Should teaching qualifications be left to chance?

A collection of thought pieces by practitioners and leaders in defence of learning excellence delivered by professionally qualified teachers and trainers across England’s further education and skills system.

Edited by Shane Chowen
“No education system can be better than the quality of its teachers.”

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Prime Minister
The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, Deputy Prime Minister

It is impossible to disagree with this opening statement by the prime minister and deputy prime minister in the Department for Education’s schools white paper in 2010. IfL believes that this is relevant for the whole of our education and training landscape, from schools, to workplaces, colleges and universities. Every one of us relies on – and remembers – brilliant teachers, throughout our lives.

This collection brings together evidence and the voices of teachers, learners, teacher trainers, managers, principals, Ofsted, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and experts with vast expertise in teaching and learning to discuss the value of initial teacher training in the further education and skills sector.

The sector offers vocational and academic education and training for young people and adults, from the age of 14, from introductory to advanced levels; apprenticeships; vital English and maths programmes; and training for many who are unemployed and seeking to enter the labour market. Young people progress from further education and skills into work or on to more advanced study.

The views and opinions expressed in this collection are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of their employers or of the Institute for Learning (IfL).

IfL wishes to thank the individuals and organisations who have contributed to this collection of thought pieces.

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Terminology

Throughout this document we use the term ‘teachers and trainers’ or ‘teachers’ to cover all those who directly support learning in further education and skills, including lecturers, teachers, trainers, tutors, assessors, instructors and trainee teachers. We use the terms ‘colleges’ and ‘learning providers’ or ‘providers’ to cover the range of organisations that provide learning outside schools and higher education.
Contents

Foreword 5
Sue Crowley | Chair of the Institute for Learning (IfL), the professional body for teachers and trainers across further education and skills

At a glance 7

Thought pieces 9

Enthusiasm and experience in vocational or subject specialisms is essential but not enough 10
Sarah Simons MIfL | Writer and FE lecturer

Learners want professional teachers and trainers to stay at the heart of FE 11
Joe Vinson | Vice-president (further education), National Union of Students

We need a coherent, robust and manifest ethos of lecturer professionalism 13
Norman Crowther | National post-16 official, Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

Dangers for learners and the economy 15
Jayne Stigger MIfL | Head of maths and science at North East Surrey College of Technology

Would you abolish the regulations to have qualified doctors, airline pilots, chartered accountants or nurses? 17
Professor Ed Sallis FIfL | Former principal, Highlands College, and visiting professor, Plymouth University

Why initial teacher education is central to improving teaching, learning and the student experience 18
Rosie Douglas MIfL QTLS | Teaching, learning and assessment manager, MidKent College
Vanessa Kent MIfL QTLS | Teacher coach, MidKent College
Stephen Grix | Principal, MidKent College

Initial teacher education links to quality 20
Marion Plant | Principal, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

Essential standards and skills and progression to being outstanding teachers 23
Sue Rimmer MIfL | Principal, South Thames College

Initial and continuing teacher education and why they matter 24
Jay Derrick MIfL QTLS | Director post-compulsory initial teacher education, Institute of Education
‘Knowing how’ trumps ‘knowing that’  
Geoff Petty MIfL | Independent author, researcher, consultant and IfL patron

Initial teacher education: why it matters  
Robert Smedley | Pro-vice-chancellor and dean of Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University

Trainee teachers are all good or outstanding  
Susan Andrews | Education curriculum coordinator, Highbury College  
Stella Mbubaegbu | Principal, Highbury College, and IfL patron

Trainee teachers value a high level of personal support  
Mike Hopkins | Principal, Middlesbrough College

Taking pride in the nature of teaching in FE – but could this be put all at sea?  
Bea Groves MIfL QTLS | Adult education tutor with the Workers’ Educational Association and IfL president 2011–13

Further voices

Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)  
The Centre for Research and Development in Lifelong Education

Education of Service Personnel, House of Commons Defence Committee, conclusions and recommendations. 18 July 2013  
Bob Powell | Chief executive, Holex, in IfL’s professional magazine, Intuition, June 2013

Stewart Segal | Chief executive, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, in IfL’s professional magazine, Intuition, June 2013

Ofsted – inspection evidence relating to whether initial teacher education makes a difference to the quality of teaching and learning in further education

The initial training of further education and skills teachers: Findings from 2011–12 initial teacher education courses leading to awarding body qualifications, September 2012

Glossary

Appendix 1 – Key facts and FAQs about the 2007 regulations for initial teacher training
I welcome you to this collection of writing and the range of views, ideas and different perspectives offered by the authors, which I believe make for an interesting and distinctive read. I hope it helps clarify thinking about what is best for initial training for teachers, trainers and assessors and for further education and skills. You may find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with specific contributions, but each one will, I believe, shed some new light and make us think that bit harder and deeper about the place of initial teacher education and teachers and trainers being professionally qualified.

In their diversity, the authors of this collection show that it is incontrovertible that training and becoming a qualified teacher or trainer matters. Good teaching is at the heart of a good training and education system.

Teachers and trainers being qualified matters for young and adult learners and the quality of the teaching and learning that they rightly should and do expect.

Teachers and trainers being qualified matters for the economy and for future generations of skilled and knowledgeable entrants to the labour market or progression to higher education.

Teachers being qualified clearly makes teaching and learning more effective, and therefore it brings efficiencies by reducing or even eliminating time and money that otherwise could be wasted if teaching were poor quality. At Highbury College, for example, all trainee teachers are graded as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ as they become qualified.

The Institute for Learning’s recent evidence from nearly 6,000 individual teachers and trainers across further education and skills strongly supports the position that there should and must be a national requirement for teachers and trainers to be qualified.

Just as other professions have robust initial training and qualification followed by ongoing professional development, so too should teaching.

The challenging, complex and fulfilling professional role of teaching is a true profession with clear national standards and respected national qualifications. Teaching and training in further education and skills is not an amateur exercise where some skills are picked up as you go along or through an induction process.

Teachers and trainers being qualified to national standards is in the public interest, and in the interest of the economy.

Initial teacher education is an investment, not an overhead. The encouraging news is that evidence from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and IfL shows that the majority of teachers and trainers across further education and skills already are the dual professionals that the sector needs: experts in their vocational area or subject and qualified as teachers.

This means, therefore, that the cost of maintaining a national commitment to a fully qualified teaching and training workforce is small in scale. The incentive of bursaries at a level commensurate with the nature and level of the training can be readily modelled and would make a very modest call on the public purse.
Whether teachers being qualified results in better quality and more effective teaching is not coming under question to any significant degree. We know of no research evidence demonstrating that unqualified teachers and trainers excel, compared with their qualified counterparts.

What is coming under question, however, is whether as a nation we commit to ensuring we have a high-quality further education sector with a deservedly high reputation, and a national standard and expectation that further education teachers and trainers should be qualified, wherever in the country they work, whichever college or provider employs them and wherever their learners are based.

The main political parties have policies that are in significant tension on having qualified teachers. The coalition government’s policy is to remove any national expectation that teachers in further education should be qualified, preferring instead to leave this up to individual institutions.

IfL has provided key facts on the national qualification requirement that was in place until September 2013, in Appendix 1 of this document, which I encourage you to read. These key facts make a robust case for having national qualification requirements.

The government’s policy contrasts with the opposition party’s emerging policy for schools, as set out by Stephen Twigg, the shadow secretary of state for education, in June 2013:

“It is shocking that this government is allowing unqualified teachers into the classroom. High-quality teaching is the most important factor in improving education. We need to drive up the quality of teaching, not undermine it.”

I recognise that for some the idea of teachers needing to be qualified is controversial. It is highly likely that each reader of this collection will have their own position on whether nurses, accountants, early years teachers, lawyers and further education teachers should be qualified or not, and whether having an expectation that this should be determined locally, or nationally determined, because it is in the national interest.

What unites every reader, I believe, is a determination that young and adult learners deserve and should expect the highest possible quality of education and training, leading to the best possible life chances.

Teachers and trainers in further education and skills have a crucial role to play in ensuring the success of more than four million young people and adults who undertake learning in the sector each year, for the benefit of our economy and society.

Some final words belong to Sir Michael Wilshaw, chief inspector of Ofsted. In his evidence to the education select committee in 2012, he stated:

“I would expect all the teachers in my school to have qualified teacher status. When I was a head, if we were short of teachers, I would occasionally employ an unqualified person and put them through a graduate teachers’ programme. My concern in the college sector is they can go year after year without receiving that validation.”
At a glance

This collection of thought pieces by teachers and leaders explores the value of initial teacher education (ITE) for the further education and skills sector, and whether initial training matters. It is supplemented by evidence from Ofsted and the government. The collection is intended to support a deeper debate about qualified professional teachers and trainers, and the role of initial qualification in helping to ensure the highest quality teaching, learning and assessment for young and adult learners.

The authors explore how outcomes for learners, and the quality of teaching and learning they have access to, is enhanced by trained and professionally qualified teachers and trainers. Some ideas are set out for further improving initial training, and its importance in supporting economic growth.

- Writer and FE college lecturer Sarah Simons makes the case that making a difference to people who need it most requires ‘super teachers’, not less qualified teachers.

- Joe Vinson from the National Union of Students offers his view on why the professional status of qualified teachers in FE matters to learners.

- Norman Crowther at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers discusses the conditions for success in teaching and training including the need for professional regulation.

- Jayne Stigger from North East Surrey College of Technology warns of the potential damage to the quality and status of teaching professionals brought about by the government’s decision to remove the Further Education Teachers’ Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007.

- Professor Ed Sallis calls for the enhancement of professionalism of teaching and training, as is being done in areas such as the social care profession.

- In their contribution, Rosie Douglas, Vanessa Kent and Stephen Grix from MidKent College demonstrate how ITE improves quality and standards of teaching and training.

- North Warwickshire and Hinckley College’s principal, Marion Plant, provides an insight into the positive impacts and behaviours that ITE has on staff at her college.

- Sue Rimmer, principal of South Thames College, provides evidence of how ITE has contributed to improving teaching and learning at the college.

- Jay Derrick, director post-compulsory initial teacher education at the Institute of Education, analyses the complexities of teaching and the interrelationships between the different skills needed to be effective.

- Education author and IfL patron Geoff Petty looks in detail at what makes the delivery of teacher training most effective for trainee teachers and learners.

- Drawing on a vast collection of evidence, Robert Smedley of Edge Hill University takes on counterarguments about the importance of initial teacher training.

