

QIA Professionalising the Workforce Case studies

An Evaluation of ITT for Teachers Working with Offenders

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1. Introduction

1.1 National Context

Offender Learning

In August 2006, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) completed the take over of responsibility for the planning and funding of Offender Learning from the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It was hoped that this change would bring the learning and skills arrangements for offenders more in line with 'mainstream' provision. The levels of funding for prison education has increased enormously over the last few years from £47.5 million in 1999/2000 to £122 million in 2004/2005 (House of Commons: 2005). With 60 percent of prisoners having poor literacy skills and 75 per cent poor numeracy skills (National Audit Office: 2005), the majority of this funding goes towards Basic and Key Skills qualifications.

On its website, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) acknowledges that:

"There is some evidence that those working with offenders have to some extent felt like a Cinderella service, working in relative isolation from the broader learning and skills sector, with poor access to development and support networks... Bringing delivery of offender learning within the mainstream of Learning and Skills Council delivery offers the opportunity to do better in developing the learning workforce, giving those working with offenders the support their challenging role merits. Providers need to offer support for the career progression of all staff delivering learning and skills". (DIUS, n.d.)

It is hard to be clear about what is meant by the term 'mainstream' in this context, as traditionally adult education has been extremely diverse in terms of its learners, the subjects taught, and the context in which learning is delivered. It is assumed that what is meant by 'mainstream' here is the education that is

available to non-offenders, including college based education, distance and work-based learning, community learning and employment training.

Teacher Training and Development

In response to recommendations made by Ofsted (2003), there has been a range of reforms to teaching qualifications for post-16 educators. Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) have been commissioned by the government to develop a suite of qualifications that would lead towards a new professional standard. They began by establishing the concept of a 'full' teacher role and an 'associate' teacher role based on the level of responsibility given to the teacher in terms of assessment and curriculum planning. Associate teachers have a reduced role, for example, they may deliver off-the-shelf training packages, or standalone one day training sessions. A full teacher will participate in all parts of the teaching/ training process, and will now require the post-16 equivalent of the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) held by teachers in schools – Qualified Teacher in Learning and Skills (QTLS). The new teaching qualifications framework consists of:

- Level 3 or 4 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) – One mandatory unit worth 6 credits
- Level 3 or 4 Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) – Four units worth 24 credits including one optional unit worth six credits.
- Level 5 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) – nine units worth 120 credits including two optional units worth 15 credits each.

Currently the optional units available are:

- Year one
 - Inclusive practice
 - Managing and responding to behaviours in a learning environment

- Year two
 - Developing and managing resources
 - The lifelong learning sector
 - Integrating literacy, language and numeracy in the learning of vocational and other subjects
 - Planning and practising embedded approaches to raise learner achievement (vocational and other subject teachers)

Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL teachers not qualified before September 2007, will be required to take a subject specialist DTLLS rather than a generic one. There are no optional units available on this specialist Diploma.

In order to qualify for QTLS status, and therefore be eligible to practise as a 'full' teacher, a teacher in adult education will need to take the Level 5 diploma (or hold an equivalent 120 credits), have achieved Level 2 Maths and English qualifications, a Level 3 qualification in their specialist area. In addition to this, they will be required to participate in 30 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) per year, pro rata.

The DIUS believe that this new suite of qualifications will support teachers working with offenders:

“Under the new arrangements we can expect an important part to be played by ...Lifelong Learning UK - providing a teacher qualifications infrastructure which enables both initial teacher training and continuing professional development to be tailored to the needs of individual staff, with the aim of developing an appropriately skilled workforce which can provide a quality service to offender learners. LLUK will also provide workforce intelligence data to enable offender learning providers to benchmark their progress towards employing appropriately qualified staff” (DIUS, n.d.)

1.2 Local Context

This case study is located within a Further Education College that provides Offender Learning provision in a variety of settings including prisons and the community.

The college is also a provider of Initial Teacher Training courses including the new suite of LLUK qualifications together with the subject Specialism DTLLS, and a PGCE/ Cert Ed course in collaboration with a local University (which from September 2008 will incorporate the DTLLS curriculum). In addition to teaching qualifications, the college also runs regular ‘Spotlight on...’ sessions for staff. These short sessions focus on a specific aspect of teaching such as behaviour management, record keeping, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), planning and resource development. The college is a member of the Westminster Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (Westminster CETT).

As a provider of both offender and mainstream provision, and Initial Teacher Training, the college is well placed to evaluate the initial teacher training of teachers who work with offenders.

1.3 Conceptual focus

There has been some indication that providing contextualised teacher training for teachers of offenders may be necessary due to specific challenges faced by these teachers (Real Educational Research Ltd for QIA: 2007).

