



HMP The Verne

Small Scale Development Project

CETT Objective 2
Deepening the link
between
the taught and practice elements of ITT

Attitudes of staff working in prisons towards Initial Teacher Training



PeninsulaCETT
Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training

Attitudes of staff working in prisons towards Initial Teacher Training

31st March 2008

Phil Bayliss: Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the **University of Plymouth**
pbayliss@plymouth.ac.uk

The University has partnerships with organisations throughout the South West peninsula. A Handbook for Mentors is available and a mentoring policy is being developed.

Chris Brimecombe: Assistant Director Offender Learning Services, Strode College
cbrimecombe@strode-college.ac.uk

Kerry Brimecombe: Teacher Training Coordinator, Offender Learning Services
kbrimecombe@strode-college.ac.uk

Strode College is a Further Education College in Mid Somerset and has been involved in the delivery of education and training to prisoners in custody for many years.

The College, through its **Offender Learning Services**, provides these services to HMPs Bristol, Channings Wood, Dartmoor, Dorchester, Exeter, Eastwood Park, Erlestoke, Gloucester, Guy's Marsh, Leyhill, Portland YOI, Shepton Mallet and Verne.

Strode College Offender Learning Services has a Director, Deputy Director and Assistant Director, plus 3 Group Managers and 13 OLASS Managers and provides approximately 375 teachers/instructors for this job.

We aim to train all our teachers, tutors, instructors and trainers by 2010. Strode College have a mentoring policy. Mentoring is part of every existing qualified teachers' professional development and professionalism.

Vic Pomeroy: Head of Learning & Skills at **HMP The Verne** Category C prison
Vic.pomeroy@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk

A recent Ofsted inspection graded The Verne a Good overall. Through our partnerships with University of Plymouth and Strode College we aim to provide our Teaching and Training staff with the skills to deliver the agenda within the Leitch Report.

Project Aims

The aim of our project was to monitor how personnel in the prison might understand the need for ITT and relate this to their present duties and their own professional development needs. At the same time, we wanted to discover the most effective means by which employers and employees could be made aware of the different levels of qualifications available.

Description of the Project

A questionnaire, devised to investigate the attitudes towards ITT, was sent to a range of prison service staff in the South West peninsula (Appendix A). Fifty questionnaires were posted or given to governors, senior managers, prison service instructors, prison officers and a union representative. The names of the recipients or their institutions were not requested, so anonymity was maintained for all respondents. The completion of the questionnaires was voluntary and no incentives were offered. Questionnaires were modified slightly depending on the job description of the recipients. The 28 questionnaires returned were collated and analysed (Appendices B – E).

Outcomes

The findings from the questionnaires are summarised below.

a. Prison Service Senior Manager (Appendix B)

Four questionnaires were sent out and one returned. The manager was wary of encouraging staff to undertake ITT until the extent of their commitment was confirmed. A willingness to publicise ITT among governors and area staff was indicated.

b. Representative of the Prison Officers Association (Appendix B)

Just one questionnaire was sent out and returned. All replies were negative. No encouragement or publicity for ITT would be given; a surprising reaction when the association has a Union Learning Fund (POA, 2007) to support staff development.

c. Governors (Appendix C)

Five of the thirteen questionnaires sent out were returned. Four indicated that they would give staff time off work to attend classes. One would give no encouragement

and two stated that the ITT programme had no effect on their staff. One of these Governors expressed dismay with the 'dull and patronising' course. Three would publicise the programme through the intranet, notices, annual reporting processes and linking it with job specifications.

d. Prison Officers - various ranks (Appendix D)

Twenty questionnaires were distributed and twelve were returned. Only two would give no staff encouragement, all the others would give (in rank order) time off to study, financial incentives and time to study at work. An officer who ticked all three incentive boxes, and therefore highly supportive, declined to offer any publicity. The five who would publicise, suggested a range of ways from information attached to wage slips, leaflets, a DVD, and the internet. Two of these officers thought management and the ITT team should organise the publicity.

