



**Cornwall Adult Education Service**  
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### **Background to case study and reasons for choosing individual**

This case study will look at the experience of one trainee teacher but many of the issues identified impact on other trainee teachers to the organisation and for that reason a range of views have been sought from a number of trainee teachers in writing this case study. For the purposes of the case study we will identify our trainee teacher as Ann.

Ann applied to teach for Cornwall Adult Education Service after August 2007, in line with new legislation as a teacher new to the sector she was enrolled on the PTLLS programme and registered with IFL.

### **Details of ITT experience**

Ann had no experience of teaching but wanted to develop her skills as a teacher/trainer. She saw being a qualified teacher as a quality benchmark, although she recognised she may work outside of formal funded education in the future because of limited opportunities in agricultural colleges. She had been refused the opportunity to apply for some positions since qualifying as a horse trainer because she did not have a teaching qualification yet she argued that she was prepared to train. She then applied to the Adult Education Service and was accepted. Ann's subject specialist area was Horse ownership and because of her enthusiasm, commitment and experience she was recruited to deliver BHS horse owner qualifications offered by the service under the supervision of her QCA.

### **Individual Issues**

At the initial assessment interview it was identified that to find a subject specialist to provide mentorship support for Ann would be difficult. Many horse trainers are qualified in their subject but few seek the extra teaching qualifications that would enable them to be recognised as a suitably qualified practitioner to be trained as mentor for the needs of someone undergoing Initial Teacher Training. The other issue for Ann was one of teaching hours; teaching two hours a week over 10

weeks would only allow her to access the CTLLS. However the service policy is that all teachers should work towards QTLS and in this case it is was also Ann's goal to achieve full QTLS. In common with other tutors in this sector it would be difficult to achieve the required 150 hours teaching practice without that impacting on the service success/achievement rates if referred on to a DTLLS programme she could not complete within time. She was determined to start the journey and to complete the PTLLS as agreed in the hope that other work would arise, she was very worried as to her options if it did not.

Subject mentorship support is currently attached to the service's Quality and Curriculum Advisor role, and the person who had been identified to observe Anne's teaching and act in a mentorship role was not a specialist in that field but had knowledge of horse ownership with the full generic teaching qualifications.

Aware that this is an issue affecting many of our teachers, the programme leader held a number of discussion groups with Ann and other trainees on the PTLLS programme. The group agreed that as at this stage of training they are not required to evidence teaching practice, a good teaching and learning practitioner is the key requirement. Although subject knowledge was useful if in teaching practice, some argued that a good teaching and learning practitioner with access to a range of subject specialist materials would be a good option. Many felt concerned that a lack of mentorship availability and the problem of accumulating enough teaching practice could limit access to ITT for many good prospective teachers.

### **Individual Issues identified:**

- Is teacher training soon to be only available to teachers aspiring to teach within mainstream education programmes, where it is easier to identify required subject specialist mentors.
- How do very part time teacher evidence enough hours within the life of a qualification to enable them to achieve a pass at Diploma level without the introduction of unit recognition? Does 5 years working toward really mean 5 years when funding mechanisms only support block programmes.
- Are we really saying that the role of Associate Tutor is *off the shelf teaching* only and relegated to limited teaching responsibility; CTLLS has a syllabus that covers the whole of the teaching and learning cycle with the need to plan, deliver, assess and evaluate 30 hours of teaching practice ?
- Does the individual suffer when subject specialist mentor support is not available but strong generic teaching and learning mentorship is?

## **Organisational Issues identified**

- How do we as an organisation provide payment, training and support to the diverse range of subject specialist mentors for the training of teachers and still support equal opportunity of access to teacher training?
- City & Guilds do not make mentorship mandatory on their PTLLS entry award. At what point do we ensure the full level of mentorship support available and what will that support model look like that is both sustainable and effective?
- If we make access to ITT more difficult because of cost /funding fears we will drive away a wealth of subject specialist knowledge for tomorrow's learners.

## **Conclusions:**

The sector needs to continue to lobby for *equality of access* to good quality teacher training irrespective of the number of hours teaching practice. Working towards and 5 years should mean 5 years and the part time tutor should not be penalised for aspiring to achieve QTLS; we need to continue to push for unit achievement funding for the Diploma.

As a service we need to adopt a flexible mentorship policy and training package that supports the delivery of ITT and provides strong teaching and learning support with flexibility of subject specialist support that matches the breadth of curriculum.

We suggest that a strong teaching and learning practitioner can act in mentorship capacity when a subject specialist cannot be made available as subject specialist resources are provided to support the trainee. The challenge is to devise a policy that is effective, affordable and sustainable once all project money and funding disappears.

There are particular issues that face part time tutors in ACL, WBL, Voluntary and Community Groups who were collectively described to the audience of a recent CETT event by an HE partner....*as the Cinderella arm of the post 16 sector.*

Ann has completed her PTLLS and desperately hoping she will be able to progress next year. *Cinders may yet go to the ball!*

March 2008

Note: The views in this case study are those of the author(s).