



SWitching Courses: Satisfaction Guaranteed?

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Lifelong Learning UK: Reforms

- **Lifelong Learning** – aka Learning & Skills and FE sector. Covers the teacher workforce in further education, adult and community learning, voluntary and community learning, offender learning and work based learning.
- **Qualification titles:** Award, Certificate, Diploma – for awards accredited by the QCA. HEIs are encouraged to adopt similar terminology to identify appropriate qualifications from:
 - **PTLLS** - Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector
 - **CTLLS** – Certificate in teaching in the lifelong learning sector
 - **DTLLS** – Diploma in teaching in the lifelong learning sector
- **Further Education sector** – wide range of organisations including their staff and governing bodies. Collectively the system:
 - includes other organisations supporting delivery of FE (eg the Learning and Skills Council, Lifelong Learning UK)
 - provides opportunities for 14+ to participate in learning, training and skills development, and
 - for learners of all ages to participate in a range of activities, including educational or vocational courses.



SWitch: Background

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- Eleven Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs) have been established in England. The 'generic' CETT for the South West – SWitch – is characterised by

“an inclusive vision of professional support for all of those engaged in providing, and seeking to improve, initial training and continued professional development for teachers in the sector.”

- Two particular challenges for the CETT are to:
 - to assist the successful integration into the complex new arrangements for initial training of parts of the learning and skills sector traditionally perceived as ‘at the margin’ of further education – adult, community and voluntary sector education, along with providers of work-based learning
 - to tackle a specific problem identified by Ofsted – the relative indifference to initial training of senior managers in colleges.

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SWitch: Key Aims

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- To create a model for the improvement of advice and guidance, recruitment, initial assessment, induction, and support of new teachers by their employers, ITT providers and others.
- Develop strategies for ITT practitioners to disseminate good practice and make quality improvements to assessment and review of the practical teaching skills of trainee teachers, including specialist areas and embedding Literacy, Language and Numeracy.
- Improve the capacity of teachers, assessors and teacher trainers to use diverse methods and innovative approaches safely and inclusively, to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse range of learners and contexts in the South West.
- Identify, implement and evaluate the ways that new technology can support learning and the dissemination of good practice.
- Ensure there is a robust and rigorous monitoring and evaluation process for all SWitch activities linking to broader evaluation activities by providers and the overall sector.
- Establish SWitch as an effective organisation working towards focused and clearly-defined priorities in ITT and CPD.

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SWitch: Key Priorities

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- Improving the processes and practices of initial assessment, induction and ongoing support for teacher trainees.
- Developing effective models for using Individual Learning Plans within ITT programmes.
- Improving the quality of mentor support in teacher training programmes.
- Establishing and supporting networks of teachers, assessors and teacher trainers to share good practice.
- Developing a SWitch Portal to promote ways that new technology can support both learning and the dissemination of good practice.
- Gather evaluation data relating to ITT programmes around the region and use this to evaluate critically. This will include engaging trainees in building the SWitch community of practice by carrying out trainee evaluation surveys across the region.

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SWitch: Members

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- **Adult & Community Learning:** Cornwall / Dorset Adult Education Services, Devon Adult & Community Learning, Gloucestershire Adult Education.
- **Awarding Bodies:** City & Guilds (South West), Edexcel, OCR.
- **FE Colleges:** Bridgwater, City of Bath, City of Bristol, Exeter, Filton, Gloucestershire, Kingston Maurward, Norton Radstock, Royal Forest of Dean, South Devon, Strode, Stroud (Gloucestershire), Weston, Weymouth, Yeovil.
- **Higher Education Institutions:** Bath Spa University, The College of St Mark & St John (Marjon), University of Exeter, UWE Bristol.
- **Voluntary & Community Sector:** Exeter Council for Voluntary Service, The Learning Curve, Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB).
- **Work-based Learning:** Accountancy Plus (Training), Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Enable Assessment, Royal Artillery Centre for Personal Development, SW Learning Providers Network.
- **Network & Support Organisations:** Association of Colleges SW, Gloucestershire Skills Unit, JISC RSC SW, Learning South West, Learning & Skills Research Network SW, SW Skills for Life Unit (LSC), SW Skills & Intelligence Module (SLIM), SW Regional Skills Partnership (SWRSP).

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What do we know about the FE based teaching workforce?

