Supporting excellence in initial teacher education in further education and skills

Case study for projects

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

1. Project title: Multi Partnership ITE for Vocational Teachers
Organisation: Canterbury Christ Church University

2. Project summary (max 50 words)
This may be the same as in the original submission, but please amend in light of changes you may have made during the duration of the project.

The development of an innovative ITE programme to enhance subject specialist teaching and learning. The creation of an ongoing resource bank and new and extended links with DTLLS consortium partners, schools, employers and STEM are key features of the new programme; access to STEM, literacy and numeracy support and QTS/QTLS linked experiences are embedded within it.

3. Your ITE provision (approx 200-300 words)
Describe the ITE provision you are offering from September 2012, including as a result of the project: number of students (predicted or estimated if not confirmed), accreditation, delivery methods and target audience.

*Large ITE consortium-23 partner institutions across SE and London, 1,200 trainees on two year programme

*Where we started

Teaching Awards in the LLS incorporating PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS are delivered collaboratively by the University's Department of Post Compulsory Education across a consortium of partner colleges and institutions. The partnership extends from coastal East Kent and the Medway towns to West London and Bexhill in the south, and also includes Police Trainers in Northern Ireland and the West Midlands.
Trainees are in-service teachers and trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector who attend their partnership institution on a part-time basis. (See page 6 of the University Prospectus for full details.)

All year 1 and year 2 trainees will benefit from the revised and refocused modules in the Teaching Awards Programme. However, the initial Project focus is for the 500+ year two trainees who have already successfully completed PTLLS and CTLLS and who are now taking the final three modules that will constitute the full DTLLS award.

In summary, the revised Programme offers:

*   Subject specialists (Subject Leads) acting as hubs for vocational trainees-drawing on local, contextualised experience and their own contacts with employers and industry
*   A re-focussed DTLLS Programme with subject specialist teaching as a key theme for learning activities and assessment

* Subject Specialist workshops in twelve subjects, each event showcasing resources and facilities across the Mid/East Kent consortium institutions
* Links with local secondary schools via STEM and 14-19 Pre-Service PGCE at CCCU to embed peer observations across contexts
* A dedicated VLE for subject specialist teaching and learning, populated initially by Subject Leads, with resources, teaching and learning materials, discussion boards etc to support trainees in their teaching, and their course assessment.

4. Resources used *(you may decide upon the level of detail to be provided here)*
Outline the resources used to run this provision (outlined in 3 above) including: teaching time, resources used, tutoring/mentoring etc.

Where possible please provide a cost for these resources.

The bulk of the Project resource was used in the development and preparation of the new Programme launched in September 2012; this fell into two main areas- funding for University staff to plan and manage the project, and payment for Subject Leads to populate the VLE specialist areas and run workshops to disseminate the subject specialist teaching and learning resources.

The key event to launch the new Programme was a week of Subject Specialist workshops in October run by vocational Subject Leads (funded by the project) in venues across Mid and East Kent. This was underpinned and supported by a Subject Specialist VLE where resources, teaching and learning materials, discussion boards, wikis etc were housed.

12 Subject Leads were each allocated 4 days for this work.

Work on the Project by University staff fell into six main administrative areas:
- Planning and project organisation: compilation of Project plan; meetings with PCET Project team staff and cross-phase colleagues; communications with consortium partners and trainees; liaison with Kent and Medway STEM; liaison with LSIS.
- Recruitment and training of Subject Leads from Consortium partners, schools and specialist 14-19 providers and their induction as Associate University tutors and STEM Ambassadors.
- Development and population of the VLE (CLIC Learn), enrolment of trainees and access arrangements to VLE, liaison with University technology team.
- Organisation of the subject specialist workshop week in October.
- Dissemination of information to trainees and partners about the revised Teaching Awards Programme and Subject Specialist Workshops/VLE.
- Project evaluation.
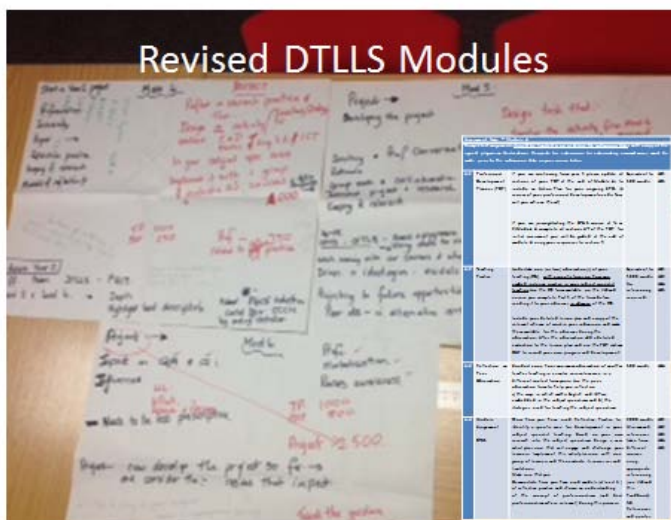
Additionally, time was needed to revise the six modules of the Teaching Awards Programme so that subject specialist teaching and QTS/QTLS equivalence became a central focus. A revised Programme handbook was created and launched at a cross consortium event in July 2012, and initial findings of the Project were presented at the LSIS London Conference in June.

