

Tessa Willy, Primary PGCE Tutor

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Tessa Willy is a Primary Geography PGCE Tutor at Roehampton University, before which she was both a primary and secondary geography teacher and also an education consultant. She was awarded Chartered Geographer status in 2005. Here's what she says about being a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)....

Why did you decide to apply to become a Chartered Geographer (Teacher)?

For the professional recognition that comes with the award and appreciation of an initiative from a well recognised and regarded professional organisation.

How did you find the application process?

I found the process relatively straightforward and appreciated the guidance and advice I was given at every point. I applied a number of years ago and know that the process is now even smoother and there is a great deal of encouragement and advice from a number of different sources such as the RGS-IBG website, the GTT website and from the approachable and informative personnel at the RGS-IBG. I found the process really useful as being an effective form of self-reflection and as I was going through a threshold at the time it was particularly useful in focusing my mind on all the work that I had done in geography. I submitted some examples of different things that I had done, a programme of activities for an outdoor education department that I had set up at school, an article written for a relevant magazine, innovative schemes of work.

What sort of experience and activities did you include in your professional self evaluation report?

I included mainly experiences and activities that I felt were either original and innovative or above and beyond the usual remit of my job – leading a trip to South Africa as a fund-raiser for a township school, starting up a new outdoor education department, projects that I had initiated and had been particularly successful and so on.

How have you benefited personally from gaining the accreditation?

It has encouraged me and given me permission to successfully pursue further CPD and my school recognised this need and were supportive. It has also given me a great deal more confidence in what I am doing and developed my professional self-esteem.

How did your department and school benefit from you gaining the accreditation?

I have been vigilant in disseminating information to others in the school through a couple of twilight sessions and also passing on information about relevant courses, resources and initiatives. I have been able to share a great deal that has come out of my accreditation and in turn learnt much from others.

How did your Headteacher and senior management team respond to you gaining the accreditation?

Very well – they were positive and supportive and clearly appreciated the status of one of their members of staff. They were also pleased at the positive effect that the accreditation and ensuing CPD and research had for other members of staff and the general profile of geography in the school.

As the CGeog (Teacher) network grows, what would you like to see happen or be available to you?

I think we're kept well informed as to what is happening but perhaps there could be even more focused information given according to particular areas of interest, projects etc. I would also like if it were at all

possible to have some face to face contact with other CGeogs – perhaps small focus groups, or even an annual meeting with a theme – social as well as professional.

Any words of advice for aspiring Chartered Geographer (Teachers)?

Go for it, it's well worth it!