This view assumes that:

- Teaching offenders in an offender environment, whether that is in a secure or community setting, is *significantly* different to teaching in other settings.
- That the challenges created by these differences in learners and context are ones that can be met through specialised teaching and training qualifications.

- The benefits of educating teachers differently according to setting, outweigh the benefits of teachers being taught together.

This case study seeks to explore whether these assumptions are valid, and will look at the benefits and disadvantages of a contextualised approach to teacher training.

1.4 Research focus

This case study will:

- Explore the teaching and learning experiences of teachers who are employed by the college and work in an offender setting.
- Discover whether these teachers feel adequately served by their teacher training and if not, in what ways (and are these ways specific to teachers of offenders).
- Investigate teachers' views on contextualised teacher training for teachers who work with offenders.

Scope

This case study will explore the perceptions of teachers who work, or have recently worked, in the following contexts:

- Category A and B prisons
- Community offender learning

All the teachers interviewed are currently employed by the college, and have worked across a variety of settings including offender learning and mainstream education. It was felt that these teachers were best placed to comment on the differences between the settings, and the applicability of their teacher training to them.

It is likely that many of the views of this group will reflect the views of teachers of offenders nationally, but it must be stressed that their teacher training and professional development experience may be different to other teachers who work in this context. The word 'teacher' will be used to describe all staff with a teaching or training role including tutors and NVQ Assessors.

This study will explore only the key emerging themes.

2. Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The objective of this case study is to provide a localised insight into the teaching and learning experience of teachers who work in an offender setting, and make recommendations concerning Initial Teacher Training and Professional Development programmes based on the data gathered.

2.2 Research questions

- What are the perceived differences between teaching offenders, and learners in other settings?
- What are the perceived differences between teaching in an offender context, and in a mainstream context?
- What additional or different skills, knowledge and attitudes are required by teachers working with offenders?
- Do teachers feel that their teacher training has prepared them well for working with offenders?
- Do teachers feel that a contextualised teacher training would have served them better than a generically focused one?
- Is there evidence to suggest that the quality of teaching in offender learning is worse than in mainstream education?

2.3 Data collection

Overview

The research methodology for this case study consists of a review of the literature, including research and policy and practice documentation, an initial questionnaire, one-to-one interviews and college Quality Process data.

Literature review

A brief review of the literature will explore policy and practice documentation and research in the following areas:

- The purpose of offender learning
- Best practice and quality in offender teaching and learning
- Initial Teacher Training and Professional Development for teachers in offender learning

Initial questionnaire

An initial questionnaire (Appendix 1) was sent by email to twelve teachers whose Human Resources records showed that they had worked in different settings including offender learning, and that they had achieved teacher training qualifications. The questionnaire was sent with a letter asking them whether they would like to participate in the study. Seven teachers responded to the questionnaire and letter. The questionnaire asked for information about extent of teaching experience, the settings worked in, which teaching qualifications they held, and the years in which these qualifications were taken. The data collected in this questionnaire provided some objective information about the range of diversity in the sample (Appendix 2). The sample was small, but may give an indication of the range of diversity in the college's offender teaching teams.

The majority of those to be contacted and to respond were female, and this is broadly representative of the college teaching population. Five of the seven respondents were teachers of literacy and five taught IT. Two of the seven are in a management role, one in a community setting, and one in a prison. Five of the seven teach or have taught offenders in a community setting and all teach, or have taught, in prisons. All teach at a variety of levels but Level 3 is the highest of these.

Five respondents have a PGCE in Post-compulsory education and the remaining two have schools qualifications and QTS status. Their years of teaching experience range from 8 years to 37 years.

Interviews

One-to-one interviews were completed with the six respondents to the initial letter and questionnaire. Respondent four was not chosen because respondent three worked in the same department and it was felt they had similar experience and qualifications. The purpose of the interview was to elicit opinions and personal views from the interviewees, but it was important that the information collected through the interviews was comparable, so an Interview Schedule was used to structure the interview (Appendix 3). The interview schedule included a mixture of open questions and fixed responses under three topic headings:

- Experience and previous skills
- The offender learning context
- Your teacher training.

College quality data

The college holds a database of information collected from the graded observations conducted through the year as part of the college's quality process. Ofsted's grading criteria are used for these observations, and the same criteria are used across the college's provision including offender learning. In addition to this, college managers recently went through a process of reviewing observation records in order to identify areas of teaching and learning strengths and weaknesses in their areas. This data has also been made available to the study and will be analysed as part of this study but cannot, in its entirety, be included in the Appendices, due to data protection and privacy issues.