- Susan Andrews at Highbury College provides evidence, including testimonials, of how initial teacher training has raised the standard of teaching and learning at the college.

- Middlesbrough College principal Mike Hopkins discusses the mechanisms that build on ITE to develop teachers further.

- IfL president and adult education tutor Bea Groves makes the case that removing the requirements for qualifications also removes minimum standards of teaching and training skills that learners have a right to expect.
Thought pieces
Enthusiasm and experience in vocational or subject specialisms is essential but not enough

Sarah Simons MIfL | Writer and FE lecturer

The FE, skills and vocational training system is a dynamic environment for learners of all abilities to develop their talents and interests, working towards higher levels of expertise and wider career opportunities.

However for many, it is a second, third, or final chance to access education. They recognise it as the best possible route to revisit learning and gain better life chances as a result. The sector often transforms the future of learners, their families, their communities and our shared prosperity.

For this significant learner demographic there is a range of often complex reasons why their compulsory school career has not equipped them with the intended benefits and employment pathways. However, they have made that leap of faith, entrusting that a comparatively short stint of further education will provide them with the skills that 11 years of schooling have not. That takes courage. It also places an extraordinary amount of responsibility on the level of teaching quality provided. When students enter FE after previous negative experiences in their learning journey, letting them down is just not an option.

Enthusiasm and experience in vocational or subject specialisms from teaching staff is of course essential, but it’s not enough on its own. FE teachers need more. They must have the ability to share that knowledge in a manner that urgently engages even the hardest-to-reach students, inspiring them to develop not just a love of the subject but of learning itself; an empowerment that will reap lifelong rewards. This is no small task. FE practitioners need to possess vast specialist knowledge of their fields, but most critically they need to be teachers.

It is for this reason that questioning the need for a requirement for teachers and trainers to hold initial teacher training (ITT) qualifications is extremely damaging, both to ongoing professionalism in the sector, and to external perceptions of it.

In recent years the sector has made great headway in distancing itself from the outdated image of have-a-go teachers doing their best, when their unskilled, unqualified best was often not good enough. Statutory requirement of ITT qualifications ensures that the professional status of all teachers and trainers in the sector remains intact. Without that requirement, the professionalism of the sector is undermined and we return to the days when providers were in many cases staffed with practitioners who were vocational experts but amateur teachers.

Teachers improve and excel through an ongoing commitment to continuing professional development. However, that development must be built on a solid foundation of pedagogical knowledge gained from a well-considered ITT curriculum. Such qualifications corroborate that a practitioner has acquired at least a base level of practical teaching ability and theoretical study.

Surely educational providers owe it to their learners to ensure that the people they trust to deliver qualifications are themselves qualified to do so. Without such regulations in place, it is not just the framework of qualification provision that is shaken, but the integrity of it.

In order to truly make a difference to the people who need it most, the further education, skills and vocational training sector does not require less qualified practitioners: it requires ‘super teachers’.
Learners want professional teachers and trainers to stay at the heart of FE

Joe Vinson | Vice-president (further education), National Union of Students

We’re constantly told that we need to get the right qualifications to succeed, that it’s important to continue in education so we can achieve a qualification because that shows employers that we can do the job and that we are professionals.

One of the primary functions of FE is to train people in their chosen profession, and to continue to aid them throughout the progression of their career, supporting them with industry recognised qualifications.

Currently we have a government implementing reforms to A levels and proposing reforms to GCSEs. These aim to strengthen student achievement and make the qualifications more rigorous. So to me it seems outrageous that the same government thinks its OK to push through a decision to remove the need for teachers and trainers in FE to have any form of teaching qualification whatsoever. Quite frankly, ministers, you need to pick a side and stick to it.

It’s important that teachers and trainers have an understanding of the subject or industry they are teaching, but it’s vital they have an understanding of how to actually teach.

FE supports so many different types of students, with different backgrounds, different levels of ability and different needs. To have someone at the front of a workshop or classroom with no quantifiable or standardised way of supporting a diverse group of students is a disservice to the students themselves, the college and the community they serve.

With more and more FE students having to pay higher fees for their courses, why does the government think it is OK to provide substandard teachers in the future? If teachers in primary, secondary and school sixth form education are expected to be trained professionals, then what’s the difference for those teaching in FE? Why should an A-level student in a school sixth form be taught by someone who is a teaching professional and someone taking their A levels in an FE college doesn’t need to be?

Surely they are being taught the same content. This is starting to look like another example of this government’s preference for the academic route, hammering another wedge between those who are in a position to choose their educational route and those who are not.

We’re a sector that supports four million students, training people in areas right across the workforce, so how are colleges and training providers expected to attract the brightest and best teachers when their profession is deregulated and not seen as important?

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills’ own consultation on the Revocation of the Further Education Workforce Regulations told it that 74 per cent of professionals in FE thought it was important that teachers had some kind of teaching qualification, and that 80 per cent of the respondents thought there would be unintended consequences for the sector if the professional element of the role were removed.

There is currently a flexible approach to training to teach in FE called Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), which can be topped up with a level 5 diploma. Alternatively, students can take the postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) route to become FE teachers; although now the hundreds who paid thousands of pounds last year to take their PGCE have found out this week that their investment is basically worthless.

Teaching and training professionals who have been striving for excellence in teaching and learning in their colleges are yet again having their expertise sidelined by a government that constantly ignores sector advice.
Ultimately, students will suffer as colleges employ teaching staff on lower wages, with limited experience and minimal support to develop the skills it takes to be a really great teacher.

And isn’t it funny, that in a week dominated by A-level results and clearing headlines, the government pushes through a legislation reform quickly where the only parliamentary committee that can challenge the decision is on recess?

I want professional teachers and trainers to stay at the heart of FE.

I want to see their professional status remain, and I want them given the recognition and support they deserve, because great and skilled teachers make achieving and supported students.
We need a coherent, robust and manifest ethos of lecturer professionalism

Norman Crowther | National post-16 official, Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

The vocational skills and education needed for a competitive economy and for benefiting the well-being of the nation are all evident in the FE sector. From entry-level to degree-level courses, from specialist student support to vocational routes, the FE workforce teaches, supports and facilitates some of the most innovative and inclusive learning environments to be seen anywhere.

However, the sustainability of high-quality teaching and learning needs more than exemplary cases or ambition: it needs a vision of what a coherent sector would look like. It needs a robust and manifest ethos of lecturer professionalism – and one that embraces all educational staff.

ATL believes that the necessary conditions for success need to be developed, established and maintained if we are to help develop our young people when leaving school or adults wishing to retrain or reskill.

Those working conditions, for a professional group of practitioners, would be based initially, around three areas, as I see it, as the national official for post-16 education at ATL: regulation within a professional body; expansive learning environments; and support for professional practitioners in their work.

The first condition, we would argue, would be adequate standards and qualifications for the profession, maintained by a democratic independent professional body.

The FE workforce is the model for all occupational and vocational areas. It is the workforce that is dedicated (as a workforce) to teach and train all other workforces. Therefore, it has a profile that makes it a special and distinctive case.

As in all areas of life, we need role models in order to develop our character and the FE workforce should be that model for all teaching and training in the area of vocational education and training (VET). Therefore, it requires and deserves regulated standards of practice and qualifications.

The skills needed to develop and maintain the appropriate skill levels and relevant educational needs for individuals, businesses and communities across the range of occupations and age cohorts should be respected as the public duty it is.

It is ATL's position that a professional body should maintain standards of professional status. Challenges in teaching and learning need experts trained in the field to solve them, not bureaucratic systems of monitoring and snapshot judgements.

The second condition would be a focused and well-supported initiative to develop communities of practice that control, execute and evaluate teaching and learning strategies in classrooms or workshops and other relevant areas.

This would provide the ground from which expansive learning environments in each college could flourish. ATL has promoted this model of continuing professional development (CPD) via the work of Professors Lorna Unwin and Alison Fuller at the Institute of Education (IOE), and it is one embraced by the Commission on Adult and Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL).
Professionals embrace and develop their professional interests in singular ways, of course, but, at their best, it is within a community of practice, and the FE lecturer is no different. The role and level of CPD in a workplace is a crucial marker of engagement in professional practice and of support by the employer to provide the conditions for success in that workplace. It shows the impact of a professional body.

CPD in the VET area can be seen to be made up of three areas of activity: occupational/ or subject; industrial engagement; and pedagogic or research base. All should be manifest and supported so that communities of practice develop relevant narratives in their areas of specialism; develop resources to help them in their work; and have a dialogic space to work through their challenges.

The third condition would be to raise the conditions, status and rewards of the FE workforce, supporting staff in their difficult and stressful work by implementing the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress management standards. The standards are based on thorough and robust research that enables the articulation of stress in the workplace to be analysed. They introduce a precision around the vocabulary and diagnostics of workplace stress, which is unsurpassed as a resource that colleges could use and benefit from.

The implication of developing these three conditions is that we acknowledge the complexity and benefit of work that the FE workforce does and how it helps individuals, communities, businesses and society. We need to do this by giving the extrinsic rewards of raised pay and better conditions to the most equitable levels that can be achieved at any one time.

In conclusion, the necessary conditions of success for the sector depend upon the explicit acknowledgement of professional practice within it. Such practice requires, by definition, standards of behaviour and expertise in knowledge, judgement and performance, virtues that extol the profession one works within, and requisite qualifications in teaching that are known and valued.

Teaching is a noble profession that develops our very human being. It is, therefore, a profession that teaches standards, lives by standards, and requires standards.
Dangers for learners and the economy

Jayne Stigger MIfL | Head of maths and science at North East Surrey College of Technology

More than four million 14 to 19-year-olds and adults are educated and trained through the FE system each year. Courses and options are numerous and encompass a fully comprehensive range of students. FE does not discriminate – why? It has a range of highly skilled, professionally trained and continually developing lecturing staff.

The government proposes to halt this, to remove the requirement for lecturers in FE to be professionally qualified, through its draft deregulation bill. The key driver for this is on the first page: “Publication of the draft Bill is the latest step in the Government’s ongoing drive to remove unnecessary bureaucracy that costs British businesses millions”.

Leaving aside, for a moment, the notion that this is designed purely to save money, let’s consider the impact this would have.

Learners enter FE to gain a qualification. The relentless drive by this and previous governments to qualify our young, middle aged and old, has resulted in a plethora of qualifications, courses and options. The rhetoric is well known: “You cannot expect to have a worthwhile career without a qualification”. Is lecturing not “worthwhile”?