e. Prison Service Instructors (Appendix E)

Nine replied from the twelve questionnaires distributed. Some members of the other groups might teach, but all the personnel in this group are teachers. Therefore, they were asked how much encouragement they thought they should be given to undertake ITT qualifications. Only one replied, 'None'. The eight others thought they should receive time off to study, financial incentives and time to study at work, in that order. Everyone responded positively to the question, 'How would promoting ITT for those who teach or instruct in prisons benefit you?' The comments ranged from the general, 'Any initiative ...will be of benefit,' to specific gaining of qualifications, professionalization, higher standards, increased knowledge, job security and employment prospects 'outside'.

Question 2 asked if the introduction of the new ITT programme affected teachers and instructors. All agreed except four respondents who answered negatively and two were uncertain.

Except for the Union representative, everyone answered 'Yes' to questions 3 – 5 about establishing education in workshops and throughout the prison.

The implications of these findings will be discussed in the next section.

Discussion

The findings from the questionnaires reveal an enthusiasm to embrace the ITT qualifications by prison instructors. However, some managers at all levels displayed a wariness to encourage this staff development.

Education for offenders is vital for numerous reasons, not least because it might reduce reoffending, particularly at a time when the prisons are almost full. The way to improve this education is through the professional development of teachers:

A growing research base on the influences on student learning, shows that teacher quality trumps virtually all other influences on student achievement. (Thompson & Wiliam, 2007: 2)

To achieve and maintain this teacher quality in prison is demanding. This is because teaching and learning in prison differs from the rest of the Learning and Skills sector institutions as security is paramount – not education. Additionally, classes are single-sex, with a high turnover of learners with ages ranging in adult prisons from 21 to the elderly; they have a spectrum of abilities with 20 – 30 per cent having learning difficulties (Loucks, 2006) yet 1500 Open University courses will be taken by prisoners in 2007-2008 (Lords Hansard, 2008). Nevertheless, the majority of the prison population have experienced deprivations and suffer from a spectrum of disadvantages. Therefore this challenging environment requires a structure of high quality training. However, in prisons, this is not the case:

There is no national framework for the continuing professional development for learning and skills managers and their staff... and no forum for developing relevant learning programmes.
(ALI, 2007, p21)

This oversight is catastrophic when the Government has set a target for the Learning & Skills sector of 20,000 newly qualified teachers each year (Rammell, 2006). Moreover, a skills brokerage service for employers, Train to Gain, will by 2011 provide over £1billion – one-third of the LSC Learning & Skills budget:

So no provider can afford to let Train to Gain pass them by – they must act to ensure it becomes a mainstream part of their budget and a core part of their service. (LSC, 2007, p1)

Workforce development in prisons has been discussed for many years. For example, an All Parliamentary Group report advised that education and training

needed to be given a higher priority within prisons (APG, 2004) and a research study of prison officers demanded that:

A whole prison approach should be adopted towards encouraging and supporting education and training for both prisoners and staff... Learning should be part of a continuum in which prisoners, education staff, officers and relevant others are involved in working towards a common goal.

(Braggins, and Talbot, 2005, p58)

It was this coherent approach, where the culture of teaching and learning suffused the prison, which was praised by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in her annual report:

The best prisons offered a mix of full and part-time education; some had evening classes and opportunities for peer-assisted learning... many had embedded learning within the workplace or gym. Integration of the learning and skills agenda into a whole prison approach resulted in the most positive outcomes.

(HM Prisons Inspectorate, 2008, p31)

Further examples of good practice case studies which demonstrate the range and variety of offender teaching and learning are discussed in Nashashibi et al (2006).

If the aims of education staff development in prisons are established, then the reasons why prison management might be reluctant to endorse this should be considered.

