

# InTuition

The journal for professional teachers and trainers in the further education and skills sector



**A taste for teaching**  
Chef Gary Hunter's ingredients for successful learning  
**Interview p10**

**Welcoming your feedback on this edition – see page 3**

Teach Too scheme marries industry and education in a vocational partnership  
**News p4**

Survey reveals what teachers and trainers want in a professional body  
**Feature p12**

Persuading managers to back your action research  
**Research Digest p20**

'Learners forget faster than I can teach!'  
**Geoff Petty p30**

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*InTuition* is unique – exclusive in its focus on teachers and trainers working in the diverse and vibrant sector that is further education

and training. This issue of the magazine may look a little different. It is the first edition under the ownership of the Education and Training Foundation and we have included news and features about our existing programmes and support work for practitioners, which we hope you will find useful. Future editions will also include Foundation news, but less so than in this first edition.

I hope you will find that all your favourite content is still here: news from across the sector; the latest research updates; opinion pieces and features; and, of course, Geoff Petty, who discusses the benefits of ‘spaced learning’ as a way to encourage learners to retain information more effectively.

Our ambition for the magazine is simply to be the No 1 professional journal for education and training practitioners. It should be written primarily by teachers and trainers, for teachers and trainers. It will combine sector news with latest educational research and exciting practical developments and ideas in education and training. We will also use it to make professional members aware of support and development opportunities from the Foundation and others.

Finally, I would also like to say a big thank you to the 3,000 of you who took the time and effort to respond to the first stages of our consultation on what our new membership service should offer (see page 12). We are determined to build a service shaped by you, that reflects your needs, helps you to build your career and enables you to network with your peers to share knowledge and debate the issues that exercise you as teachers and trainers.

You have given us plenty to think about, and we are working hard behind the scenes to build a membership service you will feel proud to be a part of.

**David Russell**  
CEO, Education and Training Foundation



## Contents

<b>News</b>	<b>4</b>
Collaboration with industry boosts teaching and learning	
<b>Opinion</b>	<b>8</b>
Geoff Rebbeck & David Law Professor Ed Sallis	
<b>Interview</b>	<b>10</b>
Gary Hunter	
<b>Feature</b>	<b>12</b>
Consulting on new membership services for FE practitioners	
<b>CPD Matters</b>	<b>16</b>
Rebecca Eliahoo Carol Azumah Dennis Michael Smith & Paul Roberts Vicky Duckworth	
<b>Research Digest</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>InPractice</b>	<b>22</b>
Private consortium wins bid to promote excellence in TLA	
<b>InSight</b>	<b>24</b>
FE's pre-election manifestos	
<b>Leading Learning</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Geoff Petty</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Books</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Forum</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Noticeboard</b>	<b>35</b>

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# Collaboration with industry boosts teaching and learning

Vocational teaching and learning is being improved considerably by industry engagement in Teach Too, according to a report on the programme's first phase

## By staff reporters

Teach Too, a programme that involves employees from businesses and industry teaching their work in education and training settings, is helping to improve the quality, relevance and range of courses offered by providers, according to a report.

*Findings from the Teach Too Development Programme* shows that benefits include teachers receiving support to update specialist skills and knowledge alongside industry colleagues and learners gaining greater understanding of the skills, standards and expectations of industry.

The report identifies 10 emerging principles, under three headings, upon which Teach Too practice is based:

### Arrangements

1. Colleges, providers and employers exercise leadership individually or jointly to improve vocational learning.
2. Formal partnerships may



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be created but are not necessary. Arrangements must include at least one employer and one learning provider.

3. There is a clear understanding of the obligations and contributions on all parties, established through collaboration.
4. There is a clear business case for all parties.
5. There is clear evidence of employer staff being collaboratively involved in curriculum development, programme delivery and evaluation and learner assessment.
6. There is a clear line of sight of work, including the potential for learner employment.
7. There is active engagement with – and clear benefits for – learners.

### Activities

5. The programmes supported are within the context of vocational teaching and learning.

### Outcomes

9. Teach Too programmes contain elements of at least one of the

following themes:

- collaborative learning between employers and providers;
  - design and development of an innovative curriculum or qualification;
  - support for occupational experts in delivering teaching, learning and assessment;
  - local or sectoral system development and system leadership;
  - a two-way street of shared skills and facilities or joint entrepreneurial activity; and
  - targeted support for entry into employment for learners.
10. Teach Too programmes have access to high quality occupational skills and learning environments, with mechanisms for review and improvement.

Phase 2 of Teach Too will support further provider-employer partnerships using the principles and lessons learned in phase 1 to develop a framework and guidance.

## Who will be Teacher of the Year 2015?

Do you work with an outstanding teacher who you would gladly recommend for an award?

Well, here's your chance to nominate a colleague for the VQ Day Teacher of the Year Award, sponsored by the Education and Training Foundation.

The closing date for nominations is 1 May with finalists announced on 25 May. The awards dinner will be held on 9 June.

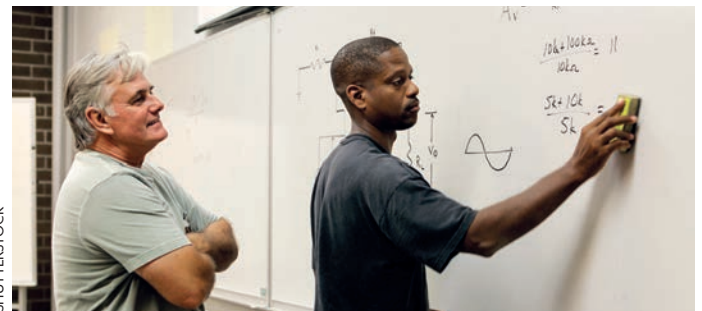
• For full details, visit [www.vqday.org.uk/vq-awards](http://www.vqday.org.uk/vq-awards)

## Maths teachers to flow via Pipeline

The Education and Training Foundation has announced another series of its free professional development courses for maths teachers who wish to improve their teaching of the subject.

Phase one of the Maths Enhancement Programme (MEP) saw 2,200 teachers complete courses in the 2013-14 academic year in response to the Government's demand that post-16 learners achieve at least a grade C in maths and English GCSE (level 2).

The follow-up phase, called the Maths Pipeline, is aimed

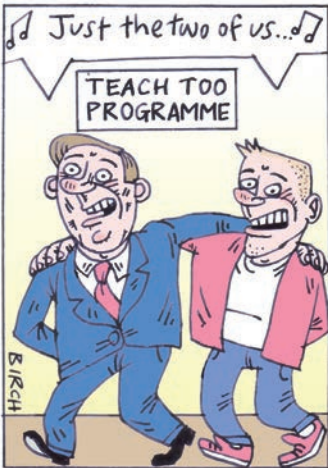


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at teachers in all settings across the further education and training sector including: functional skills teachers; vocational teachers delivering a significant maths component already and GCSE maths

teachers who want updating on the new syllabus. The programmes will support teachers wishing to deliver maths courses up to level 2.

The training is funded by the Foundation and run



The second phase will focus on specific areas including STEM, service-industry sectors and emerging business sectors.

Teach Too is being developed and delivered by the Institute of Education and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation.

Jenny Williams, director of vocational education and training at the Foundation, said: "Excellent vocational teaching and learning depends on the successful combination of occupational and pedagogical expertise. Teach Too is one way to achieve this by building genuine collaboration between industry and teaching professionals."

• **For more information visit:**  
<http://teachtoo.org>

## Refreshing your web service

By Sarah Morgan

The Foundation Professional Membership Service website is a vital part of the IfL Legacy, and forms the cornerstone of the Education and Training Foundation's service to members.

The site offers a wealth of content, resources and member benefits and is the first port of call for new and existing members – and for those looking to renew their membership.

We have retained the existing site ([www.ifl.ac.uk](http://www.ifl.ac.uk)), making only minor changes to reflect the transition to the Foundation. However, we are working hard to develop and enhance the site to ensure it gives you what you need and want as education and training professionals.

We are taking an iterative



approach, releasing improvements and offers incrementally over the next year. This allows us to be responsive to the wider consultation and continue to incorporate your feedback and suggestions.

Currently, we are working to fix various bugs, as well as improving some of the core business processes, for example, around becoming a new member, making it

a quicker and smoother experience. We will also make improvements to the speed and flow through the site so you can get to where you want to be much more easily.

Regular content and a programme of webinars will be rolled out and we are developing a new online community with special interest groups, the pilot for which will launch in April.

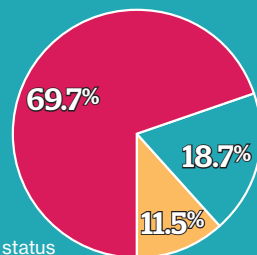
Throughout the pilot, we will be working closely with you to co-create a vibrant, professional community which will be the place to go for stimulating exchanges and interactions, enabling you to share insights, knowledge and experience with your peers across the sector.

**Sarah Morgan (pictured) is head of digital services at the Foundation**

### Member poll

We are thinking about a range of benefits which could be offered by our new Professional Membership Service. What type of benefits would be most valuable to you?

- said membership as proof of professional status
- said enhanced CPD
- said sharing knowledge with an expert community



### Member renewals

Your membership for 2015-16 can be renewed online or by telephone from 2 March.

Look out for a renewals reminder email in early March with further details of what to do.

### English enhancement programme

In addition to the MEP, the Education and Training Foundation also runs an English enhancement programme.

The EEP offers a suite of training options with six pathways, which are of different length and delivery style to suit practitioners' needs. The Foundation offers a simple skills audit to help members choose the right course.

• **For more information on the EEP, visit:**  
<http://enhanceenglishprogramme.co.uk>

by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM). Some 1,700 places are available at 114 one-day events to be held nationwide before 31 July.

Training will be tailored to suit the needs of different groups. To assist teachers

assess their needs, the NCETM is inviting people to use its online maths self-evaluation tools.

To book training and access the self-assessment tools visit [www.et-foundation.co.uk/mathsworkshops](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/mathsworkshops)  
• **My MEP story, p34**

## Unlocking the Gateway

The Excellence Gateway has been relaunched as a library of practice-based resources and information for further education teachers, trainers and managers.

Currently home to more than 7,000 resources, the Gateway, which was created by the former Learning and Skills Information Service (LSIS) in 2006, had become unwieldy over the years and users often found it hard to find what they were looking for.

The Education and Training Foundation, which became the gateway's custodian when LSIS

closed in 2013, spent a year re-cataloguing and rearranging the vast repository of resources so they are easily accessed through search and browsing.

New features include subject-specific exhibition sites – the first being SEND, with a maths site to follow soon – through which associated resources can be accessed. There is also a bookmarking feature. Work will continue on the relaunched site until the spring.

[www.excellencegateway.org.uk](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk)

• **For more on the Gateway see Resources, p29**

• **Ear to the ground: David Russell**

**You may be great, but who is better? And can you learn from them?**

**The best part of leading the Education and Training Foundation is the privilege of being invited into Colleges, ITPs and ACL providers around the country and seeing their work, as well as hearing about their challenges.**

Every provider has a different story to tell, but some of my questions are always the same. One of my favourites – which elicits fascinating responses – is this: “What are you really fantastic at, and who is even better at it than you?”

