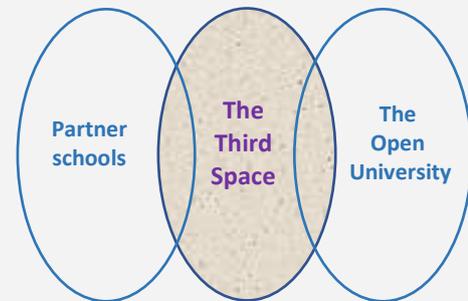
The opportunities and challenges of partnership working in Teacher Education

The Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme

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TEAN Conference, May 2021



In May 2021, 124 students across Wales were studying the new flexible two-year Open University Partnership in Wales PGCE Programme, via the part-time or salaried route.



The PGCE is part of the Welsh Government's National Mission for education.....

To 'reform our teacher training offer, strengthening university and school partnerships so that they jointly design and run programmes'.¹

Third space theory is proposed as a concept to support the closing of the gap between theory and practice in teacher education when **partnership working is a non-hierarchical and truly equal collaboration.**²

Opportunities



Close collaboration – opportunities during retreat for partners to be immersed in Teacher Education.



Shared responsibility – creation of sub-committees to provide structure for programme governance and accountability.



Co-construction – schools and university working together to ensure the theories and examples reflect best practice in Welsh classrooms.



Communication – Regular and clear communication during development phase, regular ongoing meetings and use of forums. **However**, an 'overwhelming' amount of material for schools to read.

Challenges



Accommodating all stakeholder views and expectations – ensuring Welsh cultural and education context is understood and prioritised.



Limited relationship building opportunities – the loss of face to face meetings restricted informal networking opportunities.



Adapting to The Open University IT systems – initial login problems and miscommunication as access to forums hindered.

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¹ Welsh Government (2017) *Education in Wales: Our national mission Action plan 2017-21*. p. 15.

² Jackson, A. and Burch, J. (2019). 'New directions for teacher education: investigating school/university partnership in an increasingly school-based context', *Professional Development in Education*, 45 (1), 138-150. p. 139.