2.4 Ethics and access

Both the initial questionnaire and the interview schedule include a statement of ethics. All participants are fully aware of their rights to anonymity and know that they can withdraw from the study at any point without giving a reason. The findings of this study may be made available externally through the QIA and will be circulated within the college to those with an interest in the study. Participants are aware that internal college staff may be able to work out who made some of

the comments quoted in the study, and realised this at the point that they were interviewed. It is hoped that this has not limited and restricted the way they have shared their views but it is accepted that this may have happened to some degree.

3. Literature Review

3.1 The purpose of offender learning

Offender learning has traditionally had the dual purpose of providing purposeful activity for offenders while in prison or on probation, and of improving skills with the aim of reducing rates of re-offending. This dual purpose has not changed but has been refined. In 2005, the government published the Green Paper consultation document *Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment*. This document placed a greater emphasis than ever on employment, and equipping offenders with skills that matched employers' needs. This discussion document was followed in 2006 by *Next Steps*, a document that provided some detail around employer engagement strategies and employability contracts with offenders. The 2008 report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, *Meeting Needs? The Offenders' Learning and Skills Service*, summarises this:

“The primary objective of OLASS provision is to increase employability and thereby reduce re-offending. OLASS provision may also contribute to reduce re-offending by improving individuals' basic and life skills, increasing ability to function in society. In prison, OLASS provision also helps the prison service to meet its objectives to treat prisoners humanely and decently by providing them with purposeful activity, which is very important for the maintenance of well ordered and secure establishments”

(NAO, 2008, pg 5)

3.2 Best practice and quality in offender teaching and learning

Offender learning is governed by the same National Standards as other post-16 contexts. These are laid out by Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF), more recently by LLUK's professional standards for teachers working in lifelong learning, and also the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) National Standards for literacy, numeracy and ICT.

A large body of research and resources focuses on good practice in post-16 education; this has been carried out by organisations such as the National Research and Development Centre (NRDC), The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA).

The 2006/07 Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector broadly criticises prison education:

“In many prisons there is little teaching and learning that is good or outstanding.”
(Ofsted, 2007, p46)

3.3 Initial Teacher Training and Professional Development for teachers in offender learning

QIA commissioned research, *'Contextualising the revised teaching qualifications to meet the needs of staff working with offender assessment, learning and training'* (2007) suggests that because offender learning takes place within the context of the criminal justice system as part of a prisoner's sentence, staff also need to take the following factors into account:

- “policy reforms in learning and skills in criminal justice, and in criminal justice
- the criminal justice environment
- offenders' profiles, attitudes and behaviours”

(Real Education Research Ltd,2007,p40)

The report further suggests that these factors make teaching offenders *significantly* different to teaching in mainstream education.

NIACE argues that:

“Offender education practitioners require the support and status an accredited teacher-training programme, tailored to their needs, can provide. Teacher training in post-compulsory education and training within HM prisons, for both external postgraduate and Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) students is needed to produce qualified and experienced offender education staff.

In addition, developing part-time initial teacher-training courses open to offenders, prison officers and other staff fosters the development of a learning culture and enhances teaching capacity in prisons.”

(NIACE, n.d)

The DIUS has already taken the step of funding a pilot scheme in collaboration with Strode College and the University of Plymouth to develop a specialised, accredited PGCE/ Cert Ed module for staff working with offenders in custody.- *‘An introduction to teaching within HM prison education departments’.*

Ofsted state that in their opinion FE trainee teachers do not experience enough variety of courses or students as part of their training:

“In Further Education, not enough trainees have sufficient opportunities to teach across a range of courses and to teach students of different ages and abilities”
(Ofsted, 2007, p51)

This suggests Ofsted give significant value to the widening of teacher classroom experiences. Ofsted do not refer to the lack of contextualised teaching and training in Post-compulsory teacher training in this annual report.

4. Analysis

4.1 What are the perceived differences between teaching offenders, and learners in other settings?

The report '*Contextualising the revised teaching qualifications to meet the needs of staff working with offender assessment, learning and training*' (Real Educational Research: 2007) lists aspects of offenders' potential profiles which teachers can find challenging:

- "low educational attainment
- poor written and oral communication skills
- poor cognitive skills
- a history of truancy and/or school exclusion
- low motivation to improve their learning and skills
- issues with concentration, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- learning difficulties and disabilities including dyslexia
- ESOL needs
- mental health problems, including self-harm and suicidal tendencies
- drug, substance and alcohol misuse
- low self esteem
- accommodation issues
- a history of unemployment or temporary employment
- disrupted personal relationships
- problems with anger management
- chaotic life styles
- adolescence
- offending behaviour"