The reason for the first part is obvious: colleagues speak with eloquence and passion about the achievements of their students and staff, and I learn more about what excellence looks like in 2015.

The second part I find more problematic. Even when a department is outstanding in subject provision (maths, perhaps, or games design) or excels in an area of activity (employer engagement, maybe, or use of learning technology) colleagues don't often know who is at the very top of their game.

I think this matters. A world-class athlete knows who is above her in the



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rankings. A burgeoning business knows which competitor is doing better. And a highly respected university department knows which others are judged to be even stronger centres of excellence.

In my opinion, competition is very rarely a positive force in education. The question is important for the very opposite reason. As a head of faculty or a service manager I want to know who is great so that I can learn from them, approach them,

collaborate with them. I may ask to send students to them on research visits. I will certainly want to create opportunities for my staff in exchanges or continuing professional development. And I will want to be inspired by their work and use it to inject new ideas into my own thinking, as well as simply taking heart from the success of others in my profession. I may even have a thing or two to teach them in exchange.

Further education and training has a powerful social mission, and an egalitarian ethos. It is one of its great strengths. For me that is wholly consistent with a constant quest for self-improvement and ever-greater stretch. And that's why, when I am out with my 'ear to the ground' I will keep asking not only: “What are you brilliant at?” But also: “And who do you think is the best at what you do?”

**David Russell** is chief executive of the Education and Training Foundation  
[www.et-foundation.co.uk/ceo-blog](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/ceo-blog)  
 Twitter: @DavidRussellETF

• **Strong focus on dual professionalism is needed** Frank McLoughlin

**One of the great privileges of chairing the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) was meeting often unsung vocational teachers and trainers. The Commission chose not to take evidence in Whitehall, but instead to go out to see the work in situ. That meant we spoke to apprentices, students, employers large and small, and heard from teachers and trainers about their dual professional practice.**

We learned how, on a daily basis, they combine occupational and pedagogical expertise, working in close collaboration with people from industry. Their role is to develop the talented individuals who will design, develop and deliver the sophisticated technology and high quality products and services that will enable the UK to compete at the highest level.

The Education and Training Foundation has assumed responsibility for supporting the professional development of this critical team of vocational teachers and trainers, and its Teach Too programme is to be welcomed. The task has, arguably, never been more important. Based on a series of 20 country studies, the OECD's recent review of 'Skills Beyond Schools' highlights



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the low number of adults in England with higher level vocational education as their highest qualification, relative to the needs of the economy and to other OECD countries.

It calls for the workforce in professional training institutions (colleges and training providers) to benefit from a strong blend of pedagogical skills, industry

experience and academic knowledge.

Looking ahead to the next parliament, it is higher level vocational education and training (level 4 and above), designed to develop the technician workforce of the future, that must be the priority. If our sector is to realise its contribution to this critical agenda, a strong focus on further developing the dual professionalism of vocational teachers and trainers is required.

The importance of supporting teachers, trainers and industry experts to work collaboratively across the 'two-way street' on curriculum development and teaching and learning cannot be overstated. For it is in such arrangements that the knowledge, skills and experience of vocational professionals deepens, a critical engagement with industry-based problem solving develops, and opportunities for joint research and innovation are revealed.

These were some of the hallmarks of the excellent higher vocational education and training the Commission saw on its visits.

**Frank McLoughlin** CBE is principal of City and Islington College and published his CAVTL One Year on Review in November.  
[www.excellencegateway.org.uk/cavtl](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/cavtl)

## News in brief

### Teacher autonomy is key in teaching post-16 maths

The degree of freedom teachers have to adapt the curriculum to a learner's needs is a key factor in determining how well countries teach maths to post-16 vocational learners, according to an international study commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation.

Cultural context, negative attitudes and family income are also determining factors of post-16 success in maths education, according to a report based on research carried out by social research consultancy The Research Base on behalf of the Foundation.

The report, *Effective Practices in Post-16 Vocational Maths*, says: "Internationally, we found that effective practice in maths teaching and across vocational programmes requires time, and investment in teachers and trainers, to ensure they have the training and CPD to understand how to properly contextualise maths teaching."

To read the report and the country profiles, please visit: [bit.ly/InTuition\\_effective](http://bit.ly/InTuition_effective)

### Learner voice compilation published by 157 Group



A compilation of learners' views of the benefits of studying in further education has been published by the 157 Group colleges.

The report, *The Road to Employment*, a collection of 'learner voices', was compiled



HOWARDSGATE

### New year honours for the further education and training sector

Congratulations to all those working in further education and training who received New Year honours.

Among them was Sue Crowley (pictured), chair of the former Institute for Learning, who received an OBE for services to further education and teaching.

in collaboration with Landex, the membership organisation for land-based colleges.

It records the experiences of 11 students studying at either a 157 college or a Landex institution.

The report was published at the 157's annual reception before Christmas where Sarah Robinson OBE, principal of Stoke-on-Trent College, was announced as the group's new chair.

• View the report at [bit.ly/InTuition\\_Learner\\_Voices](http://bit.ly/InTuition_Learner_Voices)

### Members shine in Tower Hamlets and Calderdale

Richard Gallen from Tower Hamlets College, who took part in the Education and Training Foundation's Research Development Fellowship (RDF) programme, run by emCETT last year, is to publish a summary of his research journal of The National Association for Teaching English and Other Community Language to Adults.

Richard will also present the results of the project at the International Annual

English Language Teaching Conference (IATEFL) in Manchester in April.

Congratulations also to Laura Lavender, an ESOL and LDD tutor at Calderdale College, who also took part in the Foundation's RDF programme, run by emCETT, who has been awarded the college's staff award for innovation. She won the award for her innovative project, which culminated in a Festival of Cultures day, organised by ESOL students and other learners from across the college.

• To access Richard's report, *Capturing and working with emergent language in the ESOL classroom*, visit:

[bit.ly/InTuition\\_RGallen](http://bit.ly/InTuition_RGallen)

• To see Laura's work, visit:

[bit.ly/InTuition\\_LLavender](http://bit.ly/InTuition_LLavender)

### Celebrating winners and the commended in Beacon Awards

Congratulations to all winners and commended providers in the 2014 Beacon Awards recognising the best and most innovative practice in further education and training.

Two providers each won two awards. Abingdon and Witney won the Education and Training Foundation Award for Transformational Leadership by Governing Bodies and the Learning Consortium Award for Improvement in Teaching and Learning through Peer Coaching.

Weymouth won the Vtct Award for Sport in the Curriculum and the UCAS Progress Award for Careers Education and Guidance.

• Read more at:

[bit.ly/InTuition\\_Beacon](http://bit.ly/InTuition_Beacon)

### Ofsted reveals its verdict on FE over 2013/14

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved markedly across further education with the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding, up from 58 per cent in 2012-13 to 69 per cent in 2013-14, according to the latest Ofsted report.

In terms of overall effectiveness the proportion of providers judged good or outstanding also increased from 72 per cent to 81 per cent, according to the Ofsted Chief Inspector's 2013-14 report on further education and skills published in December.

Michael Wilshaw's report did however highlight ongoing weaknesses in provision including offender learning and the overall quality of maths and English teaching.

• Read the full report at:

[bit.ly/InTuition\\_Ofsted\\_1314f](http://bit.ly/InTuition_Ofsted_1314f)



### Send us your views

Email us at [communications@etfoundation.co.uk](mailto:communications@etfoundation.co.uk) or tweet us at @E\_T\_Foundation. Please note that letters may be edited for publication.

# Opinion

## I swear by Athena the teacher that I shall...

Shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt has suggested that teachers should take an oath, similar to the Hippocratic oath pledged by doctors, as part of their commitment to the teaching profession. The suggestion has divided opinion

### Yes

By Geoff Rebbeck

Using the term 'Hippocratic oath' is a handy shortcut for suggesting teachers should hold a higher status in society. Coming from politicians it could be taken as a criticism of those currently in power for diminishing that status, but good education does change lives and harm follows where this is not done successfully.

Rather than calling it an oath, it might be better seen as a kind of contract a teacher makes with their own conscience, as a rite of passage and, by proxy, with every student they will teach (students work with teachers; we are all learners all of the time with or without a teacher).

It would include respect for the trust placed in them by society, to honour the relationship between teachers and students and to instruct, educate and enlighten wherever possible.

The difficulty with making contracts with oneself and students is how to accommodate others. Because everyone understands the value of a good education, everybody has a view on how to do it, drawing on their own experiences, which is a welcomed debate.

No place of learning is better than the quality of its teaching and teachers and they don't need a manager to be good at teaching. It is a very solitary responsibility.

How can a pact with oneself be seen as enforceable in an education world of being over-managed, controlled,

observed, regulated, timetabled, supervised and constantly reorganised?

Trust is earned, not awarded, but to help educate others is a very heavy personal responsibility and a contract with oneself and one's students can acknowledge the gravity of what we do. This might be better taken further as a nationally acknowledged, signed social contract.

If nothing else, it might at least stop teachers being insultingly referred to as a workforce.

**Geoff Rebbeck, QTLS, is an award-winning FE teacher, working independently as an adviser to the FE community and Jisc on e-learning**

### No

By David Law

Would you use an Elastoplast to mend a broken leg? Thought not: neither would I. So why would the creation of an education version of the Hippocratic oath be more effective than a bungled first-aid job? The notion that the respect doctors receive and the professional status they enjoy are derived from an oath is whimsical at best. This is reinforced by a 2013 freedom of information request to the General Medical Council, which revealed that a) there is no single, agreed Hippocratic oath used in the UK and b) not all doctors take it anyway.

Tristram Hunt's suggestion was greeted with a mixture of derision and indifference by the profession. For teachers to be

While doctors traditionally swore the Hippocratic oath to Apollo, the physician, teachers might make their pledge to Athena, the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom

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valued and for the profession to take its rightful position, what is required is not an oath but tangible demonstrations of the esteem in which teaching is held. This should include, *inter alia*, a proper professional body, a public acceptance by government that education and training are at the heart of the social and economic development of the country, a move away from constant reform, a willingness to allow professionals more autonomy and, of course, proper funding of the sector. The blame culture that has built up around all sectors of education continues to cause damage to both the morale of the profession and what can





# Opinion



## Making maths and English work for all

By Professor Ed Sallis

The review into what is needed from non-GCSE English and maths qualifications has started and views are being sought on the employability aspects of functional skills

Improving maths and English for all in post-16 education and training is a key national priority. Following the Wolf Report, it is government policy to enable as many young people as possible to have the opportunity to achieve GCSE maths and English, at grade C or above.

However, for some, including those already in work, retaking GCSE is not the most appropriate route. This was the reason functional skills qualifications were developed, as many learners need a more contextualised approach to their learning and a stepping stone towards achievement at GCSE.

At the Association of Colleges (AoC) conference last November the skills and equalities minister, Nick Boles, announced that he was asking the Education and Training Foundation to lead a review into what is needed from non-GCSE English and maths qualifications. The review has now started and I have been asked to chair the steering group. The deadline for the production of the report is mid-March.

The review will focus primarily on the employability aspects of functional skills. It will ask questions about how employers value them and how useful they are in the workplace. Employer recognition will be a key area of the review because it is important that all concerned, not least the learners, know how well recognised and regarded are their qualifications.

