Trainee teachers and 'impact' learning: A study of trainees' views on what helps them to use ICT effectively in their subject teaching

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The project aimed to identify the factors which are most effective in promoting trainee teachers' use of ICT to support their subject teaching by closely monitoring individual trainee's development, in an attempt to prioritise the key factors for mentors and tutors. We monitored a group of 47 Science and 24 History trainees since we were also interested in exploring possible differences between subjects.

The data confirmed the very positive attitude to the use of ICT by almost all trainees and perhaps less expectedly very high levels of use even during their first few weeks of school placement. However, trainees also highlighted the usual range of well-documented barriers hindering their ability to make the most of the potential of ICT to support their teaching. One of the key findings was the importance of trainees identifying an "ICT role model' within the department, who could support the trainees as they develop their pedagogic skills in the use of ICT. The most positive situation would be one in which the trainee was able to share their personal ICT skills with members of the subject department, whilst at the same time practising teachers supported the trainee in using these skills effectively in the classroom. A central figure in this process is the school-based mentor and their attitude and approach to the use of ICT. One of the other key factors identified was the impact of a trainee seeing something involving the use of ICT which they immediately saw as beneficial to their teaching. Given this motivation most trainees were highly effective in finding out how to do it for themselves very quickly.