(Real Educational Research, 2007, p10)

Through questions 6, 7 and 8 of the interview, this study's interviewees generated a similar list. One prison based teacher said:

“The learners are not necessarily positive about learning, but see it as an alternative to their cell. Some can't stand being in a classroom and would benefit from practical skills”

However, this was not the majority view. Most interviewee's spoke about the ways in which the profiles of offenders made them nicer or easier to teach than mainstream learners. One interviewee working in a prison setting said of her learners:

“They are generally keen to learn, there is a low level of literacy, about 60 per cent. 90 per cent seemed to be in on a drug related offence and when they were off the drugs they were perfectly nice...like all places you have a mixture...some had issues such as anger management or were on methadone and you had to be warier ...There is more difference between learners of different age groups in college or school than there are differences between teaching offenders and mainstream students”

In addition, another prison based literacy teacher said:

“There's a huge variety of backgrounds, cultures, outlooks and personal agendas. This group tends to be highly motivated, keen to achieve accreditation, interested in the finer detail of language and quite demanding in their questioning. They are also demanding in what they want to get out of the class”

A teacher working with offenders in a community setting agreed:

“I've only found two learners difficult to manage in 18 months...Most groups are very supportive of each other and of me...Some individuals can cause

difficulties and need to be excluded... [but they are] generally well mannered and behaved and often this isn't the case in mainstream!"

The Real Educational Research study that acknowledges that the challenging characteristics they list are shared by other mainstream provision, especially 14-19 learners, adds:

"However, there is a concentration of need within the offender population as a whole. Second, individual offenders have very complex, inter-related patterns of need. Third...it is likely that having a criminal conviction will impact emotionally upon individuals, potentially contributing to a sense of stigma and reduced self-esteem" (2007, p.11)

This is likely to be true and certainly, this study's interviewees refer to the vulnerability of their learners a number of times, but the majority of interviewees' responses suggest that these factors in themselves do not make offenders harder or more challenging to teach than mainstream students. More research would need to be done to establish whether this was the case.

Significantly, one interviewee stated:

"I was aware that when I came back to mainstream education I had lost some of my teaching skills because the groups [in prisons] are so small and not challenging...Schemes of Work are generic and not developed by teachers...and I had forgotten how horrible mainstream students could be...you never got rudeness like you do from 16 year old girls...If you only worked in prison you would have no chance to develop teaching skill – you don't have to have good teaching skills but it's difficult to be outstanding because of the prison environment and regime."

All of those interviewed stated that they enjoyed offender learning because of the difference they felt they made to some learner's lives:

“Some are so vulnerable – especially at the bail hostel... They are like lost souls... A lot of them are homeless, away from families or they have addiction issues or limited money ...I do more than just teach them something, I give opportunities to try things and share the results with other people...I don’ think I make a huge difference, it’s just a small part of putting them back together as people”

“You can definitely make a difference and have an influence by getting someone onto a course...it’s rewarding to see them moving on a stage and they are outwardly grateful”

When asked what makes working with offenders difficult, most interviewees cited environmental factors but three mentioned the necessity of separating their personal and professional life in a way that they did not have to when working in mainstream education:

“You mustn’t get emotionally involved and this can be difficult...you mustn’t bring your own feelings”

“You can’t talk about personal things for security reasons. Sometimes I go to tell a story and realise I can’t”

“You can’t be open...you need to have a façade or boundary about personal life, information...you have to deliver a lesson with less personal examples and empathy than normally”

One teacher emphasised the importance of being especially thoughtful when preparing resources:

“You have to choose materials very carefully because you don’t necessarily know what their offence was...If someone was an alcoholic you would want

to avoid literature about alcohol...current affairs material might be contentious too.”

Differentiating for offenders diverse needs was an issue for another teacher too:

“There are vastly different levels of prisoner ability in the groups...we have to have groups of between six and eight”

4.2 What are the perceived differences between teaching in an offender context, and in a mainstream context?

This topic promoted most discussion in the interviewees (through questions 5, 7, 8 and 9 of the Interview schedule) and most discussed the difficulty of teaching in such a tightly controlled context. The key issues that emerged were:

- Security issues
- Communication and working together issues
- Lack of access to working ICT resources
- Poor quality classrooms
- Punctuality and attendance patterns

Security issues

“You can’t just leave students for a minute...you have to plan very well because you can’t just make resources or go and get them...teaching styles are limited because of security, access to IT and the size of rooms”

“There’s the security aspect. However relaxed you are it has to be there in your head...security is very building specific...the prisons are very different to each other”

“Security restrictions make the job harder in prison, especially in relation to resources”

Communication and working together issues

“Some learners should not be in groups but there is very limited information given to us about them...there are communication difficulties between the probation office and tutors...the officers are nice and very helpful but there’s restricted information.”

