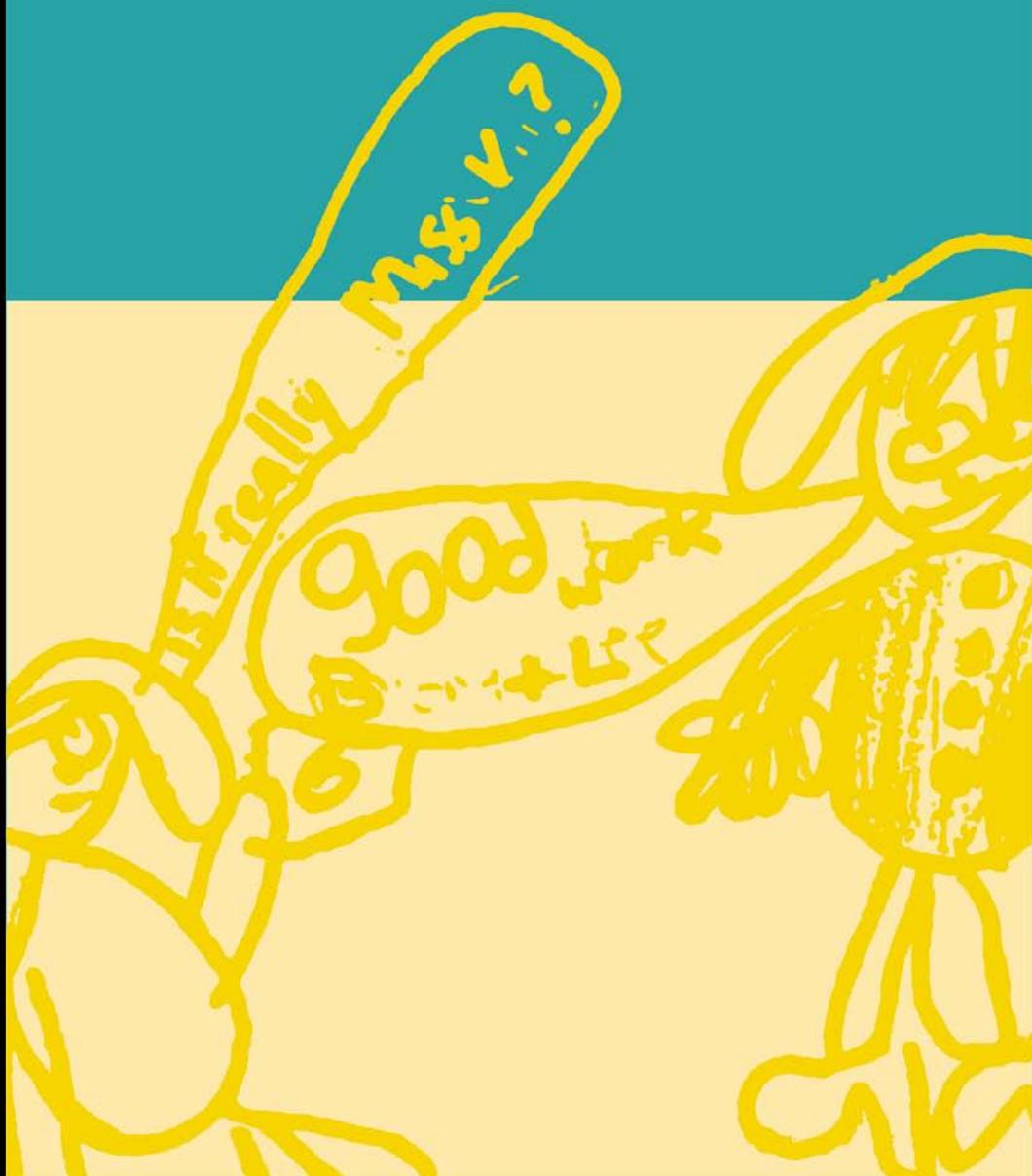


**CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS  
OF LEARNING WITH TRAINEE TEACHERS**

**Edited by Hilary Cooper and Rob Hyland**



**Also available as a printed book  
see title verso for ISBN details**

## Children's Perceptions of Learning with Trainee Teachers

This book is unique as it focuses on pupils' perceptions of their learning with trainee teachers in primary schools. It aims to raise trainee teachers' awareness of the importance of considering pupils' perceptions in evaluating their teaching and provides frameworks for doing so. It enables teachers to make links between theory, research and practice as part of their on-going development.