And yet, the government now proposes that those who lecture in FE do not need a qualification to do so.

I find this deeply insulting and from the overwhelmingly positive response to the topic on #UKFECHAT recently, staff in further education at all levels agree.

Why?

At the start of my career as a lecturer, with two degrees and a PGCE, was I “grade one”? No. I had subject knowledge, yes, but more importantly, I had training in, experience of and an understanding of educational methods and pedagogy.

I was miles ahead of those without a qualification. This enabled me to develop learners, bring out their hidden talents, manage classrooms, and identify opportunities for learning in a way that a non-qualified deliverer could not achieve. Qualifications are a measure of competence.

Those with subject experience can demonstrate how to plumb, wire or cut hair, for example. But the subject aspect is only part of the package. I have witnessed a number of people who are brilliant in their own field, some complete with PhD, utterly unable to connect with learners in their class. This has nothing to do with their subject knowledge, but is directly related to their lack of lecturing qualification.

An FE lecturer is a professional, trained to do a job and do it well for the most part. As new theories, ideas and models emerge, continuing professional development enhances their initial training and continues to prepare them to be better and more effective lecturers.

We have learners from age 14 upwards. In a school they would be taught by professionals with teaching qualifications alongside their subject specialism. A 14 year old in FE would have a ‘deliverer’.

Is the government saying that they do not regard lecturers to be worthy of professional status, but that teachers in schools are?

It would seem so.
Are FE lecturers are not equally deserving of professional status? If not, then why are only the highly qualified teachers eligible for Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) allowed to teach in schools? I would say we most certainly are worthy of professional status.

FE teachers and lecturers – whichever name you prefer, or is that is part of the problem? Are ‘lecturers’ somehow not as valued as ‘teachers’? Labelling us one or the other does not change our professionalism, which gives us our ability to teach, yes, teach all the learners in our classrooms. We take on all comers and we are incredibly successful at making their aspirations and dreams come true. We achieve this because we are trained professionals, in both education and subject.

If the government persists with this foolish and dangerous notion, standards of achievement and progression in further education that we professionals have worked so tirelessly to improve will be decimated. Learners will leave unqualified (surely no connection to the recently introduced measure of ‘retention’ rather than ‘success’), numbers of those who are not in education, employment or training (Neet) will rise and the UK economy will suffer the greatest loss of emerging talent for generations.

FE is the engine of the British economy: removing the need for professional status will lead to poor educational standards, lack of future talent, a waste of young people’s potential and economic misery for many years to come. It will also be a betrayal of those who have worked so hard for their professional status and have shown their determination to pass that ethos on to the learners they teach.

Does the government expect future generations to be taught qualifications by unqualified deliverers? Does it expect standards to rise by removing the framework that safeguards those standards?

Don’t remove our professional status: you will be removing the opportunity to gain professional status for every learner in further education for the next 20 years.
Would you abolish the regulations to have qualified doctors, airline pilots, chartered accountants or nurses?

Professor Ed Sallis FIfL | Former principal, Highlands College, and visiting professor, Plymouth University

I can’t believe that any government would abolish the regulations to have qualified doctors, airline pilots, chartered accountants or nurses. And in healthcare the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care is promoting approved voluntary registers to professionalise the complementary care professions. Yet in the crucial area of learning and skills, the government is seeking to turn back the clock and proposing to revoke legislation on further education teachers’ qualifications.

At a time when we need to improve skills as never before, we need to enhance the professionalism of our lecturers and trainers, not diminish them.

I am in favour of reform, but this means looking at how to enhance professionalism. I know of many, many lecturers who are dismayed to see their professional standing eroded by this proposal.

Further education and skills needs a new professional compact, a new way to provide initial teacher training and continuing professional development.

It needs a new set of flexible, forward-looking regulations that ensure all our learners are taught by the very best staff trained to the highest standards.

This will not be achieved by revoking the current regulations. It will happen only by all parties working together to decide how best to enhance professionalism in the sector.
Why initial teacher education is central to improving teaching, learning and the student experience

Rosie Douglas MIfL QTLS | Teaching, learning and assessment manager, MidKent College
Vanessa Kent MIfL QTLS | Teacher coach, MidKent College
Stephen Grix | Principal, MidKent College

At MidKent College, which serves around 7,500 learners across two campuses, we regard initial teacher education (ITE) as central to our priorities for the improvement of teaching, learning and the student experience. The management team and the governors of the college are committed to training and retaining qualified teaching practitioners who can continually improve the quality of teaching. The college governors take a great interest in teaching and learning and are linked to specific curriculum areas.

Currently 99 per cent of permanent staff either hold or are working towards a teaching qualification. This is a college key performance indicator and is reported to the board through the scorecard shown in Figure 1.

MidKent College Training Services (MKCTS), a subsidiary company of the college that provides training for the around 1,500 soldiers at the Royal School of Engineering (RSME) in Gillingham each year, is also committed to staff undertaking teaching qualifications. At the start of the contract in January 2009, approximately 28 per cent of instructors and lecturers held a recognised teaching qualification at level 5 or above. Now 81 per cent are fully qualified and this figure is set to rise to 90 per cent by July 2015.

We view the development of our teachers as a holistic process that combines ITE with in-house coaching and continuing professional development (CPD) to ensure that those new to teaching receive a coherent and comprehensive package of support and continuing development.

In the past, a long-standing complaint from staff was that they spent two years studying for a teaching qualification, but that it was only the college training sessions that taught them the strategies and skills needed to teach and manage a classroom effectively.

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Figure 1: Percentage of teaching staff holding or working towards teaching qualifications 2012/13
It was in response to this that we became keen to take the ITE content and deliver it in such a way that exposed our staff to experienced FE practitioners and a wide variety of teaching strategies to gain the skills to enhance their students’ learning experience.

To integrate the course effectively, we worked with partners Christ Church Canterbury University (CCCU) to design a curriculum so that MidKent College staff, well-qualified ITE professionals and teacher coaches, delivered 80 per cent of the course. The formal curriculum is further supported by a teacher coaching programme, now in its seventh year, which comprises a team of outstanding teachers who coach staff across the college. A more recent complementary initiative is the Learning Technologists Programme, in which apprentices research and create new technology resources for staff or help teachers to improve their own digital literacy.

Coaches and learning technologists are based in teachers’ resource centres in the college known as Inspiration Stations. These give teachers the space and opportunity to encounter new resources and book them out for trial. Staff can meet teacher coaches to discuss teaching and learning strategies or learning technologists for support in developing e-learning.

Staff are now enthusiastic about the impact of the ITE courses and the opportunities they afford them in reflecting on their professional practice.

One tutor described the experience of working with and observing skilled practitioners as a revelation. Another tutor remarked on how the opportunity to learn about and discuss the curriculum, policy and reflective practice significantly improved her knowledge of her industry. She felt that being aware of how policy and external drivers affect teaching practice was key to enabling her better to understand the aims of the college and the role of management. It gave her a clearer idea of her purpose and she now feels that she can be much more proactive in decision-making about her own curriculum area.

At MidKent College, we are aiming to provide the best of both worlds in ITE. We provide the theoretical elements of curriculum and policy knowledge while developing individual skills and competences through peer and practitioner engagement.

In providing a bespoke course for staff based on core values and often hard-won experience, we have created a learning set in which it is possible to develop teaching and learning while exploring new horizons and possibilities.

**Figure 2:** Lessons graded good or outstanding – three-year trend across all MKCTS teaching staff

**Figure 3:** The correlation between teaching qualifications and trainee feedback grades

1 Soldiers evaluate teachers for their preparation, delivery, course content and general professionalism.
Initial teacher education links to quality

Marion Plant | Principal, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

The initial teacher education (ITE) qualifications offer staff the confidence and credibility to stand in front of learners and instigate learning. The delivered sessions and action research requirements of the programmes allow ITE students to investigate methods, practice and theories that will develop confidence and enhance the learning experience and outcomes of learners.

Tutors gain enhanced experience and increased knowledge levels in a supervised, supported and progressive manner to enhance delivery skills and classroom management experience in respect of:

- teaching methods
- planning and reporting
- the application of differentiation
- assessment methods and practice
- safeguarding and equality and diversity
- teaching and learning strategies
- quality assurance process and expectation.

FE recruits vocational staff who have high-level qualifications in their chosen field, but may have little experience of teaching and training beyond a watch-and-learn scenario. Delivering theory sessions in particular is a challenge and ITE provides insight into how such sessions can be structured and delivered.

From a quality perspective, the emphasis on ITE with new members of staff is important. Aspiring teachers need to recognise the importance of the context in which they are working and how best to use their own knowledge and expertise and the resources that are available to them and the students. There is a big difference between someone who has natural personal confidence and the requirements of delivering learning through effective teaching and learning strategies. ITE can quickly establish sound principles of planning to meet this aim and over the course as a whole provides opportunities for reflection and development.

Stakeholder feedback from staff on the usefulness of ITE foregrounds confidence and planning as two key factors.

Evidence of the quality and effectiveness of sessions observed

- Within the ITE programmes, the observation process is developmental in the first half of the programme, with no requirement for graded observation in the initial stages.

- During the latter stage (year 2), grading is introduced as a supported and monitored process.

- Knowledge is enhanced by staff mapping performance against the criteria and, with the support of a subject specialist mentor, the tripartite process defines targets and grade improvement outcomes.

- Tutors on ITE programmes demonstrate grade improvements throughout the programme.

- The grades of those observed during ITE indicate that the training has impact on the professional practice of participants. The comments made by observers point to development and deployment of a range of activities within sessions.

Having qualified teachers is one of the key performance indicators (KPIs) tracked by the leadership and governance teams as one of the ways quality of teaching, learning and assessment is considered. Furthermore:

- ITE programme completion is a contractual requirement for all teaching staff and this is monitored by human resources and through the appraisal process.
Staff development budgets support ITE initiatives. All staff (including teaching assistants and learning support staff) are encouraged to participate in ITE programmes of the appropriate level and size to maintain their CPD requirement and enhance the learning experience within the classroom. The observation grade profile contributes towards the college self-assessment process at all levels (programme, curriculum and college).