“You work for two different ‘masters’ ie college and prison”

“You’re not in control of your students...the prison always comes first.... The prison has overall control so it’s hard to offer a coherent package

Lack of access to working ICT resources

“The computers are appalling...it’s a long ongoing problem. There is one or two in each classroom but they don’t often work and no printers are allowed in class. There is no DVD player only videos which means you end up using resources are out of date”

“There’s a lack of access to IT and archaic materials”

“We are about to get IT facilities in through REFRESH but previously we had none. “

Poor quality classrooms

One teacher working in a community setting said of her classroom at the Probation Office:

“It’s terrible...not conducive to education at all...we’re downstairs near the basement...the room is dirty and untidy...I have to carry laptops down the stairs but there’s no internet access...the City Church is the best venue we’ve had but this is not necessarily inclusive for other faiths”

Punctuality and attendance patterns

“Men start and finish at ad-hoc times so it’s difficult to judge how much time is spent in provision...prisoners are pulled by other parts of the prison for example legal visits and this impacts on consistency...Punctuality and attendance are at the discretion of the prison staff to get them there...often 20 per cent of the class is lost (in one prison) for this reason”

“Learners come and go so quickly it is hard to manage retention and achievement but there’s a lot of pressure from above to reach targets”

4.3 What additional or different skills, knowledge and attitudes are required by teachers working with offenders because of these differences?

Questions 3, 4, 10, 12 of the Interview Schedule relate to this research question. Interviewees listed a range of soft-skills and attitudes, hard skills and knowledge. By far the most extensive list was to do with communication skills, and attitudes and values.

Attitudes

- Being streetwise
- Non-judgemental
- Not easily shocked or offended
- Not taking things personally
- Liking people as individuals
- Being tactful and careful
- Approachable
- Positive about learning
- Following through on commitments
- Professional attitude

Skills

- Customer service
- Dealing with angry customers
- Communication skills
- Letter writing
- Resource management
- Talking skills (talking people round)
- Persuading and negotiating skills
- Organisational skills
- Team working
-

Knowledge

- Experience of life
- Experience of working with adolescent boys
- Knowledge of the organisational side of education
- How to keep learners engaged
- Social cognitive therapy
- Learning styles
- Teaching and communication theories

One interviewee commented that it was hard to see how these skills relate only to teaching offenders, and certainly, it can be argued that many of these qualities are required by all adult educators if they are to work to a high standard.

Another interviewee commented that the most useful thing that she learnt on her teacher-training programme was how to use matching exercises as she uses this all the time in different contexts. She said that she would have liked to have been taught more practical strategies like this.

4.4 Do teachers feel that their teacher training has prepared them well for working with offenders?

Generally, the answer to this question was negative, although criticism of their courses was largely general rather than offender learning specific:

“I think it’s been a mixture. It has helped me focus on offenders because I’ve chosen to focus on that area but it hasn’t taught me more than I knew before from college or other experiences”.

“I remember a lot about Kolb’s cycle and Honey and Mumford and yes, you’ve got to learn that, but you’ve also got to apply it. What’s lacking is a practical side”

“I don’t think they [prepare teachers working with offenders] at all but then they don’t teach you for any particular context like ESOL or Skills for Life – it’s just generic stuff and then you apply it yourself...it’s too theoretical and too introspective”

“Teacher training didn’t make me a better teacher; it just made me understand why. It wasn’t inspirational; I would have liked more spark!

“There is a lot of overlap and strategies which can be used on children and adults alike. Teacher training and practice prepares you for behavioural challenges and

again lots of tricks dealing with irate children can be applied to managing a different student or class”

When asked what they would have liked more of, the interviewees listed:

“More on the behaviour side, especially cognitive behavioural therapy”

“I would have liked some more on qualification structure, awarding bodies etc but I am well aware that these change so much the modules would soon be outdated. I had very little on learning difficulties and only touched on differentiation between able bodied learners”

“Practical solutions to managing disruption”

“Having the chance to observe Grade 1 teachers”

“NLP and Personal Skills”

“Managing challenging behaviour”

“How to maintain a positive attitude when faced with moody, de-motivated or disruptive behaviour”

“How to hold onto your patience”

4.5 Do teachers feel that a contextualised teacher training would have served them better?

Interviewees all stated that they would like a different teacher training than the one they had. Largely they would have liked a more practical programme that provided them with clear teaching and learning strategies. Two argued that teaching in a prison was in many ways easier than teaching in other contexts including community offender learning (both had worked in prisons). When asked ‘Would you like to see a teaching qualification adapted specifically for teachers working in offender learning? If yes, what would you include? If no, why not?’ interviewees answered:

“Yes, and especially for teaching in community because in prison you have a captive audience”

“Prison teachers should observe classes in college and see what happens (or not!)”