QTS and QTLS standards were mapped to identify where additional experience and training were needed to prepare DTLLS trainees fully for compliance.

PCET staff created a Blended Learning module to support the QTS/QTLS equivalence with a further supplementary Blended Learning module created to give additional support for learning theories.

Administrative support was vital to enrol Associate tutors to the University, book rooms for meetings and workshops, and ensure payment of Subject Leads in compliance with regulations and legislation.

Some of the Project development time was devoted to researching and trialling new technology so overall it would be sensible to allow up to sixty days of Project team, department staff, technician and administrator time for the development phase of this type of project.

5. Achievement against aims and objectives of project, and lessons learnt *(approx 400 words)*

The main purpose of these projects was to set up new sustainable models of delivery of ITE (DTLLS and equivalents) which will:

- support providers to develop new and sustainable models of delivery to the highest quality standards;
- create efficient models of delivery, while maintaining fitness for purpose, with a focus on creating excellence in teaching and learning;
- develop ITE provision which is attractive, and affordable, to new trainees and employers and stimulate new partnerships and increased co-operation between subject associations, employers and providers.

Please comment on how well you believe your project has addressed these overall aims and objectives by answering the questions below. Any supporting evidence will be welcome here.

- What lessons have I learnt in terms of efficiency, quality improvement, costing and affordability?
- How can I implement the outcomes from this project in other similar provision?
- In what ways has technology been used to support the delivery? What advice would you give in terms of where it should be used and in what ways? (Answer only if applicable.)
- What should be avoided? What doesn't work?

The Project funding has been a welcome and valuable resource for the Canterbury Christ Church consortium to build on current strengths and create a new and innovative DTLLS programme that meets the challenges of the changing regulatory and funding landscape for trainee teachers in the LLS. The new Programme ensures that trainees are prepared for QTS equivalence, have excellent opportunities to access a range of tried and tested subject specialist resources online, and are encouraged to gain experience across phases and differing institutional contexts.

"Why Reinvent the Wheel?" was the title of out LSIS Conference presentation and that encapsulates the ways in which the Project has exploited the partnerships and collaborative working of the consortium. Drawing on our knowledge of past DTLLS trainees across the partnership institutions we were able to identify Subject Leads who had proven track records of excellent teaching and mentoring and who were familiar with the CCCU DTLLS Programme. Several of the

institutions hosting workshops are centres of vocational excellence and have outstanding facilities; trainees who attended workshops reported on the positive opportunities to see cutting edge technology and equipment in their subject areas. Training for Subject Leads was held centrally at CCCU and link tutors from the Department were assigned to support and mentor where needed.