“The ITE programme was great fun and has helped me to decide that I really do want to be a teacher. I now feel confident in my own ability to deliver and assess the learners in my group.”
Joe Lock (PTLLS 2012–13)

“When I first started in the Diploma I had walked in the door straight from a building site. I had previously trained apprentices on the sites, but soon realised I had no concept of what classroom delivery would be like. My biggest challenge was finding ways to engage different learners such as Schools groups, Re-Start and Level 1 Multi-skill groups as opposed to those I was used to on the site. Classroom and large group delivery is very different from one-to-one with someone who is actually training on the job! What I really liked when I was doing the ITE course was that I was able to get support from my mentor and tutor, try out new teaching strategies and that I then had the confidence to know what to do if it went wrong. I learnt how to engage and progress learners as well as having the satisfaction of knowing I have influenced the career choice of many. I now feel confident and credible when I do my job and continually try to improve.”
Timothy Healey (DTLLS 2010–12)

The new ITE specifications offer a range of stand-alone ITE qualifications that are tiered and have direct entry at all levels.

The model is:

- **Award in Education and Training**
  - Level 3
  - One term
  - (Assessors, associate tutors, trainers and support staff)

- **Certificate in Education and Training**
  - Level 4
  - Two terms
  - (Part-time tutors)

- **Diploma in Education and Training**
  - Level 5
  - Two years
  - (Full-time tutors and lecturers)

There should be a move away from the concept that all ITE applicants, internal or external to the organisation, should complete an Award, Certificate then Diploma (as in the past majority of cases applicants would previously have completed the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), then progressed towards the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) or Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS)) as funding will no longer support this process and the cost to the organisation or individual will be become disproportionate.

There is no accredited prior learning (APL) route between levels to allow for direct entry on to programmes to be mapped against job roles and expectations.

There will be a reduction in cost to staff development funds used to support ITE by targeting training and qualifications for staff at appropriate levels.

The tiered process will support staff to raise their academic achievement and skill levels in a coherent manner by allowing entry at the appropriate level (especially those who have been out of education for a considerable time or are from a vocational discipline).
Commercial opportunities can be maximised by offering differing levels as a full programme to external learners at competitive rates.

The organisation will need to assess each applicant on their own merit and differentiate entry levels to accommodate:

- proposed job role
- current attainment level
- current and past experience

cost implication for the organisation and the learner.

Making ITE even better

We consider that ITE could be improved further through:

- contextualisation of programmes at all levels (programmes designed for teaching learners with disabilities, for support staff, working with ex-offenders)

- more diverse and practical content to complement the changing learner demographic, such as behaviour management to further enhance practical strategies required in the classroom

- flexible delivery modes, including distance learning, to meet commercial need

- diversification of assessment methods (blogging, e-portfolio etc)

- broader placement opportunities (academies, schools etc)

- use of experienced staff as linked mentors, professional development buddies. Develop opportunities for postgraduate qualification with research elements to inform the professional practice in teaching in the lifelong sector.

- more use of external deliverers for specialised topics.

Future developments

Future developments will include:

- development of a PGCE in-service programme with Warwick University

- Schools Direct provision development

- diversification of commercial opportunities with external organisations and businesses to maximise income

- additional specialist programmes to be added to the portfolio of qualifications delivered, such as:
  - mentoring
  - coaching
  - training
  - teaching learners with disabilities
  - behaviour management.

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Essential standards and skills and progression to being outstanding teachers

Sue Rimmer MIffL | Principal, South Thames College

The table below shows the increase at South Thames College in good or better teaching since 2008/09.

Comparing this to the number of teachers qualified:

- 2008/09 – 63 per cent were qualified
- at the end of 2011/12, 98 per cent were qualified or in training.

The rise in number of teachers qualified can be linked as one of the key factors for the improved teaching and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 and 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wandsworth: 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC target</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More specifically, we have looked at our initial teacher training (ITT) teachers for 2011/12 and 2012/13 and it clearly shows the difference in their grade profile from before they achieved ITT and afterwards:

- Good or better profile has increased for this group from 62 per cent in 2011/12 to 87 per cent in 2012/13
- 64 per cent of these teachers show an improvement in grade for 2012/13

We firmly believe that teaching qualifications ensure teachers can deliver to a basic standard and have the tools to build and progress to outstanding. It gives them a firm foundation to build their teaching skills. Without these core skills, teachers can spend their early teaching years being less effective and often will drop out of teaching altogether.

ITT should be individualised, scheduled immediately upon appointment, and linked to probation. No teacher should be performing below the minimum standards set by the employer.

Colleges, schools and universities could form federations to partner on assessment, learning and teaching strategies as this can accelerate knowledge transfer and expertise.

Assessment is missing or underplayed in all the ITT schemes; this is a real opportunity to strengthen an ITT programme.

Gaps in higher education ITT provision are huge. We question any assumption that subject expertise is sufficient. A high learner achievement is predominantly a result of a teacher facilitating discovery, making connections, forming new understanding.

Perhaps it’s time to think of OTT (ongoing teacher training), where employability, enterprise and innovation are delivered competently and confidently by teachers able to relate current industry practice to progressive classroom practice. ITT can quickly become redundant in rapidly evolving industry contexts for vocational provision.
Initial and continuing teacher education and why they matter

Jay Derrick MIfL QTLS | Director post-compulsory initial teacher education, Institute of Education

No sensible person argues that teacher education doesn’t matter. The energy in the continual controversies about the quality of teaching in our schools and colleges demonstrates clearly that it is anything but a straightforward job.

Whether we like it or not, it cannot be reduced to a short list of simple rules for doing it well. What works in one situation may well not work in another. We all feel we would recognise good teaching if we saw it (though I’m not sure this is always true), but to explain what constitutes good teaching, or even to provide a list of the features of good teaching that would apply in every situation, is well-nigh impossible.

Ofsted has changed its list of quality criteria several times over the past 20 years, and no doubt it will do so again. Questions like, “Does teacher education matter?” and “How can we demonstrate its value?”, therefore, seem to me unproductive questions to ask.

More useful questions to debate are: “Given the real complexity of the teaching role, what forms should initial and continuing teacher education take?”, and “What are appropriate roles for the government, employers, universities and teachers themselves, in supporting teacher education?”

In almost every context I can think of, teaching is unarguably an inherently complex business, requiring not just expert subject knowledge and technical knowledge about pedagogical practices, but knowledge of workplaces, organisations and people, empathy, superb communication skills, and an unpredictable range of different kinds of know-how. Exceptions to this can surely be only in relatively few and untypical situations where the learners themselves are highly expert. In addition, in my view, teaching is essentially an ethical business, concerned with achieving what is good for learners, communities, and society as a whole.

It requires its practitioners to be capable of and willing to make judgement calls as they work, which bring into play each teacher’s dispositions and character, as well as their previous experience, and of course, their knowledge and skills.

This is because a key part of the teacher’s task is not just to know about, but to model an appropriate role: as an adult, as a citizen, and as a more experienced practitioner. Aristotle’s tripartite distinction between knowledge of the natural world (episteme), skills (techne), and ‘practical wisdom’ (phronesis), seems helpful here (Nicomachean Ethics, Penguin 2004).

Teachers’ practical wisdom cannot simply be reduced to either knowledge or skill, because it is concerned not just with knowing how to achieve a particular goal, but being able to judge whether this goal is worthwhile, whether it benefits society, whether it is right.

Teachers clearly need episteme and techne, but without ‘practical wisdom’ they will not necessarily be capable of or interested in inspiring and motivating learners, encouraging and supporting them through difficulties: they will miss insights and unexpected ‘teaching moments’ that bring about learning breakthroughs, because they won’t be looking for them. Their emphasis and focus will be on the content rather than the process and purposes of learning, on the subject rather than on the learner, on the short-term, narrowly defined outcome rather than on learning for the future.

In this view, good teachers are not just competent and knowledgeable, but ‘good people’, concerned with what is best for their learners, the community, and the wider society (see, for example, Eisner 2002, Dunne 2009).
This view of the nature and role of teaching, whatever the context, implies that teacher education is integral to the everyday practice of teaching. Of course all teachers need initial training, just as plumbers or brain surgeons do.

Part of this training needs to be practice-based, and probably more so than at present, though, as the recent Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) report on vocational pedagogy emphasised, theory is essential in every domain and context too (LSIS 2013), so as to save individual teachers time in learning about useful and effective approaches and techniques, and to teach them to be reflective practitioners (that is, to be able to think productively and learn constructively from experience).

Experienced practising teachers need to play a central role in both initial and continuing professional learning, a role that needs to be recognised and much more formalised than at present. There needs to be a much greater focus on the craft and practice of mentoring, and it should be the norm for all experienced teachers to act as mentors as a formal part of their job, properly paid for and recognised in their workload, something which is rare at present in the post-compulsory sector.

However experienced they are, every teacher can still improve their intuitive decision-making, though this takes practice, hard work and time, just as it does, for example, for airline pilots, surgeons or tennis players (Derrick, in press).

Approaches to collaborative teacher learning such as the ‘Supported Experiments’ scheme presently operating at City of Westminster College (CWC 2013), embody the notion of teaching as action-research, strongly supported by formative assessment research (for example, Black and Wiliam 1998, Hattie 2009). The transition from initial training to work-based development should be as seamless as possible, and the recent Ofsted focus on newly qualified teachers in the post-compulsory sector is welcome.

What are appropriate roles for the government, employers, and teachers from this perspective? Research, as well as common sense, suggests that the government has an essential role in setting minimum quality standards, especially in a free market context, so as to protect consumers from exploitation, and to foster high expectations, skills and commitment among teachers.

It is hard to see how Ofsted can carry out an effective quality assurance role if appropriate standards and qualifications for teacher training and development are not set centrally.

The example of Finland suggests that better results, however measured, are obtained by fostering the status of teachers and respect in which they are held. This is not going to be achieved by messages suggesting that teachers do not need to be qualified to work.

On the contrary, if anything, the entry qualifications should be more demanding than they are at present, as in Finland. Employers need to provide ‘expansive’ working environments that encourage professional learning through the organisation of work processes themselves (Fuller and Unwin 2006).

And we teachers need to continue to demand the highest standards of our work environments, of ourselves and of our students, and an evidence-based policy environment in which to work, for the benefit of ourselves, our learners, all our communities, and society in general.
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Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) (2013) *It’s about work … Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning: the summary report of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning*. Available at: http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/eg:5937/datasstreams/DOC/content
‘Knowing how’ trumps ‘knowing that’

Geoff Petty MIfL | Independent author, researcher, consultant and IfL patron

Teacher training is hugely important and is about to embark on a major revision. Can we change it for the better?

