**SSAS 3001: An Introduction to Teaching: The Ambassador Scheme in the Social Sciences**

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| **What were your main reasons for wanting to take the module?**I heard about the Undergraduate Ambassador Scheme (UAS) module firstly via email and then went to a lecture explaining more about the module. I took the module because I was interested in teaching as a future career. |
| **Where was your placement and what did you do during your placement?** The placement I attended was at a local secondary school and I spent time in the World Studies department which includes Geography, which was my chosen subject, History and Religious Education. I spent the first few sessions observing from the back of the classroom making notes about teaching styles, lesson plans and materials for learning as well as observations on student participation and behaviour, before getting involved in assisting students in tasks in later weeks. This was over a number of subjects and year groups. The school I was at took History and Geography GCSE over one year periods and the current year was history so I did not get to observe any GCSE Geography lessons but I did see many year 9 Geography lessons. The experience in History, Religious Education and other lessons was invaluable, however, because it allowed me to focus on the style of teaching and student response from a perspective of non-expertise rather than focusing on the knowledge taught. I learnt many useful things during the placement, seeing the classroom from a non-student perspective was a really different experience. The main learning point involved differentiation within the classroom and the importance of timing and planning lessons within a time scale proved very challenging as time seems to just vanish in the classroom! This was also related to differentiation and the difference between student’s ability and speed at completing tasks. I have learnt that planning extension tasks is a way to cater for those who finish ahead of other pupils and time management within a school setting is a skill I have learnt as well as being aware of differences within the classroom.  |
| **Part of the assessment for the Undergraduate Ambassador Scheme (UAS ) module involves doing a special project. What was your special project?**For the special project I wanted to do a lesson to gain a realistic experience because I was interested in pursuing a PGCE after my undergraduate degree and thought this would be good experience. I discussed the syllabus with the teacher for the year 9 class I had spent time with over the weeks and they were starting a new topic called People and Place. The lesson I selected was an introduction to world population and issues that might be faced in the future. I created a starter task where the students had to guess the current world population; the actual number was then revealed and I asked them to guess how much the population would increase by the end of the lesson. This immediately got students engaged and made a great ending activity also. Throughout the lesson we discussed how the population was changing by looking at graphs and pictures to interact with visual learning before completing some written tasks answering questions on a case study, going through the answers and discussing some solutions to over and under population issues. I had learnt that a variety of tasks and information sources is crucial in meeting the needs of all types of learners. I learnt a lot about keeping students engaged because despite being an interesting topic to me, at some points the students’ attention was drifting. There was however, some occasions where they were fascinated in some facts and figures, especially as it was the first time many of them had heard about some of these issues so that was very rewarding. Overall, the special project helped me understand some key teaching and learning methods and difficulties in a more practical way.  |
| **Do you think this module will be helpful for your future career plans? If so, in what ways?**I was initially interested in this module because a teaching career is something I have considered. I therefore wanted to complete this module to learn m0re and gain a practical experience to see if it was a suitable career choice for me. I found the experience rewarding and enjoyable which motivated me to apply for Geography PGCE. The experience proved invaluable for my application to universities because I could discuss my relevant experiences and what I had learnt in a reflective way in my personal statement and how this would make me a suitable candidate.  |
| **Was the overall experience of doing the module a useful one? How do you feel you have benefitted from taking the module?**The experience was extremely useful for the career path I wish to follow. I feel it has given me a great head start about some of the key techniques and issues in education. It helped develop my communication skills and confidence to stand in front of a group of people and communicate knowledge in a coherent way, which was daunting at first. I also learnt an extensive amount about the planning process including timing and planning for a differing level of ability. These are all transferable skills that will prove invaluable to my future career.  |
| **Would you recommend this module to other students and if so why?**I would definitely recommend this module to anyone who has considered a career in teaching, in a serious way or even if just a passing thought. If someone did the experience and decided not to go ahead with a career in teaching, a vast amount would have still been learnt about the process and challenges within the classroom.  |
| **What advice would you give to future students planning on taking this module?**I would advise a future student to be open minded and to get involved as much as possible and do not think it as an easy module option! |