Subject specialist workshops across the Consortium

Feedback from Programme Coordinators in the Centres has been positive, for example: *I was impressed with the way all our year 2s engaged with the idea and most of them attended at least one workshop – in some cases as many as three……I think that for them to be able to access all the materials in one space is very beneficial…. If you are not able to organise something similar for next year, I think I would still like to plan something here, maybe with College staff contributing from the specialist areas to a conference type evening session.*
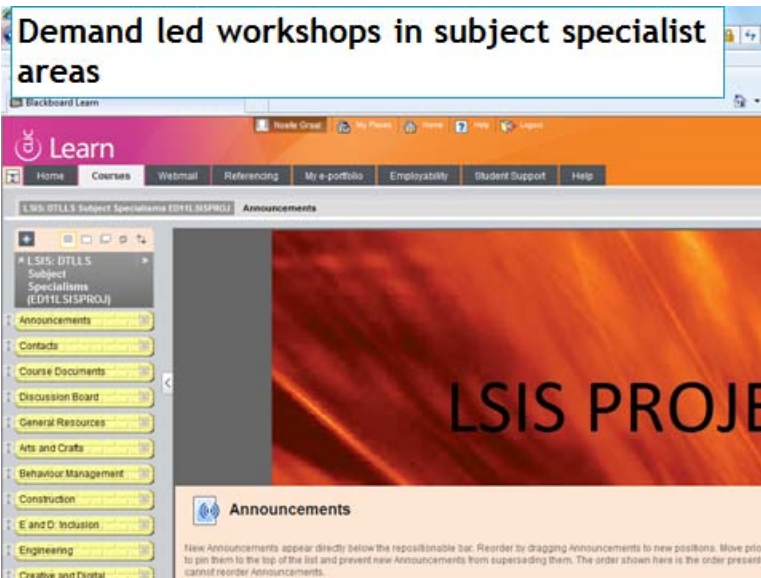
Arts and Crafts was established by an enthusiastic Adult Education group who ran their own workshop session, the Programme Coordinator felt that a real community of practice had been established and could be sustained.

Not all trainees were able to attend workshops particularly if for example they lived and worked in East Kent, and needed to travel fifty miles or so to the Medway workshop; and although the sessions were scheduled for twilight slots, some trainees' teaching timetables precluded attendance. However, the embedding of a subject specialist assignment at the beginning of this academic year's course has meant that trainees are encouraged to access innovative

approaches via the VLE if they have been unable to attend workshop sessions. The ten VLE subject specialist areas were identified via a survey of year two trainee specialisms, with the addition of English and Maths, and a much requested Behaviour Management area.

Technology has obviously been an integral part of this project and it still remains to be seen how far trainees will fully engage with the VLE; the initial impetus for the creation of a specific area was as a repository for specialist teaching and learning resources, these can be added with ease by Subject Leads, Programme Coordinators or Dept staff. Subject Leads soon began to tailor the site areas to their own subjects for example Behaviour Management has three discussion boards for trainees to report back on strategies they've tried, and Engineering has created several sub-specialist wikis to accommodate the vast range of sub specialisms, from refrigeration to geology. The quality of the resources is generally very good, with a vast range of activities, lesson plans, games, quizzes, videos, worksheets etc already uploaded so that trainees can access these from any pc, at any time.

Whilst it would be encouraging to think that trainees will engage fully with discussion boards on the VLE, past evidence of work with pilot groups in previous Department projects suggests that more nimble social media sites offer greater ease of accessibility and the possibility of a genuine exchange of ideas, resources and practical advice. Successful working with technology requires access to the University's site and VLE to be easy and unproblematic with any glitches instantly remediable at the end of a phone line. Problems with access are alienating for those trainees who are not part of the Facebook generation and experience again suggests that they will not persevere beyond one or two failures to access the VLE.

Blended Learning modules have offered a valuable support for face to face teaching; early trials show that trainees adept and familiar with technology can benefit the most from the additional support of online modules, readings and video. Equally, trainees who need time to process information have found that the Blended Learning modules give them the opportunity for multiple viewings and revision, they can pause, go back, revisit. Giving full and meaningful feedback is the challenge when using Blended Learning modules, progress is expedited when tutors can work with individuals online or via email to discuss learning. All trainees comment that they enjoy the opportunity they gain in class based sessions to discuss and exchange ideas, replicating this arena in an accessible and properly useful way is the next challenge.

The project's successes are largely as a result of:

* Close team working in the Department and Faculty-a core project team needs to be identified, even if not all members are able to participate at all stages

* Funded project team hours; time needs to be allocated for research, trialling and evaluation

* Collaborative working with partners and past DTLLS trainees-their knowledge of the Programme, the consortium and QA processes was vital

* A detailed project plan with realistic deadlines

* Regular updates and communication with all stakeholders- at Departmental meetings, Consortium workshops, and a Project launch event. Face-to-face meetings with Programme Coordinators in the pilot colleges were essential to explain changes and answer questions.