Some teachers are twice as skilled as others, not because of personality, intelligence or other supposedly fixed attributes, but because of their skill at using the most appropriate and effective teaching strategies, methods and techniques.

Also, because they look for feedback on the effectiveness of their strategies, and act upon it. We know what the most effective teachers do, and we can train people to use these same strategies and techniques. It takes time and trouble, and there is much more to teaching than method, but there is hardly a better use of our time. Let’s see why.

In an article I wrote for a recent edition of IfL’s professional magazine, InTuition, I quoted government research showing that a teacher in the post-16 sector is worth £0.5 million a year to the national economy. Similar research showed that teachers on level I or level 2 programmes, who successfully prevent students dropping out, could be worth £2 million a year to the economy.

If the impact of teachers is millions of pounds, the impact of a career in teacher training is billions. Our economy is irrigated by a well of knowledge and skills, and it is teacher trainers who have their hand on the pump.

More importantly, teachers touch lives forever. I recently attended a national event hosted by Niace and IfL to celebrate tutors, where some “learners of the year” gave first-hand stories that started with lives wrecked by unemployment, heroin addiction and despair. But an inspiring tutor then ‘waved a wand’, and gave the student a new life and identity. They became avid for learning, and astonished by their own accomplishment, and then had plans to do higher degrees or open their own businesses. One former student explained her particularly startling transformation and announced that she now wanted to become a teacher.

She turned to the tutor who had transformed her life and said, “I want to do for others, what you did for me.” This left many crusty old teachers in the audience scrabbling for their hankies.

If teaching is that consequential, we’d better get teacher training right.

But reviews of research on teacher education programmes find that teachers trained to teach in schools are only very marginally better than teachers who have not been trained at all. The effect size\(^2\) is about 0.11: ‘negligible’ according John Hattie’s Visible Learning (Hattie, 2009). This shows it is possible to get teacher training wrong.

Whether teacher training in our own sector is better than this it is hard to say, but it is certainly improvable. Ofsted reports commonly criticise teaching in colleges as being overly didactic, uninspiring, lacking differentiation, lacking stretch and challenge, and with not enough checks on learning. Why do our teachers make such elementary mistakes, even when trying their hardest?

Not that all do! A March 2013 Ofsted report on the initial teacher training at the University of Bolton found that the teaching of almost all their trainee teachers was rated as good or better, and many were rated at outstanding. How do your trainee teachers do?

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\(^2\) Effect sizes measure the impact of a variable (on achievement for example) in standard deviation. Hattie’s effect sizes are averages, of all the highest quality quantitative research studies in that area. An effect size over 0.6 is high, 0.2 is small. The effect size for formative assessment, well done, is about 1.0 standard deviation roughly doubling the rate at which students learn, compared to good traditional teaching strategies. See my Evidence Based Teaching and John Hattie’s Visible Learning books.
Should teaching qualifications be left to chance?

Wide range of appropriate and effective teaching and assessment methods
- A variety of teaching methods is used, including those that excite human interest and relate to students’ lives and work.
- Teaching methods with high effect-size are made use of.
- A variety of assessment methods is used.
- Difficult concepts are explained using ‘multiple modes of representation’, for example verbal, visual, concrete example etc.

Maslow’s needs

Self-actualising needs
- Student has some choice and control.
- Tasks set require creativity and individual personal responses.
- Student strives towards personal goals.
- Student preferences: methods and activities that are fun but focused on objectives.

Self-esteem and respect needs
- Ground-rules for mutual respect.
- Opportunity to show work to an audience.
- Peer and class reviews of students’ work require positive points.
- Recognition of achievement, improvement and progress.

Belongingness needs
- Overcoming cliques (with randomised grouping, for example).
- Eye contact.
- Using students’ names.
- Other non-verbal inclusion.
- Ground rules to build group identity.

Equality and diversity
- Race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, poverty, deprivation, maternity pregnancy ...
- Poor English? Shyness?

Removal of barriers
- Jargon is minimised and explained.
- Print size of handouts is appropriate for all.
- Financial support is provided where possible and needed.
- Travel support is provided similarly.
- The timings of classes is appropriate for students.

Differentiation
- Ladders of tasks from easy to challenging for each topic.
- Strategies to ensure each student takes the time they need to learn e.g. mastery learning, corrections.
- Use of different tasks for different students if the range of ability is very wide.
- Teaching skills as well as content.

Motivation
- (especially for students with poverty disaffection, deprivation issues)

Self-efficacy and self-belief
Students are made to believe in their ability to learn. A growth mindset is developed where students believe ability is developed by effort to learn, and is not due to inherited characteristics e.g. IQ or inborn talent.

Valuing education
Students understand the value of the course and the qualification to them including employment prospects, an interesting job, improved earnings, a respected role in society etc.

Equality and diversity
- Race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, poverty, deprivation, maternity pregnancy ...

Figure 4. Inclusion v3. © Geoff Petty 2013.

Feedback to student and teacher is acted upon: ‘Assessment for Learning’
This involves activating the ‘Quality Learning Cycle’:

Immediate
- Inclusive questioning methods.
- Class discussion.
- Group and pair discussion.
- Peer and self assessment.
- Check prerequisite/prior learning at the start of a new topic.

Medium-term
- Medal and mission feedback from teacher.
- Learning loops to correct work, or set targets.

 Longer-term
- Monitoring individual student progress with action planning.
- Providing suitable support for this action plan with study buddies, learning teams, and other additional support.
- Initial diagnostic assessment to set individual targets.
- Individual learning plan.
Microteaching and the videoing of lessons to provide feedback to trainees

The good news is that we know what works best in teacher training programmes. Take, for example, microteaching and videoing of lessons. According to Professor John Hattie’s international research, this has an effect size of 0.88, which is very large indeed. Microteaching involves teacher trainees giving mini lessons, which are often videoed. This is followed by analysis, reflection, and discussion of the lesson. The effect of this activity on the teachers’ skills is strong and long-lasting. On some of our teacher training programmes, this happens once. I suspect that on some programmes it doesn’t happen at all.

We know feedback is vital for learning, and microteaching provides feedback to our trainee teachers, helping them to improve their teaching. More feedback would be provided if trainee teachers videoed their own teaching practice with a cheap camera on the window sill of their classroom, and then watched their own lessons back. They could sometimes receive coaching based on this video evidence. They could critique one another’s lessons too.

Anyone who has had their teaching videoed will know its huge emotional impact. It’s difficult to ignore the evidence of your own eyes, and teachers who talk too much don’t repeat the mistake. This should be a routine aspect of any teacher training programme.

Questioning methods

Another way student teachers can get feedback on the quality of their teaching is by running a class discussion. If the questions are good, this soon throws up the errors and omissions in students’ learning, allowing the trainee to correct these in real time. Prof John Hattie’s newest effect-size table has class discussion close to the top, as one of the most effective teaching strategies.

Yet very few teacher trainers teach their students the most effective questioning methods that lead to such class discussion. Assertive or inclusive questioning is one of the most powerful. The teacher asks a question, small groups discuss, the teacher nominates an individual to report their group’s thinking, the teacher thanks that student but does not evaluate the response. Instead the teacher might:

- get a response from another group
- find which groups agree with a response and why
- find which groups disagree, or would add to that answer, and why.

Then the teacher asks the class to argue out an agreed answer. Only then does the teacher comment on the quality of the students’ answers. This discussion works well whether there is a ‘right’ answer, or whether a number of answers could be given, along with appropriate justifications.

For a training activity that explores questioning see: geoffpetty.com/training-materials/questioning/

Such questioning methods provide the teacher with very rich feedback on what students are thinking and why, enabling them to correct the errors and omissions in students’ learning immediately. It revolutionised my own teaching when I adopted such strategies.

Yet on many courses we don’t teach students to question like this. And the teaching standards for further education do not require that we do, unless we interpret “inclusive teaching strategies” to include such classroom discussion, which I certainly would (see Figure 4, the mindmap accompanying this piece).

A very similar argument goes for other teaching strategies that are known to have a massive impact on student achievement, but are not required in the new teaching qualifications. If teacher trainers interpreted “inclusive teaching practices” to include these high-effect-size teaching strategies, it would have a massive impact on the quality of our teacher education.
One of the many issues the teacher trainer needs to get right is the balance between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge gives facts about teaching – the background knowledge that all teachers require. The other knowledge that students need is procedural knowledge, this is the “how to teach” and it needs to get into real detail, and to explore alternative strategies and why one would choose one approach rather than another. This is vital, and should be the central core of any teacher training course. Most declarative knowledge should be there only to support this procedural knowledge.

I’m not sure whether to believe this, but I occasionally get emails and comments from trainee teachers who tell me that there was almost nothing on their course that gave them this procedural knowledge. At least from their perception, the course was focused entirely on declarative knowledge.

I hope these are exaggerations. However, I feel sure that if our teacher training courses focused on procedural knowledge rather than declarative knowledge, our novice teachers would be much better prepared.

One excellent way to look at teaching methods such as questioning styles is for the teacher trainer to use them while teaching their novice teachers. Then, at the end of the lesson, they should ask the students what they thought of the method and why. Did they learn well? Were they required to participate? Did misconceptions and omissions in their learning get addressed? And lastly, could the novice teachers use this teaching method themselves, and if so how?

This is the most vivid and persuasive way to learn about teaching methodology. Each high-effect-size teaching method could be used many times on our teacher training courses.

We have learned an enormous amount in the last 10 or 20 years about which teaching methods work best, and we find these same methods are used by the very best teachers (in terms of value added).

And those who study learning qualitatively recommend the very same methods (Petty 2009). We also know that those trained in the use of these methods, when they use them really effectively, can almost double the rate at which students learn.

It’s time to focus our initial teacher training on these findings, and on how to teach. There is a lot at stake, the life chances of the students whom our trainee teachers will teach, and the economy. The effects on both would be greatly enhanced by better teacher training.

References


http://geoffpetty.com/training-materials/questioning/
Initial teacher education: why it matters

Robert Smedley | Pro-vice-chancellor and dean of Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University

As an outstanding provider of initial teacher training (ITT), we believe that initial teacher education (ITE) matters. In this paper we explain what ITE does, consider counterarguments (that teacher education does not matter) and consider the relevant research evidence.