“I think it would be useful to have a specific module rather than a whole qualification. This might include being creative with resources, managing challenging behaviour and dealing with stressful situations”

“No, offender learning draws on life skills and experience rather than being taught how to teach within this environment. If you have made the decision to work within offender learning or even explore the area I suggest that your motivation is far more than wanting to teach”

One suggested an optional module based around people skills and personal awareness. She suggested that the module might include some of the topics included in “some of the better ‘Spotlight on...’ sessions such as behaviour management and communication skills training”.

4.6 Is there evidence to suggest that the quality of teaching in offender learning is worse than in other areas?

As already discussed, Ofsted have concluded that there is little good or outstanding teaching practice in prisons nationally. However, the college’s observation grades suggest that there is a strong correlation between grades across the college as a whole and in the college’s offender learning provision with several examples of outstanding practice.

There is considerable difference between the grade profiles of different prisons. Those prisons that did well felt this was due to extra staff training, mentoring and file audits. Peer observation had also been introduced in some with great success.

An analysis of the themes emerging from the college's observations in offender learning suggests that specific strengths and weaknesses also vary across the different prisons.

Those mentioned most commonly across the prisons were:

Strengths –	No. of times mentioned
□ Good planning and paperwork	7
□ Positive relationships between staff and students	3
□ Knowledgeable and skilled tutors	3
□ Clear communication of aims and objectives	2
□ Variety of activities	2
□ Good team working	2
□ Good use of ILPs	2
□ Good practice in ESOL, Key skills and Skills for Life	2
Weaknesses –	
□ Use of ILPs	5
□ Use of differentiation	4
□ Range of teaching styles and learning strategies	4
□ Objectives not SMART and are insufficiently focused	2
□ Progress not always recorded	2
□ Key skills not cross referenced on planning documents	2
□ Quality and diversity of resources	2
□ Use of ILT and ICT	2
□ Weak teaching in the Skills for Life curriculum	2

Clearly, these strengths and weaknesses may be college specific, but some of these weaknesses reflect the findings of Ofsted nationally. Especially those to do with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs):

“the range of provision in most prisons is not better than satisfactory...instructors do not make sufficient effort to engage those offenders who initially refuse the opportunity for training...there is insufficient linking of initial assessment, the preparation of individual learning plans and sentence planning. Learning goals are not recorded clearly or systematically enough...there is insufficient sharing of information between providers of learning and prisons.” (Ofsted, 2007, p47)

6. Conclusions

It appears from the interviews that the experiences and needs of teachers working in prisons, and those working with offenders in the community are different. In prisons, the learners tend to be motivated to learn, and behaviour issues are said to be largely non-existent. However, the constraints of working within a prison environment, and especially those caused by security issues, attendance and lack of access to ICT, negatively affect teaching and learning. In addition, teachers in prisons may also experience a deterioration of their teaching skill over time because they are not given opportunities to exercise these diverse skills or keep up to date with developments in teaching and learning.

Community based offender learners can be more challenging, not because they are badly behaved, but because of their complex needs including low self-esteem and addictions combining with additional social needs such as lack of money and housing. Teachers working in this context felt that they needed robust communication skills, including the ability to negotiate with, and motivate students to learn.

In both areas, maintaining a rich variety of relevant and engaging resources was a challenge, especially ICT resources, and this was evidenced in college observations. Both areas had difficulties because of poor communication channels between those with overall responsibility for the learner and the teacher. Teachers often were not given information about sentences, which made individualised planning for learning difficult, and the transitory nature of offenders could be seen to impact on progress and achievement. Learner records are rarely sent with learners so they often had to start their training or education again when they moved; this affected learner motivation.

National Ofsted and local college observation data suggested that use of ILPs, and other progress and targeting strategies were not used rigorously in offender learning.