* Funding to allow Subject Leads to participate fully in attending training, running workshops, and devoting time to

populating the VLE.

* Closely linking the VLE resources and workshops to the assessment demands of the DTLLS course to reinforce and underpin the importance of subject specialist teaching and learning

There were stumbling blocks:

* Not all FE institutions want to share their resources and some regard collaboration as a threat to their USP in the marketplace

* Direct communication with trainees is vital: in addition to email, visits to pilot institutions would further reinforce messages and information about the Project

* Not all trainees are happy to travel from their own institutions to subject specialist workshops, so the support of a VLE as a repository for resources is crucial.

6. Advice to others

This case study will be made available to other providers via the Excellence Gateway. Please outline any advice you would wish to give to others who may be inspired to develop a similar model by answering the questions below. Where possible please highlight any resources (publicly available) that may be of use to others.

- What difference has this project made to our knowledge of running affordable and excellent ITE programmes as an organisation?
- What, if any, further developments are you considering as an organisation following on from this project?
- Will this project result in sustainable improvement? If so, how?
- How can the lessons learnt in this project be applied to other provision?
- What lessons are there about the strategic use of technology for ITE?

Drawing on what's on our doorstep has been central to the success of the Project, links with Centres have been strengthened and extended with future collaborative ventures planned for later in the academic year. There is a real appetite and demand from DTLLS trainees for subject specialist input and using technology has meant that we are able to offer value for money for the teaching of subject specialisms.

We are now working on ways to capitalise on the valuable resource that's been created:

*   We intend to open up the VLE to subject specialist mentors so that DTLLS in-service mentors can upload and access resources.
*   Using social media networks to maximise trainee engagement drawing on collaboration with Primary Education colleagues has been the focus of recent training. Trials using *Facebook* to support DTLLS trainee networks are taking place this term.
*   Access to the subject specialist VLE is now extended to year 1 of the DTLLS programme and pre-service PGCE.
*   The VLE is a sustainable resource, the Discussion Boards tool allows for uploading in all subject areas, including those not included in the pilot-Special Needs will be an important area to focus on and develop.
*   A conference is planned for the consortium in May to be held in two venues, one for London partners and the other for Kent. The focus will be on Subject Specialist teaching and Learning and Subject Leads will be asked to participate.
*   Subject Specialist week will be embedded in the revised DTLLS Programme, and the focus on Subject specialist working for year two will continue.

From this project and from similar work over the past two years it seems clear that technology can be used to save time and to give greater ease of access to teaching and learning materials. It has to be used purposefully and trainees have to see the direct benefit of working in these new ways. To give brief examples:

*   The VLE seems to work best as a repository for readings, resources, and teaching and learning materials. Trainees can access handouts, worksheets, powerpoints, resources etc to support their classroom learning, either before or after taught sessions. Asynchronous discussion boards don't seem to be a very effective forum for the exchange of ideas but they are useful to upload resources, links etc.
*   Social media sites seem to be a more user–friendly way to discuss and reinforce/embed learning.
*   Some workshop sessions were video'd and whilst this is an excellent way of capturing them, time and expertise are needed to edit the raw film so that it can be useful.
*   Blended Learning Modules are an excellent way of supporting and reinforcing learning; trainees who are adept at using technology and who are happy to work independently can really benefit. Other trainees state that they miss the interaction with colleagues and some feel short-changed; "I've paid to get taught" is one not uncommon response.

7. Contact information
Please provide contact information of the author of this case study and state whether you are willing to answer queries from others.
Noelle.graal@canterbury.ac.uk
I'm very happy to answer queries

8. Resources available for others
Please provide details of the resources that can be made available to other providers as a result of this project. Examples may include teaching and learning resources, handbooks, spreadsheets to calculate costs, flyers and recruitment materials, procedure documents etc. These should be referenced in this report and submitted at the same time.

DTLLS Programme year two revised modules
Recruitment of Subject Leads email
Subject Lead Training Day ppt
Exemplar ppt from Subject Specialist Workshops- Health and Social Care
Action Plan for trainees post-workshops