This is a major issue because employer recognition of the qualifications is fundamental to their success, and at the moment we just don't have any large-scale data on how employers, large and small, value functional skills.

The review will be led by a steering group consisting of the CBI, the Federation of Small Businesses, the UK Commission for Employment and

Skills, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, the AoC and the adult and community learning association (Holex), with myself as an independent chair.

Consultants have been engaged to undertake a wide range of work, and although the primary focus is on employability, the review wants to receive the views of practitioners, learners, colleges and training providers. It is essential we understand what measures might be needed to improve its recognition for learners and employers.

The views of practitioners will be very helpful to the review and will enable it to have a balanced picture of the strengths and weakness of functional skills.

To this end the Education and Training Foundation has organised an online survey of former Institute for Learning members on behalf of the review and I would urge members not only to complete it, but also ask colleagues who may not be members to do so. There is a very short timescale so please complete the survey (see the link below) as soon as possible.

I really want to hear what you have to say and the steering group will listen and respond. It is important that we all play our part in making maths and English work for all. Please complete the survey at [www.pyetait.com/jointheconvo](http://www.pyetait.com/jointheconvo) • Wolf Report: [bit.ly/InTuition\\_Wolf](http://bit.ly/InTuition_Wolf)

**Professor Sallis, chair of the steering group Making Maths and English Work for All, is the former principal and chief executive of Highlands College in Jersey. He is also visiting professor in the Academic Partnership Faculty of Plymouth University**

• Have a view on this or other matters?  
Email: [communications@etfoundation.co.uk](mailto:communications@etfoundation.co.uk)

be achieved with learners.

Hardworking, committed, well-qualified and professional teachers and lecturers do not need a spurious oath. The unwillingness to engage properly with members of the profession, coupled with the avalanche of top-down reforms, which has characterised government behaviour for the past 30 years or more, would be good starting points for change. Ceasing these behaviours would do more for the profession than pledging an oath to Athena or Socrates ever could.

**David Law is a retired college principal**

# Recipe for success

With Jamie Oliver, Ainsley Harriott, Antony Worrall Thompson and many rising stars among its alumni, Westminster Kingsway College is one of the country's top catering schools. Gary Hunter, head of the Faculty of Hospitality and Culinary Arts, talks to **Alan Thomson**

"I suppose cooking has become a bit rock 'n' roll these days," muses Gary Hunter amid the concentration and clatter of his busy training kitchen in Westminster Kingsway College.

"There is a sense that being a chef is akin to being a rock star and many people consider the lifestyle to be somewhat bohemian – until they try it for themselves and realise the truth in the old adage 'if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen,'" he says.

There are certainly comparisons to be drawn between the lot of junior chefs – the long hours, the constant pressure to perform and improve, not to mention the low starting pay – and that of young musicians. But like music, it is the thought of 'making it' – perhaps working in a Michelin-starred kitchen or owning your own restaurant – that helps make the profession so attractive.

"Students and potential students know that Jamie Oliver and many other top chefs have trained here and a lot of them are inspired by these celebrities," says Gary.

"But it's important for student chefs to understand that it is hard work. Qualifications are very important – especially taking the time to study a course in a college environment where you have a set period to properly develop your techniques and knowledge under the tutelage of an experienced mentor."

So what does Gary make of the comments of Marco Pierre White, arguably the most rock 'n' roll of chefs, who said a few years ago that apprentices with real world experience were always preferable to young cooks out of college. Indeed, the chef – who once had three Michelin stars – said that he thought that, in some ways, catering colleges caused damage to young chefs' careers.

"Marco is a good friend of the college

and we have sat down together on a few occasions to discuss colleges and their role in training chefs. I know exactly where he is coming from," Gary says.

"That is why all our full-time students undertake externships every year – ranging from four to eight weeks at a time – and they all have part-time jobs as chefs in the industry where possible.

"Our two college restaurants are run commercially and our students gain an added advantage in these areas. What I prefer about our model is that our students gain many different 'real world' experiences within a year of learning as opposed to only one experience as an apprentice."

The college's approach is certainly working and there has been expansion to meet demand for the full-time Professional Chef Diploma Course and the part-time Culinary, Pastry and Hospitality courses.

"Timetabling can be a nightmare for my managers because I always want to do



TOM HOWARD PHOTOGRAPHY

more and more each year. But as long as we can cope with expansion and the college resources match this, we are fine and long may it continue," says Gary.

Taking a leaf out of the Heston Blumenthal cook book, the faculty is the only one in the UK to embed gastronomy and culinary science in all chef courses. The college built its own Culinary and Food Innovation Laboratory to train students to use lab equipment and transfer these techniques into the kitchen.

So where in this pressure cooker of expansion and innovation do Gary and his teachers have the time to reflect on their own profession practice and ensure they are up to speed with the latest techniques and developments in their profession?

"Staff development is central to this college. This has been a major drive from our senior management in recent years without it being too prescriptive," says Gary.

"Flexibility is crucial to the development of individuals within my team. We cultivate many opportunities for the team on a weekly basis and some of the initiatives are industry-based. Teachers can dip in and out depending on their workload and we ensure that their classes are



## TASTER: GARY HUNTER

### Do you eat out a lot?

I always want to try new restaurants. I also have some very good and consistent 'go to' restaurants – they usually have Westminster Kingsway alumni attached to them, usually with our students working in them too.

### Do you buy the latest celebrity cook books and do you enjoy programmes like *Masterchef*?

I've bought far too many of them! However, watching TV is a rare treat and Sky Sports is my luxury if golf is on or West Ham United are playing.

### What would be your three 'desert island dishes'?

**Starter:** Morston Mussels cooked in white wine and cream, served with our own college bakery fresh sourdough bread.

**Main:** Roast haunch of Houghton Hall venison cooked over a wood-burning grill or oven, served traditionally with jus, game chips and plenty of vegetables in season.

**Dessert:** Tart au citron, freshly baked and allowed to cool to room temperature (never refrigerate it) and served with a good quality vanilla ice cream.

### What do you think of ready meals?

I'll admit that a pre-prepared meal gives us gratification in our ever-hercetic lifestyles, but I dislike the concept intensely. To me, you can't get a better 'ready meal' than a nice piece of fresh fish, new potatoes and a salad. I can prepare and cook that in 15 minutes.

This involves him working with chocolatiers Callebaut, including teaching in their academy.

In addition, he is a prolific author of books – he has just published his seventh – and articles for trade journals, all of which keep him plugged into his specialism, even if it does mean extra work.

"You have no idea how long it took me to investigate the healthy use of blow-torches in the kitchen and gas control, only for it to take up a very small paragraph in a 900-page book," he says.

**Alan Thomson** is editor of *InTuition*



academic year. It's a great way to bond the team."

Gary's commitment to professional development for his staff is rooted in his own commitment to a dual professionalism.

"It is incredibly important to me that the industry can still identify with me as a chef as well as an educator," says Gary. "I will not dictate continuous improvement but will always lead by example and encourage it for the whole team.

"We have developed a healthy sense of competition within the group and we share a lot of good practice too. Each day the teaching team has a 15-minute meeting first thing in the morning to communicate ideas, share thoughts and convey the day's agenda. This is probably the most valuable 15 minutes in my day."

Gary's own professional development and updating is catered for thanks to his involvement with various industry bodies and committees including the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, the Craft Guild of Chefs and the Master Chefs of Great Britain. He also has what he describes as the best job title in the world – Chocolate Ambassador.

covered. I include our part-time team members which is incredibly important to team-building and morale.

"We also use lesson observations as a way to support our teachers and we continuously look at individual development plans.

"Our suppliers too perform a vital role in professional development and I take the whole team away for a few days at least once a year to look at specific subjects that we need to develop for the new

**Claire Mitchell** sets out the Education and Training Foundation's strategy to fully reflect the needs of educators and trainers in the consultation that began last November and which will publish its findings in April

On 1 November 2014 the Institute for Learning (IfL) closed and the responsibility for its assets and members was passed to the Education and Training Foundation.

At the Foundation we are thrilled to have the opportunity to support practitioners in their professional development as they build their career paths, given how closely this matches our core aim of raising standards in teaching across the education and training sector.

Our first priority has been to ensure there is a smooth experience for members during the transition period, with minimum disruption.

Beyond this, we are keen to understand how the 'Foundation Professional Membership Service' (a temporary name) can develop and grow to provide even better value and support to practitioners in future, and to fully reflect the needs of educators and trainers.

To this end we launched our consultation process last November. The purpose of the consultation is to inform the vision and strategy for the new organisation: to understand what professionals across the sector would value most from a membership organisation.

Nearly 3,000 practitioners responded to our online survey and we would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to our consultation to date.

We have augmented the survey with face-to-face engagement at sector conferences. Altogether, we have had a very positive response, with constructive feedback and suggestions.

Preliminary evaluation of survey data reveals early indications of what colleagues



ENGAGE VISUALLY

# Shaping a new membership service for FE teachers and trainers



## WHAT YOU VALUE IN A PROFESSIONAL BODY

*"I think that one of the most important things is that people working in the FE sector should have a professional organisation that elevates their status as trusted professionals."* trainee teacher

*"Never lose QTLS either for new members or for those who already have it,"* lecturer, FE college

*"Belonging to a professional body devoted to my professional role,"* tutor in adult and community learning.

*"Improving my recognition as a professional,"* manager, FE College

*"Part of a recognised association within the industry,"* trainer, independent training provider

*"Pride of being a professional member,"* tutor, adult and community learning

*"Knowing that I was registered as a 'professional' and meeting standards to achieve this,"* teacher-educator, FE College

*"Really pleased that the legacy of IfL is continuing. Love using REfLECT to log my CPD,"* manager, adult and community learning

*"A range of certificated CPD programmes run with university partners,"* teacher, FE College

*"Access to CPD materials and information"* senior manager, adult and community learning

*"Peer learning opportunities through events,"* senior manager, employer provider

*"Facilitation of communities of practice at a regional level to support evidence-based research at practitioner level,"* manager, adult and community learning

*"Online communities for those of us who cannot easily get to more central locations,"* retired teacher

*"Professionalism; I think it's important to be part of this body,"* tutor, adult and community learning

value most in a professional body.

- Both current and previous members cite 'professional status and recognition' as the most significant benefit the service can provide.
  - Current and previous members value the professional status of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS), and the flexibility it provides in being recognised by law as equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teaching in schools.
  - Respondents have placed a strong emphasis on the importance of high quality CPD that is available either online or face to face.
  - Being part of a community and having peer-to-peer networking opportunities are seen as particularly valuable. This includes online communities for those who cannot easily get to more central locations.
- The second phase of the consultation

runs from January to March 2015. This part of the process will engage directly and in more depth with practitioners and stakeholders to explore more detailed findings from the survey. It will also ask for people's comments on how they would like to see these represented in a membership offer.

We have formed a practitioner advisory group comprising members from across a variety of settings, roles and levels within the sector. There will also be extensive opportunities for colleagues to engage with the online and face-to-face focus groups we will be running in February and March.

The responses we are gathering from practitioners and stakeholders through these various research activities will be combined into one final consultation document.

The role of that document will be to clarify and prioritise the views of the

sector and will be used to gather detailed responses on specific points from wider stakeholder groups and sector membership bodies. The final findings from the consultation will be published in April.