What initial teacher education does

In the process of ITE schools, colleges and universities are required to:

- select those who have appropriate subject knowledge and the aptitude for teaching
- identify and address gaps in student teachers’ subject knowledge
- introduce student teachers to a range of teaching approaches and methods, some of which they will not have met previously
- introduce student teachers to the fact that not everyone is like them: people learn in different ways and at different rates and a teacher’s job is to adjust the teaching, accordingly
- encourage student teachers to discuss alternative approaches and methods in the light of previous experience, classroom-based evidence and research
- give student teachers the means to develop their ability to reflect on their own teaching in the light of ethical considerations, experience, classroom-based evidence and research
- assess student teachers at the completion of the course against explicit standards, failing those who do not meet the standards.

Consistently, teachers’ standards have required student teachers to have professional aptitudes or values; subject knowledge; the ability to relate to learners and manage their behaviour; the ability to work with colleagues and parents; and the ability to develop their own teaching through CPD and reflection (TTA 2000; TDA 2007; DfE 2012).

Counterarguments

A counterargument can be made, that some or all of what teacher education does, is unnecessary. This argument would make sense if it could be shown either, (a) that good teachers are born, not made or (b) that teachers learn to teach through experience, not ITE.

View (a) is held by people who have a ‘fixed mindset’, viewing abilities, intelligence and talents as immutable traits (Dweck 1999). Our experience of working with inexperienced colleagues, both in universities and schools, suggests that some professionals hold this view. Its prevalence can be explained by the fact that some student teachers do have very well-developed teaching abilities from the start of their course, so encounters with these students can lead to a view that they are ‘naturally gifted’.

However, this is true for only a minority of student teachers. Dweck (1999) has demonstrated that a ‘growth mindset’ that views intelligence, talents and abilities as developed through effort, good teaching and persistence is both more accurate and more helpful, especially when a student is challenged or is facing difficulty, as is the case with most student teachers (Conway & Clark 2003; Korthagen & Vasalos 2005).

View (b), that teachers learn to teach through experience, could be sustained if it could be shown that the best teachers were invariably the most experienced teachers. However, research shows that this is not the case.
Evidence shows that the most effective teachers are in the middle of their career, with between eight and 23 years of teaching experience, and that the most experienced teachers (with 23+ years of teaching) are actually the least effective (Sammons et al 2007).

Although views (a) and (b) have some popularity, the strongest theories of teacher development cohere around the notion of reflection (Dewey 1933; Schön 1983; 1987; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Teachers improve by learning from others (particularly their mentors), by observing teaching, by reading and by personal experience of teaching, but the strongest factor in their learning is reflecting on what they have been told, observed, read and learnt from experience.

Hence, the current Teachers’ Standards require teachers to “reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching’ (DfE 2012). ‘Reflection’ can be a phatic exercise if this means only navel-gazing but, when properly trained to reflect systematically in the light of ethical considerations, classroom-based evidence and research, teachers can and do, develop their practice.

Research evidence

Research evidence for the effectiveness of teacher education is not strong, and the evidence that exists is partially contradictory. In part, this is because there are methodological problems for researchers who want to compare the quality of teachers who have, and do not have, teaching qualifications – chiefly, the difficulty in finding valid and reliable ways of assessing teachers that do not rely on short observations, arbitrary criteria and subjective judgements. Therefore research evidence should be treated with due caution.

A seminal study found that the effects of teacher education were “washed out” by experience in school (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981) although this study was undertaken when ITE and school experience were much more separate than they are, currently. A more recent report has shown that high-performing education systems “get the right people to become teachers, and develop them into effective instructors” (McInsey 2007).

Hence the much-quoted claim, “The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.” (OECD 2010).

A substantial study entitled Can Teacher Education Make a Difference? researched 485 student teachers and teachers in 24 different teacher education programmes over 4.5 years, finding that teacher education programmes had a significant impact on the students, over and above the normal process of socialisation in school (Brouwer & Korthagen 2005).

The consistently excellent performance of Finland in the OECD’s world education ranking reports has led researchers to investigate the reasons for this. Researchers have generally attributed this to the excellence of Finnish teachers and their teacher education system (McInsey 2007; Jyrhämä et al 2008; Tryggvason 2009).

Finnish teachers have a long and rigorous training. In addition to extensive school experience, they are required to have a master’s degree, to read educational academic literature and to base their decisions on rational use of evidence (Westbury et al 2005). In their training, they are taught to be “both consumers of educational scientific knowledge as well as producers of it” (Jyrhämä et al 2008). Thus, if the English system is to improve, one likely way would be to increase both the quality and quantity of initial teacher education.

Conclusions

In teacher education, gaps in students’ subject knowledge are addressed; students are introduced to a range of teaching approaches and methods that are appropriate for different learners; students discuss alternative approaches and methods in the light of previous experience, classroom-based evidence and research; they develop their ability to reflect on their own teaching and are assessed against explicit standards.

While a few students already have the knowledge, aptitudes and skills to teach without training, most develop their abilities through training, experience and systematic reflection.
Although the research evidence for the effectiveness of teacher education is not particularly strong, the best performing systems (including Finland) have good quality teacher education. Although the evidence is not conclusive, it is likely that initial teacher education matters.

The positive findings about the effectiveness of ITT reported by Korthagen and Vasalos date back to 2005. Further and more up-to-date research is needed on ITT, and in the further education and skills sector specifically, as there have been substantial developments in ITT over the last eight years. Ofsted has indicated positive features in current arrangements for ITT.

For example, in the recent inspection of our own ITT provision at the university in 2011 Ofsted judged that the provision, training and assessment ensures that trainee teachers make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in their teaching and learning practice.

Ofsted found that tutors know their trainees’ strengths and areas for improvement thoroughly, and that very detailed and constructive feedback on trainees’ lessons and assignments secures significant improvements in their teaching practice.

In addition, the very strong emphasis given to trainees’ self-evaluation and reflection contributes to the considerable improvement in their teaching skills.

References


Trainee teachers are all good or outstanding

Susan Andrews | Education curriculum coordinator, Highbury College
Stella Mbubaegbu | Principal, Highbury College, and IfL patron

Our trainee teachers often come on to our programmes with little or no previous experience of the relevant assessment, resources, information and communication technology (ICT), functional skills, reflection, and so forth. They become more competent and confident reflective practitioners, as highlighted by the trainees’ comments overleaf.

All trainees receive an initial observation grade. Observations identify areas for development and a development plan is initiated. Throughout the trainees’ studies, observation grades are recorded and progress identified on their development plans. Figures show that 82 per cent of our trainees have improved their observation grade at the end of their studies with 67 per cent of these trainees being a grade 1.

All the college, trainees on our Certificate in Education programmes were graded as outstanding or good when they were observed during their department reviews. This meant that every trainee met, or in some instances exceed the impact measure(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate in Education Year 2</th>
<th>Certificate in Education Year 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>0%</td>
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We offer the shorter introductory element as a standalone for those delivering learning, as well as for those who wish to enter the profession. We found it very useful to have it as the first unit in our full programme (and treated it as accredited prior learning (APL) for individuals who had completed it as a standalone).

The benefit of having the Certificate as the next stage is that it enabled us to work with the trainees on their development and if, by the end of that programme, additional support or qualifications were required, they could take a gap year. Of those who have taken a gap year, 95 per cent have returned to complete their second year. We did not use the Certificate as an Associate Teacher qualification. We found that 98 per cent of our trainees (even if they did not have a full teaching role) wanted to continue their studies and achieve the full qualification.

To make our ITE even better, we will continue to be innovative and develop programmes that meet the needs of our trainees.

The proportion of qualified teachers is one of the key performance indicators (KPIs) tracked by leadership and governance as one of the ways in which the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is considered.

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Comments from newly qualified teachers about their feelings about the effectiveness now, compared with earlier on in the ITE programme

“I came into teaching with 17 years’ industrial experience and a first class honours degree, thinking, ‘I can do this’. There were tears before half term. Yes, I knew my stuff, but I had no clue how to deliver it. Doing my Cert Ed helped me to learn techniques to deliver, be innovative, but not afraid to get it wrong, reflect and improved my confidence.”

“The Cert Ed has taught me to do things differently – I put my learners at the centre of everything.”

“When I plan now, I think, ‘What would my learners want to do in order to learn? How can I plan this for them?’”

“It made me realise that every year I have to change things. You can’t just pull out last year’s class and walk into the class with it, even it’s the same subject, etc. Your lesson plan is a working document, scribbled over and identifying what went well and what didn’t. Then you make the relevant adjustments. And so it goes every year.”

Comments from mentors

“AA has continued to make exceptional progress and has benefited enormously from the training he has received.”

“Pleased to hear of grades for assignments, especially as I know BB found writing assignments a challenge.”

“CC continues to improve and has made massive inroads into fine tuning their teaching practice.”

“DD is a much more confident teacher and has developed at controlling their classes.”
Trainee teachers value a high level of personal support

Mike Hopkins | Principal, Middlesbrough College

Initial teacher education (ITE) exposes trainee teachers to a wide range of teaching and learning themes and activities that they can apply directly in the classroom. It also explains the theory behind the techniques, to raise trainees’ confidence in why they are doing what they are doing. Working with other trainee teachers in a classroom setting ensures that there is a strong cross-fertilisation of ideas as well as peer support in what can be a challenging two years for new starters. Feedback from trainees is that they value the weekly class to share experiences and value peer support, and regard it as a lifeline.

Here at Middlesbrough College, the strong pastoral support provided by the tutors and mentors contributes to the individual progress of trainees and brings growth in their personal confidence and professionalism. Trainees value greatly the willingness and responsiveness of their tutors in offering a high level of personal support.

Teaching and learning mentors are assigned to new staff, and encourage and support them in a non-judgemental way, via regular formal or informal meetings to supply new ideas and concepts, based on the initial strengths of the new teacher. This allows new teachers to build on what they already know, while adjusting to a new environment. As the trainees become more confident, the areas for development become more focused.

The flexibility of being able to offer a shorter introductory ITE option followed by a more substantial certificate or diploma will be an advantage. Some students do require a gentler introduction to the course. A shorter introductory ITE option would aid many learners, by giving them the opportunity to develop their teaching practice before progressing on to the next phase of the wider curriculum often covered in the second year of the ITE.

Within our non-graded system, new teachers are developmentally observed by their assigned directorate teaching and learning mentor on two separate occasions during the academic year. The new member of staff invites the mentor in and a professional discussion and action plan follows each observation. New staff do not fall into the main observation system until they have had one full year at the college, which includes the two developmental observations.