Includes:

- interviews with primary pupils about their learning with trainee teachers
- examples of new teaching approaches introduced by trainees which are enjoyed and valued by both pupils and mentors
- case studies offering pupil insights into religious education, classroom ethos, gender and ethnicity
- chapter summaries giving suggestions for teaching strategies, discussions with mentors and tutors and further reading

Through interviews, questionnaires, discussion of children's drawings and video tape, a powerful theme emerges. Children like working with trainee teachers. They learn most with trainees who are able to convey key concepts, who stimulate, challenge and change their thinking, who respect them as individuals and maintain a good classroom ethos. This book encourages trainee teachers to develop good practice.

**Hilary Cooper** is a Principal Lecturer and Head of Programme for Research in Education at St Martin's College.

**Rob Hyland** was, until recently, a lecturer in education at St Martin's College. Currently he is engaged in a research project at the University of Newcastle.



# Children's Perceptions of Learning with Trainee Teachers

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Rob Hyland



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# Foreword

Thank heavens for Hilary Cooper and Rob Hyland! They have meticulously edited this book which comes at a most opportune time for all concerned with teacher training and not least the trainee teacher. Over the last ten years school-based pedagogy has increased for students in quantity and indeed some quality as teacher-training establishments come to terms with government strategies and pressures. After more than thirty years of teaching it is very refreshing (if not obvious) for the views of children to be taken into account. How do children perceive the practice of the raw recruit and how does this influence their learning? I should expect this book to be well thumbed and on every trainee's bookshelf.

Graham Fraser  
Headteacher  
Quarry View Junior School, Sunderland

# Acknowledgements

The editors are grateful to all the constituents in the partnership between St Martin's College, Lancaster and the schools in which students on Initial Teacher Training courses are placed, many of whom were involved in the writing of this book.

Since new Partnership arrangements between Teacher Training Institutions and schools became statutory in 1996 teachers have had an increased responsibility for the management, support and assessment of the school-based work of trainees. New courses have been developing and new roles and responsibilities for mentors in schools, for college tutors and also for trainees have been evolving, which aim to develop coherence and shared aims and understandings in supporting the professional development of trainee teachers. These developments have been intended to improve the quality of training, but some teachers have been concerned that their primary responsibility is to teach children. The empirical studies described in this book investigate pupils' perceptions of the impact of trainee teachers on their learning. Children's perception of their learning is often different from that of adults and is often insufficiently considered in evaluating teaching. How can the benefits of working with trainee teachers be maximized and the pitfalls avoided? In a study which reflects and develops new partnership, college tutors, teachers, trainees and their pupils worked together to link theory to practice in investigating these questions.

The editors are grateful to their many colleagues at St Martin's College, those in the Education Department who participated in designing and piloting the initial pupil interviews described in Part I and the generic chapters in Parts II and V and also to the subject application tutors who contributed the case studies in Parts III and IV. Despite very demanding teaching commitments they embarked on each stage of the project with enthusiasm, believed in it, found time to discuss their proposals and findings, met all their deadlines and responded to editorial advice. For this we feel both honoured and grateful. We are especially grateful to Marion Blake for the experience, patience, tolerance, diplomacy, good humour and sheer hard work in her role as editorial adviser, and for

widening the scope of the debate by introducing us to her colleague Florence Samson with whom she wrote the afterword.