According to Lifelong Learning UK's Staff Individualised Records (SIR) data (2006/07):

- SW FE institutions included: 27 general colleges, 2 sixth forms, 4 specialist colleges
- 59% of teaching workforce are female, 41% male
- 65% of female teachers and 49% of males are part time (SW overall: 68.2% part time / 31.8% full time)
- Average ages for female teachers = 43.9 years, for males = 46.1 years
- Average SW full time FE teaching salary in 2006/07: £24,948.35 (bottom of table for English regions)

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Switch baseline report: trainees in SW partner institutions 2004/06

- 22% were pursuing HE courses, 73% FE-based courses, and 5% in ACL. Almost all (89%) of HEI candidates were on full time courses, with this reversed for FE/ACL sectors where all candidates were part time
- In HEIs 34% of candidates were taking PGCEs and 66% Cert Eds; for FE candidates, 30% were following (previous) Level 3 courses and 62% Level 4; for ACL, the respective split was 47% and 53%
- The gender split in HEI candidates was 69% female and 31% male; in FE, 63%/37%; in ACL, 70%/30%
- Across the three sectors surveyed the age range was older than equivalent cohorts in other regions, with the majority of students aged 31-50 and the largest single group 40-44. 19% of learners were over 50 compared to 15% nationally.

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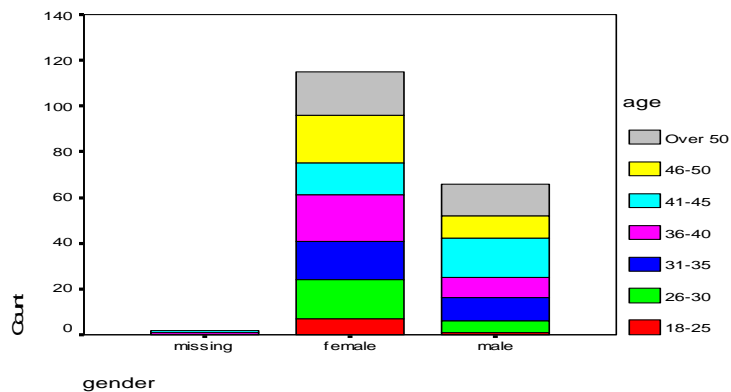


SWitch interim report: trainees in SW partner institutions 2007/08

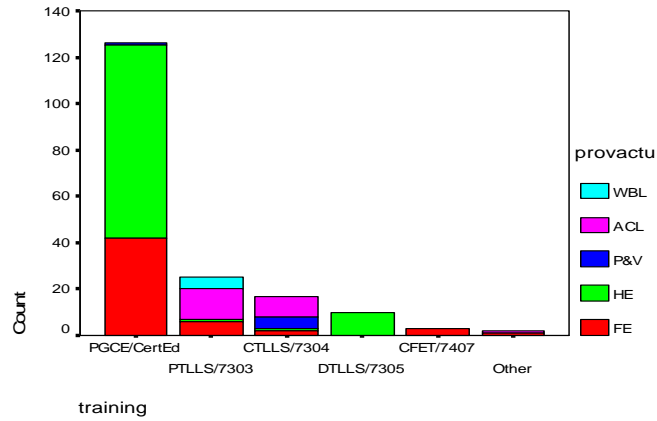
- 81% of respondents were pursuing Cert Ed/PGCE courses in HE or FE sectors, with the highest number of males in FE. Only 11% of respondents were on full time courses
- PTLLS represented the next largest proportion (13%) of new courses reported across most sectors and like CTLLS were widely spread. DTLLS were only available in HE institutions
- Across all sectors surveyed the age range was older than in the baseline report: only 16% aged under 30, with 52% over 40 and 33% over 50 - the largest single group reporting. The majority of trainees in the WBL, P&V and ACL sectors were over 40