Evidence of effectiveness

In view of the fact that many trainees have completely different experiences, quantifying the effectiveness of ITE is not straightforward. Some trainees are on full-time teaching contracts, so they quickly build up a bank of experiences and opportunities that cannot be matched by another trainee meeting the minimum requirements of the course: 100 hours of teaching practice. In addition, while we encourage all students to adopt and adapt all the techniques to which they are introduced, some find that they cannot always apply those techniques in their practice setting.

However, that all said – of course there is evidence that most trainees develop significantly over the period of the course, as their knowledge and experience grows.

We run a developmental RAG (red, amber, green) rating system whereby the evaluations from any new teacher developmental observation highlights areas that would lead to a re-observation if they were in the main observation system. Mentors then work on these areas with the new members of staff in an attempt to ensure this is not the case.
It is college policy is that all teachers must either hold or enrol on a teaching qualification within one year of their commencement with the college, and must achieve this within three years. This is one of the key performance indicators tracked by the leadership team.

**Making ITE even better**

Mentor support can be problematic, as it is voluntary. At Middlesbrough College, we have some excellent mentors who have provided invaluable subject-specific support the generic ITE programme lacks. The college is excellent at providing mentor support, but unfortunately not all organisations, particularly smaller training providers, offer this. A financial incentive might perhaps encourage more experienced practitioners to support trainees.

From next year, each teaching and learning mentor will receive an update every two weeks about any new teaching staff who have been recruited. Mentors will then contact them and arrange to meet at least twice in the first six weeks. Developmental observations will follow this. With the ever-increasing abilities of our students to use digital technology, e-learning and assisting the ‘networked learner’ is a key focus for all staff and with new teachers this also needs to be considered much more.
Taking pride in the nature of teaching in FE – but could this be put all at sea?

Bea Groves MIIfL QTLS | Adult education tutor with the Workers’ Educational Association and IfL president 2011–13

It’s pretty much common sense that if one engages a plumber, carpenter, painter or decorator for a domestic repair job, it makes sense to choose a tradesperson who has the right blend of qualifications and experience. It’s highly unlikely that anyone would want to employ someone to do a job if they had no credible evidence of their competency. And if one considers caring services, then the matter of standards of work becomes even more important. Would anyone want to be treated by a nurse straight off the street? Flown by a pilot without a licence? Safeguarded by a policeman with no training in the law?

Surely the same principle applies to teaching in further education?

We need to know that teachers can teach, not just know about their subject.

In order to give students confidence in the quality of their education, it is essential that their teachers should have been trained in the principles that underlie the learning process. Over decades we, as a nation, have sought out better education opportunities for all, and developed professional occupational standards that have been espoused by all teaching staff (wherever they happen to work and whatever their subject areas). This has raised pride in the nature of teaching in FE, and has clarified what good quality teaching and learning is.

To remove the need for a national qualification simply blurs the issue of what a minimum standard of educational skill should be, for adult students and for teachers themselves. It also lowers professional status, and leaves potential new teachers all at sea as to what training they need to do their job competently.

FE is more complex now than ever before and teachers need a body of skills that reflect a broad knowledge of how to engage learners of all types. We need to improve and deepen this via initial teacher training, not remove national standards altogether.

Take away a regulated requirement for a standard teaching qualification (and the training that underpins it) and one is left with the chaos of old; where quality was difficult to pin down and transferability of skills across sector domains was zero.

Let’s keep a minimum standard – you know it makes sense.
Further voices

Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)

UCET is pleased to give its full support to IfL’s campaign. Learners have a right to expect that the people they are taught by are properly qualified. For teachers in FE, that means a 120-credit level 5 qualification, and nothing less.

The Centre for Research and Development in Lifelong Education

The Centre for Research and Development in Lifelong Education (CRADLE) at the University of Wolverhampton (UoW) is concerned to address the neglected field of post-compulsory education and training in mainstream educational policy and research, including its marginal status among statutory bodies responsible for school and FE provision.

CRADLE and the wider UoW partnership are very concerned about the proposed deregulation of mandatory standards required of new entrants into the teaching profession (Lingfield Report 2012). Discussions with partners (colleges, adult education and sector providers) have revealed an overwhelming desire and commitment on their part to maintain their current position requiring their staff to be qualified. This is reinforced by ongoing research in CRADLE exploring the impact of ITE on the professional practice of the FE and lifelong learning sector workforce.

Education of Service Personnel, House of Commons Defence Committee, conclusions and recommendations. 18 July 2013

“Defence instructors – the MoD should ensure that all instructors complete the ‘Defence Train the Trainer’ course before they take up their appointments. The MoD should also institute a system of observation and feedback to all instructors in line with the recommendations made by Ofsted in its recent work for the MoD. In response to this report, the MoD should set out its plan and timetable to implement these recommendations.” (Paragraph 42).

Bob Powell | Chief executive, Holex, in IfL’s professional magazine, Intuition, June 2013

“The [Education and Training] Foundation should not stray from its core purpose of raising the professionalism, and thereby the reputation, of the sector through a keen focus on how individual members of the workforce, and teams might further develop … What is done to improve practice is done always with an eye to improving the quality of learning experience.”

Stewart Segal | Chief executive, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, in IfL’s professional magazine, Intuition, June 2013

“We have to focus on standards of delivery in work-based learning and there will be that big push to improve English and maths. IfL is for individuals, and training providers will give maximum encouragement for their trainers and teachers to develop their own qualifications and maintain their own continuing professional development … I predict a surge in demand for teacher training among AELP member organisations and see a need for IfL to work with the Education and Training Foundation to work on twin tracks to get individual and institutional provision of high quality teaching right … As IfL looks to individuals and the Foundation is looking at providers, the two can sit together within the same skills framework … The drive for more and increasingly high-quality apprenticeships has been significant in encouraging record numbers of workplace tutors and instructors to seek qualified teacher status, and which will increase along with rising standards of provision. Training providers with the employers, individual learners and various agencies, can be trusted to get on with it and get things right.”
Ofsted – inspection evidence relating to whether initial teacher education makes a difference to the quality of teaching and learning in further education

**University of Bolton** and its partnership with four further education colleges and one private training provider, January 2013 – Grade 2 (good), giving authority:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall effectiveness</th>
<th>Grade: 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>The key strengths of the FE partnership are:</td>
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<td>- The outstanding leadership and management of the provision that have led to significant improvements in the quality of training and the outcomes for trainees, so that successful completion rates are high for all programmes and almost all trainees' teaching is good or better by the end of their training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The highly cohesive partnership where all partners contribute to outstanding leadership and management and the tight coherence between the elements of the course, resulting in the improvements in the quality of provision and in the outcomes for trainees.</td>
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<td>- The high-quality Skills for Life provision with more than half of trainees' teaching being outstanding by the end of the training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The high quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning that arises from detailed analysis of the outcomes for trainees, including the progress made by individual trainees and groups of trainees, and is focused well on securing further improvements to these outcomes.</td>
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**University of Central Lancashire** and its partnership with 13 colleges across the north-west and one National Voluntary Organisation, March 2012 – Grade 2

"In 2010, 83% of in-service and pre-service trainees were at least good and outcomes improved further to 86% in 2011. Of the 2009/11 trainees, 85% were graded good or better on completion when only 65% of the cohort had achieved this level with interim grades in 2010. In 2011, 87% of pre-service trainees achieved ‘good or better’.

"Trainees demonstrate strong subject knowledge, acquired through professional or academic study and vocational experience. Their lesson planning is thorough, with clear aims and objectives. Teaching and learning activities are planned to meet individual needs and abilities, including a range of assessment strategies. Their rationales for specific lessons show an ability to monitor their own progress and the targets they need to meet. Trainees demonstrate excellent reflective, self-critical skills both in their assignments and consistently in their professional development journals. Trainees deploy a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies which they use imaginatively and skilfully. They are adept at using information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance their learners’ understanding. They are able to develop good relationships with learners and have an effective rapport with them. Management of classroom environments by trainees is good and they are able to understand the causes of, and manage, challenging behaviour. Trainees can check learners’ progress accurately, often by using effective questioning. Trainees’ assignments are clearly written and persuasively argued. They are fully prepared to embed literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) into their teaching, in addition to teaching learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities.”
\textbf{Edge Hill University} and its partnerships with colleges and providers, May 2011 – Grade 1

“… the outstanding use of technology to enhance trainees' progress and their own students' learning.”

“The very high quality of provision and training and assessment ensures that trainees make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in their academic work and in their teaching and learning practice.”

“Trainees make very good progress compared with their starting points and demonstrate very well-developed teaching skills. Trainees are confident and articulate. Of particular note is how they use excellent rationales to demonstrate very clear links between theory and practice. Trainees understand and apply the principles of learning and teaching very well. They facilitate learning very effectively and have well-developed strategies to check learning has taken place. Trainees know how well they are progressing and they produce sharply-focused action plans on their areas for development. 52. Trainees plan the structure of their lessons to cater for the diverse range of learners’ abilities in great detail and with considerable care. They are often animated and their enthusiasm for teaching is infectious. Trainees have very creative information learning technology (ILT) skills which they use very effectively to help their learners understand new topics. Their high levels of challenge and expectation motivate their learners. Trainees develop very good classroom and behaviour management skills. They demonstrate good subject knowledge. Trainees encourage their learners to develop vocational and life skills and to use safe working practices. They make very good use of assessment for learning strategies.”

The initial training of further education and skills teachers: Findings from 2011–12 initial teacher education courses leading to awarding body qualifications, September 2012

“The teachers who completed the courses, and their employers, valued the qualifications for the increased self-confidence they provided and status they bestowed.”

“They became better teachers as a result of the training they received on these courses.”

“The teachers also valued highly the status and self-confidence that the qualifications provided. These qualifications are also valued by many employers; they are seen as a key component in increased professionalism and in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.”

“Providers should ‘ensure that training takes more account of the ‘dual professionalism’ of teachers in FE and skills so that training in the application of specialist understanding and skills has parity with the development of generic teaching skills.”

“The large majority of teachers who completed their course made good progress and improved their teaching as a result of the training they received, including improvements in:

- planning and using a wider range of teaching methods
- using their increased understanding of how learning takes place and the factors that promote and inhibit learning to match their teaching better to the group of learners
- monitoring and assessing learning in order to provide better focused interventions and support, and/or modify the approaches used
- supporting learners with varying needs and learning preferences.