We are grateful to the teachers and headteachers in our partnership schools throughout Lancashire and Cumbria and in the Isle of Man and Sunderland for their generous professional support of the hundreds of trainees they annually integrate into their school communities, of whom those mentioned in this book form a small random sample. In this instance we appreciate the time spent completing the class-teacher questionnaires and arranging the pupil interviews which underpin the case studies.

We should like to thank the trainee teachers who agreed to participate, accepting that children would comment freely to an interviewer and to college tutors on aspects of their practice not normally scrutinized. And of course we are grateful to the principal contributors to this book, their pupils.

We are very grateful to Susan Cockburn for her patience and efficiency in correcting numerous drafts of the typescript and collating the final version.

For reasons of confidentiality the names of schools, trainee teachers and children have been changed, but they are certainly real places and people in real contexts, as is made clear by the vivid descriptions of situations and vitality of the comments. Throughout the book the terms trainee teacher and student teacher and pupil and child are interchangeable; this is partly for variety and also because sometimes one seems more appropriate than the other depending on the context.

minority trainee teachers; what constructions of race and ethnicity impact on the ways in which they respond and what are the implications for Initial Teacher Training Institutions and the professional support of black/ethnic-minority teachers?

The afterword is written by Marion Blake and Florence Samson. Marion Blake worked with each of the contributors and with the editors from April until September 1999, helping us to turn eighteen discrete papers into a structured book, which we hope has both coherence of style and the varied texture of many voices. Through our regular discussions it became clear that partnership arrangements and responsibility for the professional development of teachers are as much the focus of current changes in her native Ontario as they are in England. Marion Blake and her colleague Florence Samson discuss these connections and the possibilities they offer for new beginnings.



# Introduction

Hilary Cooper

'What is a student teacher?' a headteacher asked his pupils after twenty-five students had spent an intensive one-week placement working with pupils, teachers and tutors in his school. He received interesting answers. When he

## Student Teachers

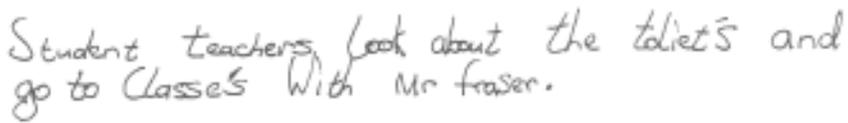
Student teachers are half teachers and they help people. In a few years they are real Teachers. They go to teachers university

When a student teacher is not at school she is in college. She learns how to punish children. She also learns how to learn children, maths, handwriting, art, R.E., Reading and English. She learns the easy way to teach kids. When she's in ~~the~~ school she gets influence from the proper teachers.

I think a student teacher takes someone's class so when they get a job in a school they will have some experience with children.

When they are not at school I think they tell their tutor what they done and learned so they can get a job.

shared them with the student teachers in a plenary session in college they thought they were hilarious, particularly:



Student teachers, look about the toilets and go to classes with Mr Fraser.

Yet, on closer scrutiny, there are reflections in these quotations, on the status of student teachers, the length and purpose of a teacher-training course, and of roles and responsibilities in the partnership between the school and the university. It's good to see 'there tudor' still has a significant role. As always with children it is necessary to look beneath the surface statements. For example the ambience of the toilets in this challenging urban school is meticulously nurtured and proudly maintained, with hand cream and scented soap provided for the girls, soccer icons and trophies for the lads, sexist maybe, but this exemplifies the care, respect and creative concern lavished on the school by all who work in it. This remark actually meant that children had noticed that the student teachers, during their brief stay, had acquired some insights into the way in which the ethos of their school was achieved.

What *children* think about working with student teachers was not a dimension to which we had previously given much thought. Mentors in schools are required to take an increasing responsibility for managing, monitoring and assessing the school-based work of trainee teachers, in increasingly circumscribed ways; college courses are increasingly rigorously inspected to ensure that they enable trainees to meet prescribed standards, all with the legitimate aim of enhancing pupils' learning. But, in the midst of all these targets and pressures how do the children perceive their learning with student teachers? After the headteacher had raised the question in a light-hearted introduction to his lecture the question would not go away.