1. Definitions of the term 'Teacher'.

According to the sector skills council, LLUK (2007), this term includes tutors, trainers, lecturers instructors and anyone whose role involves aspects of teaching, regardless of the job title. Prison staff who are involved in education might not consider themselves or their colleagues as teachers. This could be clarified in the publicity for ITT programmes.

2. The transition to a professional educator.

Many prison educators require support to make the transition from a previous or current profession, say as a prison officer or carpenter, to a teacher. Managers might consider teaching and learning tasks inferior to other duties. However, without this support, suggests Spenceley (2007), they will fail and the sector will lose a valuable resource.

3. High turnover of staff

Managers may be unwilling to invest in training staff who might leave in the short term, especially when this turnover is spread throughout the prison personnel as a Prison Reform Trust report revealed:

Retention figures for new prison officer recruits are low, with 60 per cent of those who signed up between 2000 and 2003 leaving the service within two years. Turnover at governor level is also significant, with the average tenure for prison governors standing at one year and nine months. (PRT, 2003, p1)

Conversely, by encouraging professional development staff retention could be improved. Also, by creating a culture where staff value learning, then the importance of education should permeate to prisoners. However, other factors in the retention and recruitment of staff need addressing such as, Hudson (2007) suggests, holidays, pay scales and pathways to career progression.

Recommendations for Peninsula CETT

Many of the findings about attitudes of prison staff to ITT qualifications relate to strategic matters that are probably beyond the influence of this CETT.

Nevertheless, champions of education for offenders should disseminate their views.

The reluctance of some prison managers to encourage the professional development of teaching staff is probably associated with lack of knowledge of the ITT qualifications. Therefore, we would endorse the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – LLUK (2007) has produced a summary sheet to explain the qualifications. Poster sized copies of these should be obtained from LLUK and sent to every Head of Learning and Skills to display. A Statutory Instrument (OPSI, 2007) explains the associated legislation.

Recommendation 2 – The University and Strode College should distribute information about the ITT qualifications available. This should be clear and simple with explanations of expectations of participants and expectations of the institutions.

Recommendation 3 – Potential participants who might not be ready for the Level 4 ITT programme should be advised to study for the Level 3 teacher education course as a stepping stone.

Through this project we should assist personnel in prisons to understand the need for ITT and relate this to their present duties and their own professional development needs. In order to do this we should consider the variety of communication methods suggested.

References

Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) (2007) *A Review of the Leadership and Management of Offender Learning*, Coventry: QIA.

All Parliamentary Group on Further Education and Lifelong Learning (APG) (2004) *Inside Track: Prisoner Education in 2004 and Beyond*. Available at: www.fpe.org.uk/filestore/insidetrack.pdf (Accessed 15 Sept. 2004)

Lords Hansard (2008) Baroness Morgan 'Education (Student Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2008,' in. 26 Mar 2008: Column 601. Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/80326-0007.htm> (Accessed: 28th March 2008)

Braggins, J. & Talbot, J. (2005) *Wings of Learning: the role of the prison officer in supporting prisoner education*, London: The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

HM Prisons Inspectorate (2008) *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales: Annual Report 06/07*. HC 207. London: The Stationery Office

Hudson, C. (2007) *Contextualising the revised teaching qualifications to meet the needs of staff working with offender assessment, learning and training*, Coventry: QIA

Learning & Skills Council (LSC) (2007) *Train to Gain: a plan for growth - November 2007 – July 2011*. Available at: http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-plan-for-growth.pdf?WT.mc_id=ttgho760&WT.mc_ev=click (Accessed: 18th March 2008)

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) (2007) *Qualifications for teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the FE sector in England*, Coventry: LLUK

Loucks, N. (2006) *No One Knows: Offenders with Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities. Review of prevalence and associated needs*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

Nashashibi, P; Boffey, K; Harvey, S. and Rowan, T. (2006) *Just Learning? Case studies in improving offender education and training*, London: Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)



Appendix A

Questionnaire for

Principal Officers, Senior Officers & Prison Officers

The Peninsula Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) is a wide group of education and training institutions from throughout the South West. We, the University of Plymouth, Strode College Offending Learning Services and HMP Verne, as part of the **CETT** group, have a special interest in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) for prison teachers and instructors.