The consultation is, however, not the end of the dialogue with the sector and we will continue to be responsive to the needs of our members so we can ensure that the service continues to be highly valued in the future.

If you are interested in joining our mailing list to ensure you are kept up to date about our future consultations and opportunities to participate, please email: [membership.communications@etfoundation.co.uk](mailto:membership.communications@etfoundation.co.uk)

**Claire Mitchell** is head of membership at the Education and Training Foundation

- **Overleaf:** How should your new professional body be governed?

# How should your new professional body be governed?

Securing the right governance and accountability structures for a professional membership service is vital and the Foundation continues to consult on this issue. In the meantime, *InTuition* approached a range of people and organisations for their views



**Rod Clark, chief executive, Prisoners' Education Trust (PET).**

Prison tutors can feel like the Cinderellas of the further education (FE) and skills sector. Ofsted reports show prisons at the bottom of the league tables and staff say they lack the networking, development opportunities and teaching resources available in the wider FE community.

At the Prisoner Learning Alliance's conference last April, Ros Foggin, then an advisory council member for IfL, called herself 'the naked teacher' because she felt she was the only resource in the classroom.

PET welcomes the Education and Training Foundation's efforts to address the needs and improve the status of all FE educators and of prison educators in particular. PET would like to see the Foundation's membership service governance include strong practitioner representation and specific representation from the prison education sector.

People in prison need excellent teachers to inspire them to learn and teachers need the status and connections of a professional body that recognises and values their special contribution to FE.



**Dr Rob Smith, co-founder of the Centre for Research and Development in Lifelong Education (Cradle) at the University of Wolverhampton**

The communication loop that connects policy makers to the everyday concerns of practitioners is broken in current models of FE governance.

In a marketised context in which providers are keen only to present positive messages, management of data and market image have begun to eclipse and even interfere

with the quality of teaching and learning. They have also begun to erode the professional practice of teachers in FE. Increasingly, governance and accountability is being harnessed to the 'big data' regime.

These concerns need to feed into the proposed structure of governance for the Foundation's proposed professional services body. It is imperative that the concerns of ordinary teachers find a voice within these structures and that governors do not just become another rubber-stamping committee for back-of-an-envelope policy interventions.

It might seem an unorthodox idea, but the voices of employers, privileged in FE governance ever since incorporation, might also benefit from being balanced by democratically elected representation.



**Dr Norman Crowther, national official for post-16 education at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers**

The Education and Training Foundation survey on a professional services body was primarily focused upon the type of services that members may want and it had little to say on governance or institutional structure and procedures.

It might have been appropriate to understand the motivation and commitment of those 18,000 members on the former IfL register so that new services could be built on that enthusiasm and interest.

The consultation process is evolving and therefore in the next phase involving a practitioner advisory group we may discuss such issues. However, if the service remains just that a 'service' it will have little resemblance to the conventional understanding of what would pass for a professional body.

Even so, such support is welcome and

one would hope that teachers, trainers and lecturers and assessors might all have access to such service – something that has obstructed innovation and professional development in the past. ATL is calling for a contractual right to continuing professional development.



**Andrew Harden, head of FE, University and College Union**

UCU supports the enhancement of the professional status and

qualifications of teaching across further, adult, community education and the independent sector. Too often in the past staff were given minimal CPD options that rarely met their needs. We fully support any initiatives that deliver CPD that allows individuals to develop.

UCU was uncomfortable with the IfL's role as both membership body and regulator of the sector. Asking lecturers to pay for being policed was the last straw.

If the Foundation's professional membership service is to succeed then there must be transparent governance of the programmes it offers and the governance must rest with those who teach in the sector.

If the Foundation gets the professional membership offer and governance right then there is a real opportunity to develop CPD options that offer staff an opportunity to refresh, develop and reinvigorate their passion for the profession.



**Ken Merry, governor at the Education and Training Foundation**

As a member of the board of directors I would be keen to see a professional

membership offer designed to serve all facets of the education and training sector, including those traditionally less well-served – while also meeting the needs of individuals.

There would be a significant benefit to the effectiveness of the membership offer (in whatever guise it develops) from embracing a basic participatory governance structure where members can have an influence over the direction of the offering, as well as more direct shaping of the services offered.

I would also not discourage the opportunity for sector members to work on a steering group to help shape the first (and evolving) offer of professional membership by the Foundation.

Additionally, I think this type of involvement would promote transparency across the sector where members (and non-members) will be reassured of the progress being made.

# All the world's a stage for skills

WorldSkills is the Olympic Games for vocational trainees, but the benefits for competitors' tutors and coaches are just as great, writes **Alan Thomson**

Walk around any WorldSkills event and you'll find it hard to accept claims that countries, the UK included, are producing too few young people with the talent and application demanded by employers.

Any system that produces competitors of the calibre routinely entered for WorldSkills events obviously has the capacity for excellence. And this capacity is stored largely in the trainers, teachers and tutors who nurture not only their star competitors, but all learners.

Mike Burdett, a training manager in bricklaying for WorldSkills Squad and Team UK and a teacher at York College, says: "We hold training events at the college involving WorldSkills squad members. Students watch the demonstrations, we explain the WorldSkills process and they see it is achievable.

"In fact, they are often shocked that the Team UK members started out by taking the same level of course that they are on. It inspires our learners and we get great feedback from them."

Mike and other training managers (TMs) – he is one of around 150 trainers involved in the Team UK network – agree that while many learners have the potential to reach the standards required for WorldSkills competition, additional factors such as motivation, competitiveness, creativity, resilience and the ability to self-critique tend to distinguish successful squad members.

## Wider benefits

However, the competition and its training processes have a far wider, positive impact across the further education and skills sector. Key to this is the way in which TMs enrich and improve their own knowledge and skills as teachers. In short, WorldSkills makes them better teachers.

"I am working with young people at the top of their skills and trade," says Mike. "They keep me on my toes. It stretches me and I would like to think I am a better practitioner because of it."

Barry Skea, Squad and Team UK training manager for mechanical engineering (computer assisted design)



Yolande Stanley



Barry Skea



Mike Burdett

and assistant head of the faculty of engineering and automotive engineering at New College Lanarkshire, agrees. "My involvement has made me reflect on my own practice. It's infectious and is one of the best parts of my professional life," says Barry.

Having seen the way Team UK and other countries approached WorldSkills, Barry proposed – and helped to introduce – a project-based system for teaching at his college in 2008, replacing a tutorial-based approach.

"WorldSkills has also helped me expand my professional network so I hear about developments in the automotive industry that are relevant to my area and my teaching," he says.

Yolande Stanley, a chef lecturer at Westminster Kingsway College and confectionery and pastry training manager for Squad and Team UK, says: "I am growing and developing all the time. It is such an eye-opener doing WorldSkills. I see new things constantly and that's taken back into my practice."

Training for WorldSkills events take two years and is intensive – Yolande estimates that 10 years' worth of experience is

crammed into those 24 months – with regular pressure tests and assessments for squad members as well as ongoing tutoring, mentoring and competitions.

Inevitably, some squad members, who have trained hard for two years, are disappointed not to be selected to compete in the WorldSkills finals. Team selection this year will take place in May, ahead of the WorldSkills finals in São Paulo, Brazil, in August.

## Worthwhile sacrifice

Eugene Inceri MBE, head of skills competitions at Find a Future, the organisation that runs WorldSkills UK and the popular Skills Show, believes that part of the 'payback' training managers receive for their sacrifices is the benefit to their practice.

"The ethos of WorldSkills is to create a developmental culture. It gives educators an insight into how other people and other countries go about teaching and coaching," Eugene says.

"The exchange of knowledge is one of the most beneficial things about WorldSkills. For practitioners to be able to bring back these insights and ideas is hugely powerful and of benefit to the UK FE and training system overall."

Barry sums things up in a more personal way: "I'm away from my wife and children for a number of weeks a year; it takes up several nights a week and part of my weekends. But would I give WorldSkills up? No, I'd be happy doing this until I'm on my death bed."

**Alan Thomson** is editor of *InTuition*

## WORLDSKILLS

Are you interested in becoming a WorldSkills training manager? Email [wsukperformance@findafuture.org.uk](mailto:wsukperformance@findafuture.org.uk) for details. Selection and recruitment begins in the autumn. *InTuition* will publish details of the application process later in the year.



# Teacher education as a satisfying career

By Rebecca Eliahoo

## Teacher education may bring job satisfaction in FE, but practitioners face greater challenges with less support

Nearly two million people study at English further education (FE) colleges each year and more than 640,000 of these learners are 16-18 year olds<sup>1</sup>. Compare this with the number of 16-18 year old students who study in school sixth forms – just under 440,000 – and it is hard to fathom why recent governments have primarily cut funding to FE.

From a teacher educator's perspective, it is puzzling that most policy, research and government discourse centres around school teacher training, even though the average numbers of trainee teachers in FE has often been greater than the number in primary and secondary schools combined. Furthermore, the recent Carter Review of initial teacher training did not focus on FE at all.

Given FE's particular challenges, I wanted to find out what teacher educators think are the rewards of their role in English FE, especially as they were an under-represented and under-researched group in the literature.

### Four perspectives

The research originated from my role and practice as programme leader for a post-compulsory teacher education consortium and included concepts drawn from four broad theoretical perspectives:

- Lave and Wenger's model of situated learning.
- Fuller and Unwin's (2010) interpretation of the use of the apprenticeship model to describe teacher training and their work on expansive and restrictive professional development.
- Eisner's use of the Greek concepts of *episteme* (true and certain knowledge) and *phronesis* (wise, practical reasoning) to explore the conditions

for excellent practice.

- Hodkinson et al's use of the theory of learning cultures to explore how and why situations influence learning.

Ten experienced teacher educators were interviewed – five men and five women, half of whom taught, or had taught, in four different higher education institutions and half of whom taught, or had taught, in five different colleges.

The 70 survey participants were teacher educators from the south east of England who were contacted through various initial teacher education (ITE) networks. Of the 64 survey participants who revealed how long they had been teacher educators, 27 (just over 42 per cent) were long-career participants; 25 (39 per cent) were mid-career participants and 12 (almost 19 per cent) were early-career participants who worked in higher education (HE) and in a variety of institutions in the FE system.

### The challenges of educating teachers in FE

A pressing concern was whether ITE in FE would continue to exist in the future and, if so, what pressures would emerge between, on the one hand, providing a desirable and effective ITE course; and on the other, meeting externally imposed requirements.

What came through strongly were the ways in which teacher educators and senior colleagues combat managerialism through a process of 'strategic or creative compliance'. Teacher educators' ability to use such strategies was bolstered by their gradual accumulation of experiential wisdom and judgement, which, additionally, gave them credibility with both staff and managers.

Some of the financial issues identified in the research included the lack of funding for ITE in general and the concerns that arose when employers did not give trainees remission from teaching, which cuts down on their study time. Some participants said that their trainees' subject mentors were often neither paid nor given remission. Participants expressed concerns about the difficulties of supporting trainees with integrity within a 'target' culture.

The nature of the relationship with their trainees, who were also colleagues, could pose problems. These might manifest themselves within the pastoral or tutorial role, or in terms of boundaries between colleagues, or tensions which may arise from being both the trainee's line manager and an assessor or mentor within ITE.