There is a strong argument for suggesting that teachers working with offenders would benefit from a formalised training package that addresses the needs of these teachers, and some research has suggested that an optional DTLLS unit in offender learning would be appropriate. It should be noted that all of the teachers interviewed have taken their qualifications before the development of the DTLLS programme and in fact many of the training needs identified by this study appear in the DTLLS programme already as optional units:

- Inclusive practice
- Managing and responding to behaviours in a learning environment
- Developing and managing resources
- The lifelong learning sector
- Integrating literacy, language and numeracy in the learning of vocational and other subjects
- Planning and practising embedded approaches to raise learner achievement (vocational and other subject teachers)

It should be noted that any optional module designed to look specifically at the offender-learning context, such as the one developed by Strode College and the University of Plymouth, would 'compete' with the other optional units; learners would have to choose between them. This study has identified that many trainee teachers are likely to take up existing DTLLS optional modules, especially knowledge of inclusive practice, managing and responding to behaviours, and planning and practising embedded approaches. In addition, many teachers of offenders work in the Skills for Life subject areas, and will be taking the Subject Specialist DTLLS courses. These courses do not currently have the flexibility of optional modules, and do not include modules on behaviour management and the psychology of learning. This study suggests that although a 'Working in an Offender Context' optional module might be appreciated by some teachers, this in itself will not provide the solution that the DIUS hope it will.

This study argues that strong soft skills, and key attitudes and behaviours, are essential to teachers working with offenders, and that these attributes might be

better developed through a more varied and reflective peer observation requirement. Wherever possible, mentors who work with offenders, and are judged good or outstanding practitioners, should be chosen to support learners and offer support by observing and being observed and offering supervision. It is also suggested that practical training sessions on key themes such as resource development and behaviour management should replace some of the theoretical modules.

7. References

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1

21st April 2008

Dear Colleague,

As a college with experience and expertise in delivering offender learning, we have been asked to develop a case study that contributes to the understanding of workforce development for the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA). This is an exciting opportunity for us to participate in the development of Initial Teacher Training by sharing our experiences.

We know that you have worked in a variety of teaching and learning contexts, including offender learning, and are therefore well placed to comment on the impact that your teacher training has had on your practice in these settings. We would like to interview six teachers as part of this study, and these interviews will form the basis of our case study. We would like to ask whether you would like to be part of this study.

Your involvement would be to participate in a 1-1 interview which will take about an hour. We will ask you about your teacher training experience, and how you came to be working in offender learning. We will ask everyone the same questions – although they might be in a different order. We will ask you to compare the different teaching environments with the aim of identifying key themes that may suggest ways in which Initial Teacher Training could be developed to support teaching and learning in Offender Education. Notes will be taken during the interviews and we will check at the end that you agree that the notes are an accurate reflection of what you said. The notes will not be identifiable, and will not be used for any other purpose than to inform our research. Anonymity of all participants will be assured. No actual names of prisons/ centres or personnel will be used.

If you would like to be part of this study please could you complete the attached Initial Questionnaire **by Friday 25th April**, and return it to:

Rebecca Galley
Professional Development Unit
Milton Keynes College
Bletchley Campus
Sherwood Drive
Bletchley, Milton Keynes
MK3 6DR

The success of this research relies on willing and knowledgeable participants, and we look forward to hearing from you. If you would like more information about the study, please contact me on 01908 637045.

Yours Sincerely,

QIA Workforce Case Studies Initial Questionnaire



In which context do you currently teach (please tick all those that you currently work in)?

Prison	
Probation	
Community	
Campus	
School	
Other (Please detail)	

In which contexts have you taught in the past (please tick all those that you have worked in)?

Prison	
Probation	
Community	
Campus	
School	
Other (Please detail)	

What subject(s) do you teach and to what level?

How many years have you been teaching or training (in any context)?

Which teacher training qualifications do you currently hold, or are working towards?

Qualification Title	Dates
PhD or MPhil in Education from a Higher Education Institute	
MA in Education from a Higher Education Institute	
FETC Stage 1 Level 4 (old NQF)	
FETC Stage 2 Level 4 (old NQF)	
FETC Stage 3 Level 4 (old NQF)	
Endorsed Stage 1 from a Higher Education Institute	
Endorsed Stage 2 from a Higher Education Institute	
PGCE or Cert Ed from a Higher Education Institute	
Skills for life jointly endorsed qualification integrating generic teacher training with a Skills for Life subject specialism	
C&G 7302 An Introduction to Delivering Learning	
C&G 7307 Certificate in Teaching Adult Learners – Stage 1	
C&G 7307 Certificate in Teaching Adult Learners – Stage 2	
C&G 7303 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)	
C&G 7304 Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLTS)	
C&G 7305 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS)	
CIPD Certificate in Training Practice – Level 3	
CIPD Certificate in Training Practice – Level 4	
NVQ Level 3 in Learning and Development	
NVQ Level 4 in Learning and Development	
Other:	

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The information that you give will be treated in the strictest confidence by the research team, and it will not be possible to identify you individually in any reports published that arise from this research. The collected results will enable us to find out more about how teacher training prepares teachers and trainers, and specifically those working with offenders.