We are inviting you to contribute to our development project by completing this short questionnaire. Any information that you give will be treated in strict confidence; anonymity is guaranteed. Any of your information that we use in our report will not identify you.

Please complete this questionnaire by ticking the box by the answer you choose.

1. How much encouragement would you give to staff wishing to take an Initial Teacher Training qualification?
 - a. Time off work to attend classes
 - b. Time to study at work
 - c. Financial incentives to buy text books
 - d. None

2. The sector skills council for teachers of young people and adults, LLUK, has developed a new programme for ITT. Do you agree that this initiative affects your teachers and instructors?

Yes

No

3. Would you agree that skills training should be offered in the prison workshops?

Yes

No

4. Do you think that educational support should be offered in prison workshops?

Yes

No

5. Do you feel education should be established across the prison?

Yes

No

6. (a) Would you be prepared to publicise and advocate Initial Teacher Training for those who teach or instruct in prisons?

Yes

No

(b) If 'Yes' – how would you do this? Please write your answer below:

Thank you for your time.

Please return the form in the enclosed SAE to
Kerry Brimecombe 25, Douglas Avenue, BRIXHAM, TQ5 9EL



Appendix B Questionnaires for CETT Project 2.

Prison Service Senior Manager

Prison Service Senior Manager

(1 out of 4 replied)

Would need to confirm extent of commitment

Q1 a	Q1 b	Q1 c	Q1d	None	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6a	Q6b	If 'yes' how would you publicise and promote ITT in prisons
					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Via	Governors & Area staff

Union Representative

(1 out of 1 replied)

No	No	No	None	No	No	No	No	No
----	----	----	------	----	----	----	----	----

Union Representative

Appendix C Questionnaires for CETT Project 2.										Governors
	Q1 a	Q1 b	Q1 c	Q1dNone	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6a	Q6b If 'yes' how would you promote and publicise ITT in prisons?
Governors (5 out of 13 replied)										
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Link with personal job spec.
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Via annual reporting process which includes development plans.
	Yes				No	Yes	Yes	Yes		Only if courses are improved more akin to level 2 - dull and patronising
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Via prison service intranet and notices
				None	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Appendix D	Questionnaires for CETT Project 2.					Prison Officers - various ranks				
	Q1 a	Q1 b	Q1 c	Q1dNone	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6a	Q6b If 'yes' how would you publicise and advocate ITT in prisons?
Prison Officers, various ranks (12 out of 20 replied)				None	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
				None	?	Yes	Yes	No	No	
		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Information attached to wage slip, posters and targeted email
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not sure, but think it would be a good idea
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Should be driven by management
	Yes				No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Intranet/internet, informative DVD, hard hitting leaflet campaign
	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Through teacher training
	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
	Yes	Yes	Yes		?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

Appendix E Questionnaires for CETT Project 2.										Prison Service Instructors
	Q1 a	Q1 b	Q1 c	Q1d	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6a	Q6b How would promoting ITT for those who teach or instruct in prisons benefit you?
Prison Service Instructors										
(9 out of 12 replied)										
	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Any initiative that assists the process of training in whatever form will be of benefit
		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Right qualifications for the job, & deliver skills required to promote higher standards
	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Additional qualifications
	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	to understand what levels of knowledge are required to ensure professional standards
			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Update with resources, teacher training & group meetings
	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased knowledge and confidence in my role as a teacher
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	All and any support would be helpful.
				None	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Job security, better employment opportunities, better qualified to teach new skills.
	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	To professionalize and standardise teaching across the workshops, & make me more employable outside. All skills training should be carried out by in house instructors.