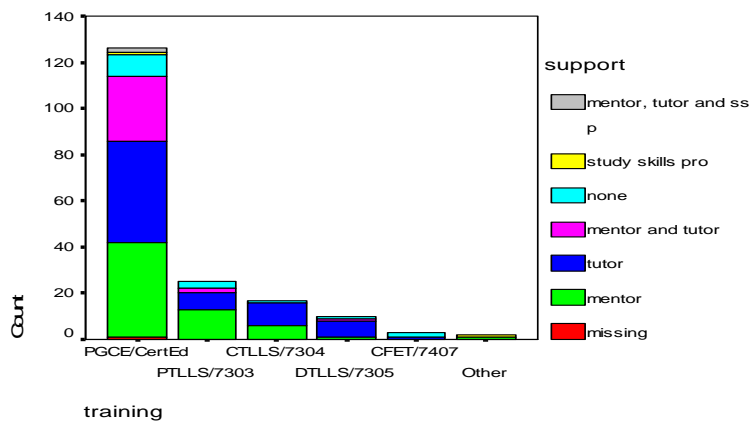
Interim survey trainees: age/gender



Interim survey trainees: course by sector



Models of support by course





Interim survey findings – quantitative data

- 80% of respondents considered support received to be at least 'fairly appropriate'. There is no consistent recruitment pattern for mentors: some are line managers, many are colleagues, some were arranged by trainees and others by course tutors.
- 82% of respondents felt courses were 'fairly' or 'highly relevant'; 86% also found them 'fairly' or 'highly challenging'. 58% of 46-50 year old respondents found courses 'highly challenging'.
- Almost 50% found courses 'fairly creative', but only 16% 'highly creative'.
- Nearly all (89%) thought the formal requirements of the training to be founded on real world practice, with the highest ratings amongst over 50s. 76% found courses generally manageable.
- Strikingly, many respondents were unclear in which sector they were undertaking their training.

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Interim survey findings - qualitative analysis methods

NVivo software based discourse and frequency analysis of selected terminology / 'word search'

Cluster analysis of pervading themes in open ended responses

Sectorised analysis of individuals' responses to the questions: 'one thing you could change or do differently' and 'other comments'.

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Interim survey: qualitative findings (1)

Trainees' expectations were coloured by

- Incoming job requirements for the L&S sector
- Career changes and professional development, including pay rises
- Enhanced quality and effectiveness of practice
- Preparation to return to work / updating skills
- Peer interaction and exchange of practice

Trainees' motivations included

- Opportunities to progress and formally validate experience
- Incorporating underpinning theory and new methodologies into practice
- 'People reasons' - team and group work, sharing experiences, access to skilled observation for improvement of techniques

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Interim survey: qualitative findings (2)

Trainees' anxieties included

- Mid to late career learning, including theoretical coursework and academic study skills
- Practicalities of juggling work/life commitments, with uncertain practical requirements and time availability an additional worry
- Unfamiliar performance and quality standards
- Micro-teaching and peer observation
- Lack of availability of course information to clarify expectations
- Concerns re a 'paper exercise' to satisfy legislation only
- No real relevance nor acknowledgement of experience for older trainees
- Overly theoretical, generalist approaches tuned more to HE/FE contexts than more specialist voluntary/work based sectors
- Additional time needed for mentoring support, reflection and research
- 'Bedding in' time for a newly developed course framework

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Interim survey: qualitative findings (3)

Suggestions for changes - responses across sectors included:

- WBL: *“too early on in the course to say (only had a couple of sessions)”*
- VCS: *“greater clarity re assignment timings and requirements ... enjoying the duality of being trained and training at the same time”*
- ACL: *“cut down on the number of short assignments, and the reliance on paperwork, forms ... childish to have to complete so many short assignments on an eleven week course”*
- HE/FE: *“For people starting this year the course has already been changed significantly, to include much more practical help, eg, voice projection, class management. ... it would be nice to get a pay rise at the end. If the government are ‘making’ us do it we should automatically get some ‘reward’. Some colleges do this, mine doesn’t.”*

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Interim survey: qualitative findings (4)

Respondents' perspectives for further discussion:

- *“I am enjoying the learning experience, despite the heavy workload and all the repetitive paperwork exercises. I like working with other teachers and getting ideas from peers and tutors to improve my teaching.”*
- *“lecturers who have been teaching for years already”* having to *“write essays”*.
- *“[would be good] to have an overview of the course beforehand; to get support all along; to have a chance to train with colleagues in the same area of expertise.”*
- *“I would rather come back next year when all the teething troubles have been sorted and the delivering staff understand the new course better.”*
- *“more study time [is needed] to complete work in course time rather than all my free time, of which there is little, with the demands of my full-time job as a teacher.”*

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