Several teacher educators also said that they faced ethical dilemmas. For example, because they wanted to be realistic about the demands of the FE system, without being overly negative – but were torn between the demands of their institution and their ethics as a trainer. They lamented the confusion between quality and developmental observations and also the need to educate managers about the differences between the two.

Employers did not always recognise the demanding nature of the teacher educator role in terms of career structure or increased pay. Teacher educators, even more than their colleagues, must keep up to date with scholarship; they have an increased marking load that must be assessed at different HE levels.

### Job satisfaction

Despite contextual difficulties, most people taking part in the research stated that they enjoyed their work as teacher educators. Nearly two-thirds cited their prime motivation for remaining in ITE as, firstly, that they liked to watch trainees





# Shining a light on teacher educators

By Carol Azumah Dennis

develop from nervous beginners to confident practitioners; and secondly, that they liked to see the increase in trainees' skills and lively enjoyment of the course.

Thirteen per cent of those surveyed remarked that teacher education provided them with additional insights into their own practice, through observing their trainees. In general, teacher educators who remain in FE have decided that the rewards outweigh the challenges.

Nonetheless, there was a clear indication that these practitioners feel they should be recognised as possessing a discrete role for which a career path should exist within their institutions. There should be adequate remission for mentors and trainees as well as for teacher educators' scholarship and research and they should be encouraged to join collaborative networks to support their professional development and to mitigate the effects of challenging work environments.

## Further information

This is an abridged version of Rebecca's article. The full version, including a full list of references, is available on her blog <http://rebeccaeliahooteachered.blogspot.co.uk> Rebecca is on Twitter @RebeccaEliahoo and LinkedIn at [uk.linkedin.com/in/rebeccaeliahooteachered](http://uk.linkedin.com/in/rebeccaeliahooteachered) and is happy for practitioners to comment or ask questions on the article or her research.

## Professionalising the sector means finding the answers to lots of questions about ITE practitioners

In 2011, a special issue of an academic journal identified a series of unanswered questions about teacher educators: "Who are they? Why do they work in teacher education? What career pathways have led them to teacher education? What are key aspects of their knowledge and practice as teacher educators? What are the critical issues faced by those working in teacher education?" (Mayer, Mitchell, Santoro & White 2011, p247).

This discussion was not framed with reference to further education (FE). However, given the relatively late arrival of FE pedagogy as an established presence in graduate and postgraduate study, the questions resonate. They also form the basis of what the FE teacher educators' project (FETEP) has been set up to explore.

FETEP – a collaborative research partnership between FE colleges, independent training providers and higher education – aims to fill an important gap in our understanding of post-compulsory educators.

This means more than satisfying our curiosity. Scholarship in FE contributes towards the ongoing professionalisation of the sector (Dennis 2010). While we have certainly made some important gains, the past few years have been a struggle. It is not an exaggeration to say the current shape of policy might well lead to our disappearance. Anything that highlights who we are, what we do, how and why is valuable.

The FETEP data – digitally recorded monologues, interviews and questionnaires with FE teacher educators – has now been collated and the research team is deep in analysis, trying to discern

overall patterns, answering our research questions, desperately seeking both coherence and the unexpected.

This is an enormous study, driven by a commitment to equity, which has been encoded into our methodology, and it is too soon to say what the outcomes are or what they point to.

The usual division of labour between researcher and researched has been blurred: researchers have participated in the project to both gather and contribute their own data. We will post our unfolding data analysis on the TELL blog (see link on page 18) and we invite interested others to review, comment upon and contribute towards the final shape the project takes.

I know why I work in teacher education. I'm a critical utopian. By that I mean I am utterly convinced that words – written or spoken – make a difference.

Utopians are often accused of being fanciful day dreamers. But I work within an ethos of experimentation, oriented toward identifying and, when possible, creating spaces for resistance, reconstructing the here and now.

This motivation matters. It shapes what I value, what I do and what I feel about what I do. It means I avoid certain activities if they undermine my overall ethical stance. Motivation defines the triumphs and challenges practitioners face. They might also provide insight into how and why FE skills policy takes the shape it does in sites of practice.

Other teacher educators (according to the literature) position themselves differently, as pedagogues, as reflective practitioners or as subject specialists.

**Dr Rebecca Eliahoo**  
is principal lecturer (lifelong learning)  
at the University of Westminster.



# Teachers' research tackles initial assessment

By Michael Smith and Paul Roberts

I am sure there is a much wider range of positions possible.

Interestingly, I am unable to find any reference to teacher educators motivated by a desire to benefit the economy. Given those charged with developing policy are unable to see any other policy, this might well point to the critical issues each of us face.

If you'd like to discuss and aspect of teacher education, professionalism, skills, the discussion will continue at: <http://teacheredlifelonglearning.wordpress.com>

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Dr Carol Azumah Dennis lectures on education at the University of Hull, EdD and supervises doctoral researchers

## Doubts are raised about the computer assessment tools used to initially assess students' abilities in English

**The focus of our research was to investigate how we conduct the initial assessment (IA) of our students' abilities in English at the start of the academic year. IA is a challenge unique to the further education sector and is incredibly important in identifying what kind of support a student will receive throughout the year.**

Our research interest grew from a distrust of the current orthodoxy used in our college, in which a computer assessment tool (CAT) was employed to initially assess students. We knew already that the software did not test students in their writing, speaking or listening abilities and that it 'labelled' students as working at specific levels which we found out later were often incorrect.

In addition, the government's drive for GCSE to be the pinnacle qualification for 16-18 year old students meant that now, more than ever, it was vital for us as teachers to correctly place students on the right course from the start of their programme, whether functional skills or GCSE.

We were very fortunate to receive support throughout the whole process from the Education and Training Foundation's Research Development Fellowship (RDF) programme supported by the Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (SUNCETT). We worked closely with our mentor at Sunderland, Professor Maggie Gregson, and attendance at three residential sessions honed our research angle and introduced us to literature that helped us appreciate the 'bigger picture'.

It became apparent during the residentials that we weren't the only college to be using CAT systems to

initially assess our students, and we were hard pressed to find someone that could speak of them in a positive light.

Professor Frank Coffield, a keynote speaker at each residential, further stoked the fires of inquiry by posing the question: "What practices should we as teachers be holding onto and which ones should we abandon?"

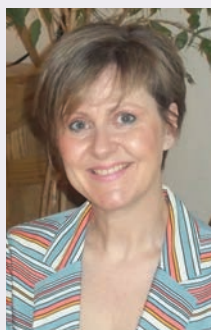
So, we set about exploring the current systems in our college in greater detail. We sampled student IA data collected from the 2013 intake and made some startling discoveries.

Students were taking just over 11 minutes per assessment on average, nowhere near enough to get a true insight of their abilities. A sample of 200 students revealed that more than half were taking their end-of-year assessments at a different level than their IA had determined them to be working at – in some cases with a discrepancy of more than two levels. We also scrutinised the questions used in the software and uncovered an abundance of multiple-choice tasks that sought to test often esoteric, arbitrary knowledge.

However, after exploring the previous assessment model we were unsure how to go about developing an alternative IA process. Prescribing a 'one size fits all' approach would ignore the vast range of skills, beliefs and experiences our students bring with them to the classroom. Instead, we started by developing a set of three overarching principles we believe effective IA should abide by.

These are:

- a need for students to engage in the process of IA



# Improving your practice through research

By Vicky Duckworth

- multi-faceted, holistic assessment of each facet of the curriculum
- comprehensive exploration of student ability in different contexts and scenarios

As well as the fantastic support from the RDF programme and SUNCETT we are equally indebted to our college's senior leadership team which encouraged us throughout the process and at the start of the year permitted us to trial an alternative IA approach.

Following Fielding's (2005) work into the benefits of an innovation in a microcosm, we have experimented with alternative means of IA with small groups of students that have thus far shown promising results.

Our proposed reform employs an 'assessment and initial learning zone' (AILZ), consisting of 12 hours of classroom-based, teacher-led assessment across a variety of activities.

As part of this we have developed a free writing task that employs 'stimulus' images to engage students and provide them a platform to exhibit their written aptitude in a subject and style they feel most comfortable in using.

Moving forward we hope to continue this research and disseminate it to others providers. Stay tuned.

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- Fielding, M. (2005) *Factors influencing the transfer of good practice*. Nottingham: DfES Publications
- For practitioner research opportunities, visit [www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/research/practitioner-research-support](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/research/practitioner-research-support)

Michael Smith and Paul Roberts are functional skills teachers at Barking and Dagenham College

## Practitioner research allows you to generate your own knowledge rather than being a passive spectator

**Carrying out practitioner research (PR) that would be directly meaningful to me and my literacy learners appealed as a critical tool that would offer empowerment and be empowering.**

My PR explored how 16 former basic skills learners have been shaped by the public domain of schooling, college and work and the private domain of family, friends and home. I sought to develop my practice through the research and reflect a critical pedagogy, providing a curriculum that is culturally relevant, learner driven and socially empowering.

My progression through the research, which became my PhD, was supported by the community of practice, which included colleagues and external networks, for example, the Learning and Skills Research Network (LSRN) in which I was involved.

PR allowed me and my learners to generate our own knowledge, rather than being passive spectators. It has played a key part in driving my practice. For example, rather than presuming to know what the learners want to learn and what type of resources are best, I listened more closely to the learners' voices, letting their needs, aspirations and dreams shape the lessons.

It helps to get research basics sorted first. There is research done by a person who is investigating somebody else's classroom (an outsider); research that is carried out by teachers themselves (insider) in their own classrooms; and research carried out by both the teacher and their learners.

Practitioner research tends to centre directly on the concerns that practitioners raise about their own practice in the classroom. It enables you to identify the area you want to explore, arising from your own professional experience or concerns.

You decide what questions to explore and how to conduct your research. This process of investigation can often be carried out in conjunction with your learners. Practitioner research may be an ongoing process that takes place through a number of projects over your career.

Reflection can be a key component to PR, being a process of finding the time and space to stand back and think about the meaning given to a situation or a set of circumstances in a particular time and place in your practice in relation to yourself, others and the wider context.

PR opens up the possibility for trainees, new and experienced educators who want the opportunity to think critically and enter a dialogue about problems and barriers related to teaching and learning. Reflection is a term that refers to a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be and involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work. PR is about being critically reflective.

The research was a tool for working towards social justice. It challenged the inequalities that many learners had faced in and out of the classroom. It empowered them in the classroom and, subsequently, in the community they lived.

*This article is based on Vicky's book, 'Learning trajectories, violence and empowerment among adult basic skills'. Readers are eligible for a 20 per cent discount on this book when ordering from [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com) Enter the code IRK69. Offer is valid until 31 December 2015.*

Dr Vicky Duckworth is a senior research fellow and senior lecturer at Edge Hill University and an author. @Vicky\_Duckworth

# ResearchDigest

## Data and determination can persuade managers to back your research

By Andrew Morris

The use of evidence as a basis for improving teaching and learning practice has been something of a mission in recent decades, yet now that it's finally on the agenda, tougher questions need to be addressed about how you actually go about doing it.

This was the drive behind a recent workshop of the Learning & Skills Research Network (LSRN) that brought together practitioners, researchers and intermediaries to share experiences and hammer out

key messages about tackling the challenges.