“These improvements were made clear in records of observations of teaching and the impact on learning, in the teachers’ portfolios and in interviews with mentors, employers, and teachers who had recently completed their training.”
# Glossary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTLLS</td>
<td>Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTLLS</td>
<td>Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIfL</td>
<td>Fellow of the Institute for Learning</td>
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<td>IfL</td>
<td>Institute for Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITE</td>
<td>Initial teacher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITT</td>
<td>Initial teacher training</td>
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<td>MIfL</td>
<td>Member of the Institute for Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTLLS</td>
<td>Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector</td>
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<td>QTLS</td>
<td>Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills</td>
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Appendix 1 – Key facts and FAQs about the 2007 regulations for initial teacher training

Institute for Learning, August 2013

Until September 2013, statutory regulations were in place that required individuals teaching and training in further education provision to gain an initial teacher training qualification. IfL had opposed the removal of the Further Education Teachers’ (England) Regulations 2007. Below are some of the commonly put questions and arguments, and a range of independent evidence.

Did the regulations have any impact?

The most comprehensive analysis of the impact of the regulations was published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in 2012. The report showed that progress was being made, but that there is still work to do in achieving a fully qualified teaching and training profession across the sector.

The evaluation (BIS 2012) showed that:

- Around 80 per cent of all teachers in FE colleges have achieved or are working towards a recognised teaching qualification. Of these, 57 per cent held the level 5 teaching qualification.

- The proportion of qualified teachers in the adult and community learning (ACL) and work-based learning (WBL) is slightly lower than that of FE colleges, but progress has been made since the introduction of the regulations in 2007.

- Two-thirds of ACL and WBL providers have introduced policies for teaching staff to become qualified to level 5 within five years. These policies did not exist before the introduction of the regulations.

- There is evidence that levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT have improved among teachers and trainers as a result of undertaking teacher training qualifications.

- “The regulations have been successful in introducing a minimum level of competence among teachers and trainers through the PTLLS qualifications”. This has had the largest impact in the WBL and ACL sectors, where it was less likely that new teachers would have undertaken a foundation teaching qualification.

- As a result of the large take-up of introductory teaching qualifications, new teachers “gain a quicker and more effective grounding in key teaching skills such as lesson planning, planning schemes of work and understanding and responding to different lesson preferences, for example”.

- There is evidence that some providers are still not supporting teachers beyond PTLLS, so maintaining the momentum towards achieving higher-level teaching qualifications is vital.

- Teachers and managers agree that there are significant benefits of new teachers systematically undertaking initial teacher training, such as increased confidence and reflective practice.

- In addition to achieving a consistent minimum level of competence, the regulations had, according to the report, helped to foster a culture of professional development and gaining qualifications among teaching staff.

- Even teachers out of scope of the regulations, including those who started before 1 September 2007, have benefited from the culture shift towards qualifications, skills and continuing professional development (CPD) brought about by the regulations.

The regulations had a positive impact on teachers’ career aspirations.

Further to this evaluation by BIS, the government’s response to a public consultation on removing the regulations, published in August 2012, said that of the 1,002 responses it had received, 74 per cent said that the further education teacher qualifications regulations should not be removed. A significant majority – 80 per cent of respondents to the consultation – believed that removing the regulations would have unintended consequences.

The Institute for Learning’s own evidence provides an insight into the effectiveness and impact of the regulations. In a 2012 survey, to which nearly 6,000 teaching and training practitioners across FE and skills responded:

- over two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that the regulations had enhanced the professionalism of the sector
- 89 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that nationally recognised minimum teaching qualifications add to the status and standing of the profession
- 87 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that teaching qualifications should be mandatory on a national basis.

The regulations had done what they set out to do. We don’t need them anymore, do we?

Having the kind of professional minimum qualification criteria that the regulations provided is very important to teaching and training practitioners. As our evidence shows, the regulations were intertwined with the status and standing of the sector as a whole. In other words, the fact that teachers and trainers needed to reach statutory minimum thresholds means that the sector as a whole benefits from greater respect and confidence from learners, employers and the public.

Furthermore, evidence from the government’s own evaluation reinforces the argument that the strength of the regulations was in their longevity: they provided a clear expectation for initial training and, proper professional development opportunities; raised career aspirations; and maintained a culture of upskilling and high-quality teaching, training and learning in all parts of the sector.

For these reasons, it is clear that the benefits to teachers and trainers, learners and the wider sector are gained because the regulations were a vital part of a developing culture that promotes high-quality provision. It is, therefore, short-sighted to suggest that the regulations can at any point achieve everything.

Finally, for this assertion to be made confidently there would need to be evidence of a fully qualified teaching and training workforce. The government’s own evaluation makes clear that there is progress still to be made. It is vital that there is robust and up-to-date workforce data.

Teacher training qualifications don’t necessarily produce good teachers.

A view sometimes expressed is that qualifications are not guarantees of quality teachers or trainers. This is an extremely limiting perspective to take in terms of the roles of teachers and trainers and indeed the roles of qualifications themselves.

Evidence shows that excelling as a teaching or training professional is connected to initial teaching qualifications. We’ve seen this demonstrated in this very document.

This is the bedrock from which an individual’s expertise builds on learning from experiences; the ability to adapt behaviours and techniques; ongoing CPD; reflective practice; peer review; and learner feedback.

All of this is underpinned by initial teacher training, designed to provide a core of skills, knowledge and competencies for practitioners to develop throughout their careers that meet national standards for the benefit of learners, wherever in the country they are training or studying in further education.

5 www.ifl.ac.uk/newsandevents/latest/the-future-of-your-profession-member-survey
The government wants to deregulate further education and skills as much as possible to make it more responsive to employers and learners.

The sector has welcomed the drive to afford further education and skills providers the freedoms and flexibilities to best respond to demand from learners, employers and communities. It is questionable how deregulating the teaching and training workforce will help to achieve this objective, if it diminishes quality and reduces the number of qualified professional teachers with a well-developed repertoire of teaching methods that they are readily able to apply to different contexts and groups of learners. The shared goal is to have flexibility and delivery of high-quality, responsive programmes with excellent teaching, learning and assessment.

IfL believes that the recently removed regulations for teachers becoming qualified were already very flexible. They required that a short, preparatory initial teacher training award was undertaken within 12 months (currently called PTLLS) and that a level 5 diploma was undertaken within five years. The vast majority of FE teachers and trainers already make the most of this flexibility and undertake initial teacher training in-service.

A case has yet to be made for what would replace the regulations that would be as flexible, as valuable and accord the proper high national status of the profession and the sector, and give the public confidence that national minimum standards for teachers being qualified are expected.

Colleges and providers should be able to employ those who they, not the government, believe are best for the job.

As has already been highlighted, the regulations offered the kind of flexibility that allowed and encouraged colleges and training providers to employ as teachers people who are experts in their field and then required them to undertake short, introductory teacher training in the first year and work towards being a qualified teacher over a period of up to five years. This is very flexible.

If an expert from industry is genuinely put off a position as a teacher or trainer because they would be required to undertake a modest amount of introductory training followed by a diploma in teaching, over a space of five years, this arguably brings into question their motivation and commitment to high quality for learners.

As is the case with a good doctor or a good nurse, there are many attributes that make a good teacher over and above their particular technical vocational expertise. Learners deserve no less than a dual professional: someone who is able to use their expertise in teaching and learning to transfer their subject specialist and vocational expertise in the best way possible. The regulations allowed colleges and training providers to employ those who they believe will be the best teachers, giving a window of five years to undertake initial teacher training, and for those who teach for fewer than 28 hours a year to be encouraged but not required to become qualified teachers, thus promoting a good flow and ‘two-way street’, where industry experts contribute to teaching in further education.

Initial teacher training has become too expensive.

IfL has consistently argued that access to initial teacher training, particularly in the wake of significant reforms to higher education funding, is a debate the sector needs to have.

IfL has, for example, led the calls for a package of support equal to those on offer to trainee schoolteachers – such as bursaries ranging from smaller sums generally to those of up to £20,000 for in-demand subjects or vocational subjects where there are shortages – to be afforded to trainee teachers in further education and skills.

It would be unacceptable and counterproductive for providers and individuals to be priced out of accessing high-quality initial teacher training.

IfL believes there is a case for co-investment in initial teacher training, much in the same way that both the government and employers already invest in qualifications for employees.
Upfront and modest investment in high-quality teaching and training spares expensive waste further down the line for learners, teachers, employers and the government.

More and more schools are allowed to employ teachers without teaching qualifications, and university lecturers don’t need to have teaching qualifications. Why does FE need qualified teachers?

Enabling free schools and academies to recruit teachers without teacher training qualifications arguably remains one of the most controversial policies enacted by the coalition government, and the parallel drawn with university lecturers is one that superficially is easy to make. However, there are stark contrasts in the kinds of roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and indeed in public status between the schools, universities and further education sectors.

Most school teachers undertake pre-service initial teacher education, that is, before being employed as a teacher. It was recognised long ago that this would not be appropriate for teachers and trainers in the further education sector, which is why both in-service and pre-service routes exist and the majority train in-service. The recognition that the skills, expertise and experience of the individuals the sector wants to attract means flexible in-service teacher education represents a major difference between the school teaching and FE teaching and training professions.

IfL’s data shows that the average age of entry to teaching in further education and skills is 38, about 10 years older than the average for schoolteachers.

Stark contrasts can also be made between teaching in higher education, where learners are already qualified at level 3 and by definition successful and independent learners, and teaching in further education, where learners, and the teaching and learning methods required, are more diverse and large amounts of provision are at level 2 or below. Many learners in further education and skills did not thrive in school and need well-trained experts in flexible and carefully tailored teaching methods.

Teachers in schools, colleges, workplaces, training providers and universities all deserve respect and admiration for what they do. Many in the FE sector feel that university teachers, through the inherent esteem of universities, and schoolteachers, through everyone’s lived experience, benefit from greater public recognition.

Furthermore, there are frequent calls for higher education teachers to undertake teacher training, the most recent made by the EU high-level group on modernisation of higher education.6

It is difficult to think of a profession, outside education, that does not have a universally recognised, statutory minimum entry qualification to gain professional recognition. Professions such as medicine, law, engineering, social work, accountancy and driving instruction are well-established in the national psyche as having clear national requirements for qualification. Increasingly though, the benefits of initial entry qualifications and professional standards are providing opportunities and enhancing services in areas such as early years, with clear national requirements for early years teachers to be professionally qualified, and for sports coaches.

Indeed, in March 2013, following consultation, the government decided against removing the requirement for street work operatives and supervisors to obtain qualifications.7

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