This book evolved over two years. All the contributors are lecturers at St Martin's College. After their initial amusement at the headteacher's quotation they decided to try to find out in more systematic ways, what lay beneath the surface in pupils' perceptions of trainee teachers. The empirical studies through which they did so all took place in schools across Lancashire, Cumbria and the Isle of Man where trainee teachers from St Martin's College are placed as part of the partnership arrangements between schools and the College.

The aims of the book are to raise trainee teachers' awareness of the importance of considering pupils' perceptions in evaluating their teaching; to provide some insights which will maximize the advantages of working with trainees and help them to avoid some of the pit-falls; to investigate a variety of key questions of interest to tutors and students, both generic questions and questions related to teaching subjects across the primary curriculum, in the context of the relevant literature; to provide a range of frameworks which

students can replicate, develop or modify to investigate their own practice, as a basis for formal and informal discussions in schools with their mentors, and with college tutors as part of taught courses; to develop coherence both across courses and between schools and initial teacher-training institutions with which they are in partnership. Big aims!

In Part I, *The Big Picture*, an introductory survey identifies key factors in pupils' perceptions of working with trainee teachers from 130 structured interviews with a random sample of children from Reception to Year 6 taught by trainees from St Martin's College, across Lancashire and Cumbria, in large multi-cultural urban schools, schools in market towns and rural schools with only two classes and two or three teachers. This survey is set in the context of other related studies.

The findings are explained in greater depth in Parts I to V. Parts II and III consist of a series of small empirical studies undertaken by Education and Subject Application Tutors at St Martin's College, investigating questions of interest to them about children's perceptions of their learning with trainee teachers. Each chapter is related to relevant literature and followed by suggestions for investigations student teachers may wish to undertake themselves, questions for discussion with mentors in schools and tutors in college, and recommended further reading.

Part II, *Roles and Responsibilities*, investigates, through analysis of video clips in Year 6 and children's drawings in Years 1 and 2, how pupils perceive and respond to an additional adult, a student teacher, in their learning environment; how they integrate the new role and the new personality; their expectations and aspirations, and offers some insights into how these can be successfully encompassed. In Chapter 3 Nigel Toye investigates the hypothesis that when the trainee teacher is in a fictional role in drama the power relationship between trainee and pupil is altered; the pupil is unable to rely on the conventional game and has to make sense of the new relationship; this makes real dialogue possible. In Chapter 4 Suzanne Lea explains what children in Nursery and Reception classes think is the teacher's role, how they see the trainee in relation to this role, and how this changes from Year 1 to Year 2.

In Part III, *Do Pupils Learn what Trainee Teachers Teach?*, case studies investigate, from various perspectives, the factors which influence good match between the learning objectives of the activities trainees plan and children's perceptions of the purposes of these activities in progressing their learning in geography, science, technology, history, English and mathematics.

In Part IV, *New Faces, New Ideas?*, case studies are used to consider ways in which trainee teachers may introduce new teaching approaches, which are valued by pupils and by their mentors, in art, music, information technology and physical education.

Case studies in Part V explore important cross-curricular themes and issues. Can novice teachers change attitudes in religious education? How do children assess a trainee's ability to control and manage the class? How do children who have never had a male teacher feel about a male trainee? How do children

in predominantly white primary schools perceive and respond to black/ethnic-minority trainee teachers; what constructions of race and ethnicity impact on the ways in which they respond and what are the implications for Initial Teacher Training Institutions and the professional support of black/ethnic-minority teachers?

The afterword is written by Marion Blake and Florence Samson. Marion Blake worked with each of the contributors and with the editors from April until September 1999, helping us to turn eighteen discrete papers into a structured book, which we hope has both coherence of style and the varied texture of many voices. Through our regular discussions it became clear that partnership arrangements and responsibility for the professional development of teachers are as much the focus of current changes in her native Ontario as they are in England. Marion Blake and her colleague Florence Samson discuss these connections and the possibilities they offer for new beginnings.

Part I

# The Big Picture