A recent review of research on the issue by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was outlined at the workshop by one of its authors, Julie Nelson (see box). She set out the role research evidence played as one of several contributors to evidence-informed practice and identified a number of distinct approaches to linking research and practice.

The characteristics of practitioner enquiry at a local level and academic research at a more general level were

described. Both kinds are needed to develop practice.

Examples of active projects were presented at the workshop. At Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, 'clinical interviews' are being tested as vocational students work on numeracy problems.

At Barking and Dagenham College, evidence is being used to trial new processes for initial assessment (see page 19) and at Walsall College a practitioner enquiry strand is built into a training programme for people tackling gang culture.

A key message was don't just wait for government initiatives: make a start, decide what knowledge you need then frame your enquiry accordingly. Armed with your own and others' evidence you have a better chance of getting buy-in from budget holders and practitioners alike.

For those who work in a culture where data is seen as only for audit purposes, the advice was to get buy-in by using local data as a starting



SHUTTERSTOCK

point for your research. Chris Davies, a director at South Staffordshire College, set out practical ways to encourage a research culture by, for example, dedicating a common time slot for staff development, setting up campus-based CPD Centres and taking a developmental approach to lesson observation.

The Education and Training Foundation's support for practitioner-led action research projects is helping individuals get started with practice-based enquiry and grants from the new FE Trust for Leadership (see article opposite for details) will provide even more help in future.

Simply getting staff together to collaborate can be a major challenge, especially where many are part-timers.

### Useful links

NFER: [www.nfer.ac.uk](http://www.nfer.ac.uk)

NFER review of research: [bit.ly/InTuition\\_NFER\\_research](http://bit.ly/InTuition_NFER_research)

LSRN report on the workshop: [bit.ly/InTuition\\_LSRN\\_workshop](http://bit.ly/InTuition_LSRN_workshop)

For studies on evidence-use, visit the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre at the Institute of Education: <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms>

The Research Unit for Research Utilisation Centre at St Andrews University: [www.ruru.ac.uk](http://www.ruru.ac.uk)

## Leadership research fellows announced

Practitioners from different parts of the FE system are the first research fellows to be appointed by the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL).

Ruth Allen, The Cornwall College Group; Ann Creed, The Workers' Educational Association; Alex Day, Peter Symonds College Adult & Higher Education and Tim Ward, The Learning Curve,

have secured grants to enable them to undertake research projects that aim to progress thinking around leadership in FE.

Mark Ravenhall, chief executive of FETL, said: "The fellowships and grants are about academic credibility, but also about creating time and space in which professionals can think about their practice, the sector and outside the

existing paradigm."

FETL secured £5.5 million in legacy funding from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), which closed in 2013. In addition to fellowships, it offers organisational grants of up to £100,000 to fund research on leadership. It will also endow a university chair in FE leadership.

The next round of grants and fellowships is due to start in the spring. Further information will be published in *InTuition* and will be made available at [www.fetl.org.uk/#fellowships-and-grants](http://www.fetl.org.uk/#fellowships-and-grants).

• FETL's inaugural lecture, delivered by James Krantz, from leadership consultancy WorkLab, will be held in London on 10 March.



Change of any kind may look threatening to practitioners and research may be even harder to promote given that its outcomes, by their nature, are uncertain – not usually a selling point for risk-averse planners and budget holders.

Gaining the support of the leadership team was seen by workshop participants as the top success factor. Bottom-up initiatives with practitioners involved in research often result in greater impact because practical knowledge of what works on the ground is integrated into the research process.

Collaboration between practitioners and with professional researchers as in the 'joint practice development' approach of the Foundation's practitioner research programmes is proving effective for many providers.

The final plea from workshop participants, as they wound up their deliberations, was for an end to the 'silver bullet' mentality. Approaches need to be tailored to suit local circumstances - maybe many 'silver pellets' as one expressed it.

**Andrew Morris is an education consultant and a member of the Learning and Skills Research Network**

# Teachers and students join forces on action research

By **Dr Tony Leach**

The report of the BERA-RSA Inquiry, *The Role of Research in Teacher Education*, makes the case for "the development, across the UK, of self-improving education systems in which teachers are research literate and have opportunities for engagement in research and enquiry."

The work I am doing with teachers and students in schools is enabling York St John University to explore the realities of teachers in schools, colleges of further education and higher education institutions working together in partnership for research.

Last academic year a partnership arrangement with Brayton High School in Selby resulted in 14 teachers planning and carrying out small-scale, action-based investigations into teaching and learning. Many of these projects involved students as co-researcher.

The venture also involved a group of seven student parliamentarians who planned and carried out a small piece of research to explore student motivation to learn. My role as the visiting academic was to advise and support them.

To celebrate their

achievements, the seven student parliamentarians and eight pupil researchers presented the results of their research to members of the school senior management team. They gave a similar presentation at York St John University last summer.

The 14 teacher practitioner researchers presented the results of their research to their colleagues in the school. This academic year the venture is being opened out to include all members of the school staff. The students-as-researchers project is also being expanded to include more students.

New partnership projects taking off in 2015 include:

- Support for research across an alliance of 13 primary schools in North Yorkshire. Teachers from these schools are working together to investigate the following themes: 'Talk for maths', 'Marking and feedback', 'Reading: alternatives to guided reading.'
- A project similar to the one at Brayton High School for schools in North Yorkshire.
- Work with recently qualified teachers in secondary schools to help them plan and carry out a small-scale action-based investigation, into an

aspect of their practice.

Reflecting on the factors that could explain the success of these ventures, the first thing to say is that they are developing relationships and not a pre-determined programme of training in research methods. It follows that, from the perspective of the school, college of FE and university, costing the venture at the outset is problematic.

Gaining entry into a school or a college is about more than being invited to and agreeing to work with teachers and students. It is about gaining people's trust and respect.

These ventures raise interesting questions. The experience so far is that it is about teachers, students and academics working in partnership to identify spaces that are 'in-between' what are often experienced as every-day arrangements and conventions in their respective organisations.

[www.yorks.ac.uk](http://www.yorks.ac.uk)

[www.tonyleach.com](http://www.tonyleach.com)

[www.bera.ac.uk/project/research-and-teacher-education](http://www.bera.ac.uk/project/research-and-teacher-education)

**Dr Tony Leach is a senior lecturer at York St John University**

## Foundation research support for practitioners

The Education and Training Foundation is keen to support FE practitioners who wish to undertake research.

The Foundation's 2014-15 practitioner-led action research projects, run in conjunction with East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (emCETT) and the University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (SUNCETT), are already underway.

Research fellows each received a £1,000 bursary from the Foundation to cover their travel and associated costs. Research projects will be written up and disseminated.

Participants will have the chance to share and discuss their projects at the Foundation's annual research conference due to be held at Mary Ward House, London, on 7 July.

Research support for practitioners: [bit.ly/InTuition\\_research\\_support](http://bit.ly/InTuition_research_support)

# Provider consortium wins bid to promote excellence in teaching and learning

By **Markos Tiris**

We all know that outstanding teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) is at the heart of learner success. Now there is a programme, commissioned and funded by the Education and Training Foundation, dedicated to supporting providers in their journey to outstanding TLA, delivered by members of The Learning Consortium.

The Learning Consortium, which won a Foundation tender to improve teaching and learning capacity across FE, uses a unique model that is able to call on the experience and expertise of a wide range of provider types across the UK. This includes colleges, work-based learning, adult learning, offender learning, and community provision.

The Consortium is led by South Essex College and core members include: Chichester College, Walsall College, East Durham College, Wirral Metropolitan College, Learning Curve, Franklin College and SCL Ltd.

The diversity of the consortium's

member organisations ensures that delivery of the programme meets the needs of all provider types, as well as being tailored for individual organisations.

The model is based on peer communities who meet and share expertise, together with peer-delivered CPD to develop expert practitioners as leaders of learning.

These are teachers, trainers and managers who have acquired the expertise, qualities and skills to lead learning and support ongoing improvement in teaching and learning practice. They are key individuals who support others and help to communicate the excitement and possibilities of change.

The programme is based on the learning framework, a proven peer-led model which develops capacity for self-improvement in providers. It is underpinned by solid research and delivers sustainable and measurable long-term benefits for learners. The

Sharing in peer communities is key to excellent teaching; learning and assessment.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOUNDATION

programme uses peer-coaching approaches alongside the framework's learning cycle – a model to inform good quality lesson planning and delivery.

The model, which has learner voice as one of the key indicators, uses established impact measures:

- Learner satisfaction
- Improvements in lesson observations
- Increase on learner achievement and improved success rates
- Increase in top-level performance of learners (those achieving high grades) and CVA

Senior leadership engagement is essential to maximise impact. Managers that attend leadership of learning CPD complete an organisational learning agreement and commit to the development of their own action plan which they co-create with their advanced practitioners.

This creates a new energy around the development of outstanding teaching and learning and acts as a catalyst for culture change. Critically, the model produces a cultural shift, with both practitioners and managers working jointly to improve the quality of teaching and learning as leaders of learning operating at different levels.

Angela O'Donoghue CBE, principal and chief executive of South Essex College, tells *InTuition*: "With the support of the Foundation, we are delivering a high impact programme at exceptional value for money. In addition, we are

## SUMMARY OF THE CONSORTIUM OFFER:

- Leading Teaching and Learning certificates include two types of training for senior management and advanced practitioners. Participants attend a summer school, which brings senior managers and their advanced practitioners together.
- A range of modules is available, either standalone or to supplement the training offered in the certificates. For example, participants can gain a Licence to Observe or Assess. There are also opportunities for governors to attend training in outstanding teaching and learning.
- Opportunities to bid for £5,000 Joint Practice Development Projects to improve teaching, learning and assessment through a project focusing on a TLA theme of their choice with another provider.
- Access to resources and training materials on the Consortium Moodle and participation in online communities of practice open to all who wish to develop their insight into outstanding TLA.
- Support and Challenge Partnerships that involve partnering between advanced practitioners and/or senior managers from another organisation.
- The National Learning Conference celebrating and showcasing excellence in TLA will be held at the British Library on 24 June.

To find out more about The Learning Consortium and the National Learning Conference please visit [www.thelearningconsortium.ac.uk](http://www.thelearningconsortium.ac.uk)

The programme covers all providers funded through the Skills Funding Agency in the South East and Coast to Capital LEP areas. Eligible providers can express interest in any activities included in the article by completing the online form at: [bit.ly/Outstanding\\_teaching](http://bit.ly/Outstanding_teaching)



# Survey explores links between observation and professional development

By **Nick Bailey**

delighted that we have been given the opportunity to share the fantastic skills and expertise of our consortium members to benefit students.”

**Markos Tiris** is executive director of The Learning Consortium

## MIND THE GAP

In addition to awarding the tender to The Learning Consortium, the Education and Training Foundation is also supporting work by AoC London Region and EMFEC.

The AoC London Region programme of activity aims to contribute to closing the gap in the performance of the London education and training sector, compared with the average performance of the sector across England and with the London school sector.

The project, led by EMFEC, will be delivered by a consortium of vocational education and training providers in the East Midlands. Its aim is to put the ‘wow factor’ back into TLA through an ethos of shared endeavour in continuing professional development that is provider- and practitioner-led.

