



Corrine Scandling: from 2 ‘O’ levels to a master’s degree

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I left school at 16 with no real idea of what I wanted to do. I had not enjoyed the last 2 years of my schooling, missing classes and not engaging with my teachers but I did manage to leave with 2 GCE ‘O’ levels and mediocre Certificates in Secondary Education (CSEs) [these awards were, together, the predecessors of GCSEs]. This was sufficient to get me a job as a junior clerk/secretary in a local engineering company and I was required to attend my local college one day and one evening a week. This I did enjoy and engaged with. It was the start of my lifelong learning journey. For the next three years I undertook and successfully passed relevant qualifications in secretarial studies and then, at the age of 23, realising I no longer wanted to be a secretary, mainly due to the fact that I did not feel challenged enough and felt

capable of doing more, I moved into youth training to teach/train what was known as office skills. This new job allowed me to teach the skills I had acquired to those who wanted to be secretaries.

My journey into becoming a teacher educator began in 2000 at what was then Huddersfield Technical College (HTC), now Kirklees College. I was teaching part-time at Her Majesty's Prison and Young Offender Institution (YOI) New Hall as well as at HTC teaching key skills. I was asked to join a small team at HTC to develop and then deliver the City and Guilds (C&G) 7307 to a cohort of trainee teachers specialising in childcare and early years. This council-led initiative was a response to the investment in early years education by the then Labour Government and aimed to meet the expected demand for more childcare and early years teachers by training childcare and early years practitioners. Although not a practitioner, I had been chair of a pre-school governing body and of an after-school club.

Initially I was quite intimidated by teaching trainee teachers in a field I was not an 'expert' in, however, I quickly realised that it was not about teaching them their subject knowledge, they had this, it was about teaching them to teach, and I could draw on my own experience of teaching in different environments to different types of learners. My experience of teaching different subjects at the prison/YOI had taught me that if you identified a theme for teaching a specific subject on one course, this could often be adapted and be taught on others. This is something I still draw on today when my trainee teachers are struggling with how to embed English and maths into their lessons.

In 2001 I decided to move into a full-time teaching role at HTC, which would allow me to continue teaching on the C&G 7307. The main factor in my decision to move to the College was I had got

a thirst for learning and wanted to do something more substantial rather than focusing on short courses, so I opted to undertake a BA (Hons) in Education and Training with the University of Huddersfield. This was a course I was more than ready for, and I fully utilised the relevant modules to develop my own academic ability but also as a means to improve my teaching. As I came towards the end of the degree things began to change very quickly in initial teacher education and the expectation that new teachers would require a Level 5 teaching qualification created an opportunity to teach the University of Huddersfield's CertEd and Professional Graduate Certificate in Education at my college. I was initially quite overwhelmed teaching on these courses, especially year 2, but the support within my college and through the monthly network meetings at the University were invaluable in helping me through this transition.

In 2008, recognising how important it is to keep up-to-date with what is going on in the sector, I started a master's degree and completed this in 2011. As a teacher educator, **what motivates and inspires me is to get my trainee teachers engaged and aware of issues that are impacting on them and their teaching practice.** I actively encourage the use of digital technologies within my lessons and keep up-to-date myself, there is so much out there but **I learn from the trainee teachers as well as them learning from me.** I am a huge advocate of promoting dual professionalism and how important it is to be at the forefront of developments in teaching and learning as well as what is happening within government and policy.