

Project Summary Sheet

Contextualising ITT: addressing the needs of ACL, V&C and WBL learning in ITT programmes through innovative models of delivery

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The Project started in June and will complete in November 2008. The key tasks were to: firstly, to investigate how providers of Adult and Community Learning (ACL), Voluntary and Community (V&C) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) deliver PTLLS and CTLLS and how they meet their learners' needs; secondly, to undertake additional research into methods of delivery, identifying sources of innovative practice; and, thirdly, to initiate pilots of new methods.

As of 4 November, the first task has been completed, the second and third are in hand. The final report will incorporate the findings from all three tasks and include "practitioner guides" on key issues: Recruitment, Induction, Patterns and Methods of Delivery, Learning Resources, Tutoring and Mentoring, Assessment and Verification. The pilot activity will continue after the conclusion of the project. Below is a summary of the findings from the telephone survey.

Survey of WBL, ACL and V&C providers of ITT

A total of fourteen provider organisations took part in the telephone survey, comprising six ACL, two V&C and six WBL organisations. Across the 14 providers surveyed, a total of 105 PTLLS courses have been delivered to some 1,000 trainee teachers / trainers. Most were providers in the SW region. The majority of the provision referred to by respondents was PTLLS, though some CTLLS courses have been run and there are plans to develop this next year. There has been a significant demand for PTLLS across a wide range of employer organisations and job roles.

Types of Provision

Whilst the majority of provision is open to trainee teachers / trainers from any employer type and relevant job role, some discrete PTLLS courses have been run for specific groups of employees from public and private sector organisations. A range of delivery patterns has been used, including the traditional 'long and thin' model, either based on weekly, fortnightly or monthly class attendance and short, intensive courses. Some providers have used weekends to allow for the time needed for the microteaching activity for PTLLS and some distance learning models have been used. Most of the courses covered by the survey are tutor led and classroom based, though two WBL providers use a combination of tutor input, distance and blended learning.

Initial Assessment

All providers carry out some form of initial assessment either prior to or at the start of their programmes. Just under half of the respondents reported that they carry out some form of diagnostic assessment of writing skills. It appears that the use of ILPs is well established, though it is not clear whether these are used developmentally or chiefly as a means of recording information and targets. The process of inducting learners into PTLLS and CTLLS courses almost always forms part of the first course meeting.

Tutoring and Mentoring

Tutorials are used throughout the courses to support trainee teachers and to facilitate completion of assessment tasks. In many cases, tutor support is also available via email outside of regular tutorials or class contact time. Tutor support is a strong feature of delivery, though mentoring support is less well developed. It appears that, in most cases, some kind of relatively informal 'mentor' support is available, not necessarily subject-specific. In the case of two providers outside the SW region, mentor support has been facilitated via their local CETT, either via specific programmes or funding support. Delivery tutors are also generally provided with some form of support, either from peers or via in-house meetings and CPD or CETT training events.

Learning Resources

Aside from the usual classroom based resources such as flipcharts, the most commonly used resources are books, centre-produced handbooks, workbooks and teaching and learning materials, some of which are available via VLEs. There is evidence that almost all providers make some use VLEs and other forms of e-learning, with extensive use of email for tutor-tutee contact outside of face to face contact.

Assessment and Verification

Assessment of C & G accredited PTLLS programmes has been found challenging by a significant number of providers, with the large number of tasks and restrictive word counts, especially at level four, causing particular concern. Some centres were concerned that the wording of some of these tasks appears to make the assumption that the course participants are already in a training or teaching role, despite the fact that PTLLS is intended to meet the needs of pre-service candidates. The evidence suggests that the C&G assessment model is perceived by delivery centres as rather unwieldy and restricting, with little possibility of meeting the individual assessment needs of candidates, such as dyslexic or ESOL trainee teachers. By contrast, those centres that deliver Edexcel or OCR accredited programmes have been able to use flexibility in designing assessment tasks and methods of gathering evidence. In all cases, Internal Verification is carried out by one or more designated IVs, using sampling plans and standardisation meetings.

Learner Response

Feedback from course participants has been very positive with many appreciative comments reported about the quality of the taught programmes, the usefulness of the microteaching phase and support from the tutors. The only negative issues raised concerned the C&G assessment tasks.

Problems faced by Providers

Three specific aspects of PTLLS and CTLLS delivery have proved challenging for provider organisations: the prescriptive nature and format of the C&G assessment model, difficulties over funding available for programmes that are not offered on a full cost basis and some general delivery issues such as lack of support for course participants by their employers.

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