[www.londoncolleges.com](http://www.londoncolleges.com)  
[www.emfec.co.uk](http://www.emfec.co.uk)

I started to look at Thurrock Adult Community College’s professional development following a very successful Joint Practice Development (JPD) project last year. It involved testing the links between lesson observation, personal reviews and professional development.

The experience was surprising, not because of the revelations or its success, but the motivational effect on staff and their engagement with genuinely thoughtful reflection and exploration of practice. It was significant for those involved because of the release they felt when they could observe and be observed, and engage in professional discussions. There were no grades or threats of sanction in the process. Staff found they reignited their interest in teaching and learning, felt energised and inspired to expand and experiment.

At the same time, I was reviewing our observation model and saw the need to tighten the links between observation, objective setting and personal review.

I remain unsure about the validity of an observation grade profile as a reliable indicator of the quality of teaching and learning. Based on such a small sample, the vast margin for error far outweighs any marginal improvements implied.

And, when you add the risks from inconsistency, lack of standardisation, and the low correlation factor between different observers, it is difficult to justify using these grades as a basis for any sound judgement.

However, what I would like to present to the college’s governing body – and to Ofsted – are the cumulative improvements exemplified by the achievements and progress made by staff against their set objectives and those that have arisen from observation and the associated professional dialogue.

This evidence would represent a year’s worth of progress, include every member of staff (not always the case with grade profiles) and demonstrate the professional development of each individual and the organisation as a whole.

I have a model prepared and am in the process of implementing the changes

building on our current practices and the momentum generated by the JPD experience. The model uses the new Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers (see box), rather than the Ofsted criteria – which are for inspection not professional development.

I am aware that there are many different models and practices and varying degrees of ‘joined-upness’, or otherwise. What I want to know is how evolved are the links between observation, personal reviews and professional development and what is the perception of staff and managers of the process involved in observation, review and professional development.

The Education and Training Foundation has supported me with a research fellowship to pursue this question. A survey is being prepared and can be found by following the Twitter feed **@CPDsurvey**. Links to the survey will also be available through other networks, including LinkedIn.

I also have the support of several academics interested in what the outcomes may be and the support of the Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training at Sunderland University, which manages research fellowships for the Foundation.

Those who participate in the survey will have access to the final report, which will be presented at the Learning and Skills Research Network Conference in July. The findings should also provide a benchmark for colleges and training providers to review their practice as we enter a new age where Ofsted doesn’t grade.

**Nick Bailey** is vice principal of Thurrock Adult Community College

## FIND OUT MORE

Nick is keen to hear from many teachers, trainers and managers. To access the survey go to the Twitter feed **@CPDsurvey**. Download the Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers at: [bit.ly/prof\\_standards](http://bit.ly/prof_standards)

# FE sets out its stall ahead of the election

With three months until the general election, *InTuition* examines the manifestos of seven leading FE and training organisations to find out what they want from a new government

## Association of Colleges

### The AoC's 10-point manifesto calls for the following

1. The introduction of systematic careers education for 11- to 18-year-olds which should promote understanding of different types of business, the risks of career stereotyping and the qualities for employability
2. Grants and loans for adult FE students aged 19 and over on an equivalent basis to the funding available to HE students
3. Affordable and accessible student transport including local authority assessments of the transport needs of 16- to 18-year-olds
4. Give FE providers the equivalent of degree awarding status allowing them to expand their role delivering higher technical and professional education qualifications developed in collaboration with employers
5. Pre-apprenticeship training that prepares 16- to 24-year-olds for full apprenticeships
6. Scrap plans to abolish AS levels and ensure that rigorous modular assessment is used alongside final exams for 16- to 18-year-olds
7. The protection and enhancement of measures to ensure colleges can operate autonomously in response to the needs of their local markets
8. New English and maths qualifications that allow 16- to 18-year-olds to choose a non-GCSE route that will give them the core literacy and numeracy skills required in the workplace
9. Ring fence spending on 16- to 18-year-olds to ensure an end to the cuts, plus a review into the cost of educating and training children and young people should be carried out by the end of the first year of the next parliament
10. Government should only allow new schools, including studio schools and university technical colleges, to open if they genuinely meet demand and/or they cater for rising pupil numbers

[bit.ly/AOC\\_manifesto\\_PDF](http://bit.ly/AOC_manifesto_PDF)

## 157 Group

### The group's five key requests of the next government are:

1. A stable policy landscape so that colleges can focus their energy on delivering outstanding teaching and learning; on designing innovative curricula; on employer engagement and employment opportunities, without having unnecessary distractions
2. A transparent and equitable framework for measuring performance and demonstrating accountability across all post-14 education and training
3. A coordinated partnership approach to strategic employer engagement for economic growth
4. Autonomy and trust for maximum local influence and economic impact
5. A durable investment envelope and funding system

[bit.ly/157\\_manifesto](http://bit.ly/157_manifesto)

[bit.ly/157\\_future\\_colleges](http://bit.ly/157_future_colleges)

## University and College Union (UCU)

### The UCU sets out 15 'big ideas' for the next government

1. Commit to increased spending on the knowledge economy
2. Redesign the way in which post-school education is funded
3. Reinforce the importance of early years education as a determinant of life chances
4. Ensure a real choice and balance between academic and vocational options for 14- to 19-year-olds
5. Overhaul careers education to improve understanding of different educational pathways
6. Enhance the apprenticeship brand by improving quality and ensuring that apprentices receive a rounded education
7. Tackle youth unemployment using a kite-marked partnership model for local authorities, businesses and education providers
8. Introduce greater collaboration between schools, colleges, universities and community learning programmes to widen participation
9. Launch a bespoke educational offer for those aged 25 and over wishing to up-skill and retrain
10. Undertake an in-depth review of the prison education system
11. Increase transparency and accountability at education institutions
12. Extend the statutory protection of academic freedom to all staff working in teaching and research
13. Protect our global reputation and remove overseas students from the immigration cap
14. Stop all public funding for profit-making education institutions
15. Protect the status and quality of academic teaching by ending exploitative working practices

[bit.ly/UCU\\_manifesto](http://bit.ly/UCU_manifesto)



## Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)

### The AELP's manifesto recommends 10 key points for action

1. Schools must have a balanced curriculum that includes a focus on basic skills as well as employability skills like team working
2. All young people must have access to high quality careers guidance and schools must be held accountable for ensuring that pupils receive independent and impartial advice
3. Government funding for basic employability skills and competencies up to level 2, regardless of age and fund short courses and skills development for the unemployed
4. Adults must have access to labour market and training information linked to skills demands, qualifications required, the costs of relevant training and the likely wage returns
5. High quality apprenticeships should be the preferred route to training with a substantial increase in the number of young people on the programme
6. Apprenticeships must build on what works and avoid disengagement by young people and employers
7. Increase access to the traineeships programme and increase the flexibility of delivery. Programmes for young people not in work should focus on high quality, work-related learning and experience
8. More coherent procurement is needed across government departments (DfE, BIS and DWP) with coordinated aims and consistent contract management
9. Local enterprise partnerships have a key role in supporting local delivery but we must retain the coherence of national contracting for key employment and skills programmes
10. Funding and contracting must be open and transparent with contracts awarded to providers with a proven ability in a level playing field

[bit.ly/AELP\\_manifesto](http://bit.ly/AELP_manifesto)

## Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

### The ATL's manifesto looks forward to a new deal for students and education staff and sets out its six priorities

1. A broad and balanced curriculum for young people in which they have access to academic and practical knowledge and employment skills
2. A new deal for young people which restores financial support and careers advice and guidance
3. An end to schools, colleges and universities being run for profit, and for publicly-funded institutions to be democratic accountable to their local communities with transparent funding and governance structures
4. A return to a nationwide system of teacher training that results in a professional qualification backed by a contractual right to continuing professional development
5. An end to excessive working hours for teachers and the return to a consistent national pay structure that allows for some local flexibility
6. A new accountability system for schools based on collaboration and support with local partners and a new role for Ofsted in evaluating these arrangements

[bit.ly/ATL\\_manifesto](http://bit.ly/ATL_manifesto)

## Edge Foundation

### Edge's manifesto sets a simple target for the next government: no NEETs. It says the next government should:

- Reinvigorate practical learning in classrooms, science laboratories, design and technology workshops and outdoor settings
- Create more high-quality specialist 14-18 schools and colleges such as university technical colleges, studio schools and career colleges
- Introduce a baccalaureate that recognises the full breadth of young people's achievements up to the age of 18
- Introduce an entitlement to impartial face-to-face information, advice and guidance for all young people, as soon as resources permit
- Help education and employers to work together via national initiatives such as Inspiring the Future and local partnerships led jointly by employers and educators
- Protect FE from further funding cuts
- Give top priority to apprenticeships for young people aged 16-24

[bit.ly/Edge\\_manifesto](http://bit.ly/Edge_manifesto)

## National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace)

### Niace proposes six priorities for after the election

1. A major, independent review into the long-term skills needs and funding issues facing the UK over the next 20 years, to report by 2018
2. A new UK government department for education, skills and work to develop an integrated skills and industrial society that includes a new localism focus that integrates skills and economic growth strategies
3. A personal skills account for adults linked to career reviews to help people decide what skills development they require
4. More emphasis on informal, and non-formal, as well as formal learning to enable people to gain economically and socially useful skills
5. Full funding for adult basic skills with support for those with lower-level skills to engage in informal learning
6. An Apprentice Charter that sets out how every apprenticeship will provide an expansive education and foundation for a successful career

[bit.ly/NIACE\\_manifesto](http://bit.ly/NIACE_manifesto)

# Trainee pipeline turns graduates on to FE teaching

By staff reporters

Becky Hamilton (pictured right, bottom) was working towards a career as a university academic but, having completed an MSc in evolutionary anthropology, she decided that she didn't really enjoy the working environment.

"Everyone was trying to get one up on each other. It wasn't what you'd call a supportive environment," says Becky who is approaching the end of her first year on the Premium Graduate Initial Teacher Education scheme run by the Education and Training Foundation.

Having completed her master's, Becky took a job in catering to pay the bills. She had considered school teaching as a career but the cost of putting herself through a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) was prohibitive. Then she came across the Foundation's

graduate ITE scheme.

"There are lots of graduate recruitment schemes out there that promise lots of money and I used to think the same as many of my friends: 'hold out for the money,'" she says.

"But while the scheme does pay, just as importantly it opens the door to a rewarding career in teaching; that is the reason people should consider this scheme. I've realised I am pretty good at teaching and I enjoy it."

Under the scheme, PGCE fees are covered and trainees are employed as trainee teachers throughout the two-year programme. Becky is paid a salary of £20,000 by Darlington College where she teaches, while her PGCE is delivered by Middlesbrough College which she attends twice a week.



MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE

"There is excellent support from our mentors and coaches at both Darlington and Middlesbrough – quite different to university – and I try to replicate the positive relationships I have with my teachers in class with my students."

Beth Mainwaring (right, top), a zoology graduate, is a trainee colleague of Becky's at Darlington College.

"To be honest," says Beth, "although I was aware of FE colleges, I didn't think they would do things that I could teach."

"However, not only do you come out of the scheme with a PGCE but also a level 5 diploma in either maths or English, so

# Babel fish get teachers hooked on technology

By Nikki Gilbey

The concept of messages being lost in translation is something I am all too familiar with in the realms of learning technology where I have spent the past 12 months of my career.