Thank you very much for agreeing to become part of this study.

I confirm that I understand the purpose of this study, and that I am happy to participate.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 2

Summary of data gathered from the initial questionnaires

	M/F	Role and subject	Level	Years teaching	Current teaching	Previous teaching	Qualification held	Date taken
1 *	F	Teacher of Literacy and IT	Pre-entry – L2	13	Probation Community Campus	Prison Community Campus Commercial sector	FETC Stage 1 FETC Stage 2 A1 Assessor award PGCE (PCE)	1999 2005 2007 2008
2 *	M	Manager. Subject area Art and Design and ICT	KS 3,4 and 5	15	Prison	Boarding School	BA Education (hons)	1993
3 *	F	Teacher of Literacy	Pre-entry – L2	8	Prison	Prison Community	FETC Stage 1 FETC Stage 2 PGCE (PCE) Literacy subject specialism	2001 2003 2005 2006
4	F	Teacher of IT	To L3	10	Prison Community	Prison Community Training centre	C&G 7307 Stage 1 C&G 7307 Stage 2 PGCE (PCE) Literacy subject specialism BA Education and IT	nd nd nd nd 2008
5 *	F	Manager and teacher of Literacy, Numeracy and Cookery	Pre-entry – L2	8	Probation Community	Prison Probation Community Campus	PGCE (PCE)	2005
6 *	F	Teacher of Literacy, Numeracy, Induction training	Lit to L1 Num to E3	37	Prison	School	Cert Ed (QTS)	1974
7 *	F	Business, Key skills, literacy, numeracy, ICT	Pre-entry to L3	28	FE College (campus)	Prison Community School	JEB Teaching Diploma D32,33,36 Assessor awards PGCE (PCE) RSA Teachers certificate Initial Teaching Certificate – ESOL Internal Verifier D34 and V1 Literacy subject specialism	1993 1993 1996 1997 2003 2000/04 2004

Appendix 3

Interview Schedule

Ethical statement

We are researching how well teacher training qualifications prepare teachers working with offenders. This interview will take about an hour. We are interviewing five other teachers who also have a range of teaching experience and have worked, or currently work, with offenders. We will ask you all the same questions. While I am interviewing you I will take notes and at the end you can check to see that I have made an accurate recording of the interview. My notes will not be identifiable, and will not be used for any other purpose than to inform our research. Anonymity of all participants will be assured. No actual names of prisons/ centres or personnel will be used in the final report. You can stop the interview and withdraw from the study at anytime without giving a reason.

Topics

Topic 1. Experience and previous skills.

1. How long have you been working with offenders? What roles have you had while working in this setting? (*prompts – teacher/ assessor/ learning support/ manager etc*)

2. How did you come to be working in this setting?

3. Have you ever worked outside of the education sector? (*Interviewer to read each and tick all those that apply*)

Business	Admin	Family	Retail/ sales	Care and allied professions	Manufacturing
Forces	Police/ public service	Catering/ hospitality	Customer service	Construction	Other (please detail)

4. Are there any skills that you have brought with you from a previous profession that you have found useful when working with offenders/ in an offender setting?

Topic 2. The offender learning context

5. We know that you have taught in different educational contexts. In what **key** ways would you say that offender learning was different to those other contexts?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

6. Tell me about your learners.

7. What do you enjoy about teaching in offender learning?

8. Is there anything about working in this context that makes your job as a teacher more difficult?

9. How does the environment support teaching and learning in terms of resources?
(prompts – time, IT, security issues around equipment, classrooms etc)

Topic 3. Your teacher training

10. Thinking back to your teacher training, can you give some specific examples of modules/ theories/ learning that you have found especially useful?

11. What would you have liked more of?

13. Overall, how well do you think that teaching qualifications prepare teachers for working in an offender context?

12. Listen to these words. Which ones would you use to describe **your** teacher training experience? (*Interviewer to read out each one by one*)

Frustrating	Motivating	Fit for purpose	Enlightening
Challenging	Inspiring	Impractical	Valuable
Disappointing	Practical	Useful	Inclusive
Interesting	Pointless	Theoretical	A chore

Are there any words you would like to add?

13. Would you like to see a teaching qualification adapted specifically for teachers working in offender learning? If yes, what would you include? If no, why not?

Show interviewee your notes and ask them whether they agree that this is an accurate recording of the interview. Yes/No