Teaching staff and IT specialists often have very different approaches to Information Learning Technology (ILT), which became apparent when I was faced with launching a new college-wide Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

As a teacher, I understand the importance of making the student experience of any VLE engaging and interesting. I was determined that our VLE would not become a repository of files, but a lively teaching, learning and assessment tool that would be central to our blended model of delivery – a core part of the college teaching and

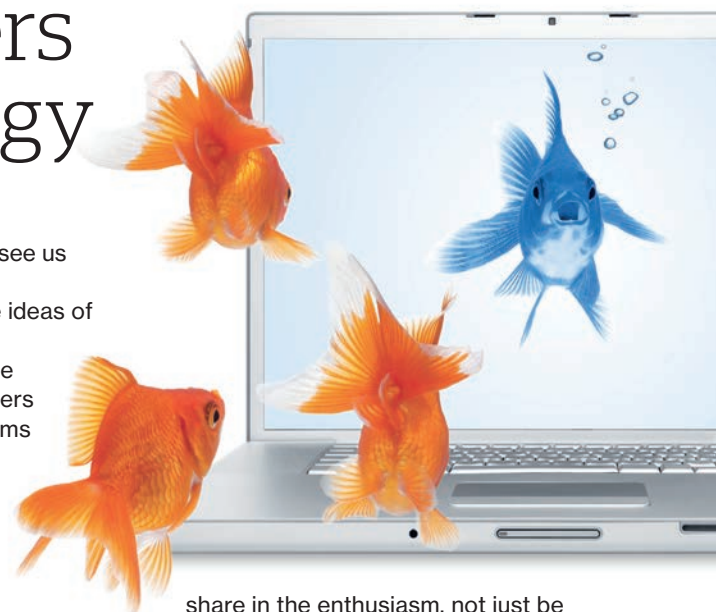
learning strategy that would see us move towards 'Outstanding'.

I wanted to get across the ideas of 'cloud hosting', 'HTML', 'embedding' and 'effective file management'. But are teachers really interested in those terms and what they mean? Some are, but the majority are not – they may lack confidence or competence and so immediately switch off when it all gets a bit too 'techie'. I needed a Babel fish.

I decided to take a participatory leadership approach to the launch of the new VLE. I absolutely did not want staff to feel like this new system was being imposed upon them. It was important for them to feel included, supported and to

share in the enthusiasm, not just be recipients of my motivating spiel.

I gathered together a group of the college learning champions and identified some early adopters who would be happy to work in pairs to deliver staff training and promptly threw them into the deep end.





not only will I be able to teach biology but maths as well.”

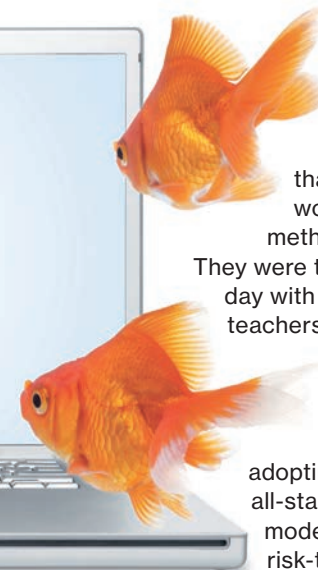
A final benefit of the scheme, appreciated by both Beth and Becky, is the master’s level leadership component built into the second year of the programme that also gives trainees a route to FE management.

The package has proved so popular that the 45-place pilot scheme has been massively oversubscribed, says Paul Kessell-Holland, the Foundation’s programme manager for workforce development. “We are still in the first year of the pilot but people have been biting

our hands off to get on the scheme,” he says. “Not only will it help fill gaps in maths and English teaching but we hope it will bring in a cohort of ambitious young graduates into the leadership pipeline. It’s also helping develop subject specific training in FE which has never been achieved before,” he says.

Paul says the scheme was designed to offer strong mentoring and support to the graduates, adding: “We have been very careful not to simply parachute graduates into teaching in FE.”

• Visit ‘support for teacher recruitment’ at [www.et-foundation.co.uk](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk)



I had created a bank of resources and a structure for the day, but had an expectation that this group of staff would shape their own method of delivery.

They were to spend a whole day with a team of other teachers, training them on using the new VLE and they had two weeks to prepare.

I took a risk adopting this model of all-staff training but by modelling the risk-taking behaviour, I demonstrated to my

early adopters that risk is necessary and is often the catalyst to change and improvement. I love challenge and I love risk – and my early adopters started to love it too.

We tore up the traditional ‘Moodle how-to’ guide and focused on embedding external content and

activities to make any course page interactive and engaging.

In their groups, teachers explored new ways to teach through a digital learning environment; found content to make learning more active and created assessment methods that checked learning effectively and also provided the opportunity to employ a flipped classroom model.

So had staff been left wondering what I was going on about in my initial briefing? Was it the case that I might as well have been speaking Klingon?

I don’t think so – the buzz and excitement around the college on the training day was fantastic. The risk of giving a small group of ‘non-techie’ staff, the responsibility to deliver the message in teacher-friendly terms and make real links to teaching and learning paid off. They weren’t early adopters, they were my shoal of Babel fish.

**Nikki Gilbey** was learning technology manager at Fareham College and has just started a new job as head of learning (land based) at Chichester College.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIOR MANAGERS

Senior managers are linking together in a new network that allows them to share knowledge and support in a bid to improve the quality of leadership across FE and training.

The Leadership Register, run by the Institute of Education on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation, allows senior staff to offer and receive support and mentoring on specific issues they face and in relation to their career development more generally.

The register – offered alongside the Senior Leadership and Management Development programme run by the Association of Colleges in conjunction with the Foundation – is very flexible.

It can be used to arrange mentoring arrangements, work shadowing, learning visits, events and specific interest networks. The format also allows for integration with organisations’ management and leadership development programmes.

Sign up at [www.leadershiplearning.org.uk/~leadreg/about.php](http://www.leadershiplearning.org.uk/~leadreg/about.php)



## Been on the Excellence Gateway lately?

### It's time to take a fresh look...

Love the treasure trove of CPD resources on the Excellence Gateway? Now, following extensive redevelopment of the Gateway by the Education and Training Foundation, you'll find they're much easier to find.

- Search and browse using simple filters
- Resources accessed via a new search facility
- No explanatory web pages with multiple clicks

[www.excellencegateway.org.uk](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk)

### Plus: Foundation Online Learning

Online professional development for anyone working in the education and training sector.

Access the latest programmes on:

- Leadership
- Governance
- Teaching and Learning
- Equality and Diversity

And much, much more. Register and enrol today:

[www.foundationonline.org.uk](http://www.foundationonline.org.uk)

# Free maths teaching workshops

National Centre  
for Excellence in the  
Teaching of Mathematics

Do you teach maths, numeracy or functional maths, or is maths part of your vocational subject?

We have a free, one-day course just for you!

The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) is organising a series of free, one-day workshops for lecturers and trainers to improve their teaching and build their confidence in maths.

The workshops run from now till July 2015.

They cover core areas from enhancing your understanding of Number to teaching numeracy in construction, hair and beauty and other vocational areas. They are suitable for practitioners from all FE and training settings including colleges, work-place learning and prisons.

For details of all the workshops and to apply for a free place, go to:

[www.et-foundation.co.uk/mathsworkshops](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/mathsworkshops)



# The new-look Excellence Gateway opens for business

By Peter Munday

After months of hard work, the Excellence Gateway, a tremendous resource for the education and training community, is now live. The redeveloped site provides access to a dynamic repository of resources and information to support teachers and trainers in their practice as well as managers, governors and sector leaders.

Redevelopment has been significant. The Excellence Gateway was first developed in 2006 by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), with the aim of being the first port of call to find advice, resources and support.

Over the years it underwent many redevelopments with new areas being added. There were thousands of web pages, each containing links to more pages, and it would take users umpteen clicks to find the resource they were

after. It had become as unwieldy as it was expensive to maintain.

The running of the Gateway transferred to the Education and Training Foundation in 2013 following the closure of LSIS and we quickly decided to make this incredible resource more accessible, efficient and cost effective.

Effectively, we are creating a library of resources. The aim is to allow resources to be found easily and quickly via new taxonomies through straightforward search and browse features. Another new feature is the "My collection" facility which allows you to bookmark your favourite resources. Additionally, we are producing exhibition sites that showcase resources on a particular topic. The first, offering resources on special educational needs and disability (SEND), is live and a maths exhibition site will follow soon.

We are reviewing all existing resources:

deleting those that are no longer relevant and adding new ones, many produced by Foundation-commissioned programmes. We are also looking at how material can be turned into online courses to run on the Foundation Online Learning platform ([www.foundationonline.org.uk](http://www.foundationonline.org.uk)).

There is a lot still to do and we hope to have completed the process by the end of March. All legacy sites will remain open and live until the then.

In the meantime, I hope you will visit the redeveloped site and please accept my apologies for any disruption caused during the changeover. Finally, please do let us have your feedback.

[www.excellencegateway.org.uk](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk)

**Peter Munday** is an interim adviser digital estate at the Education and Training Foundation and is managing the redevelopment of the Excellence Gateway

## ATL union steps up delivery of professional development

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is working with 12 colleges on a project backed by the Union Learning Fund (ULF) project to support professional development for staff.

Continuing professional development is delivered in a range of ways, including twilight sessions, workshops and teach meets. Development is available across a range of areas including apprenticeships, traineeships and English and maths.

There are sessions on 'managing difficult behaviour', 'protecting your professional identity online', 'being a professional in the FE sector' and 'stress and well-being'.

ATL is due to present its work with the colleges at the Apprenticeships 4 England conference in London on 3-4 March. ATL is also interested in supporting other colleges outside the ULF project.

For more information on the ULF projects, and in working with ATL, please email Rebecca Poorhady at [rpoorhady@atl.org.uk](mailto:rpoorhady@atl.org.uk)

• For information on the ULF, visit [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)  
[www.apprenticeships4england.info](http://www.apprenticeships4england.info)



## Independent providers assess digital risks

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers is running a workshop in Birmingham on 24 March that will explore the opportunities and risks for learners and staff who use social media, mobile and web technologies.

The workshop is being held against the backdrop of a growing number of employees losing their jobs due to a lack of understanding of their online responsibilities and company policies, the AELP says.

• For more details visit [www.aelp.org.uk/events](http://www.aelp.org.uk/events)

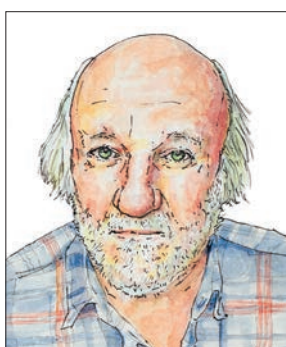
## Sign up for your free newsletter

Don't forget to sign up for your free copy of the Education and Training Foundation's newsletter service. The monthly bulletins provide vital information to help support you in your teaching practice and career development as well as giving you updates on important news and events.

• Signing up couldn't be simpler, just visit: [www.et-foundation.co.uk/newsletters/newsletter-subscription](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/newsletters/newsletter-subscription)

# Help!

## They forget faster than I can teach



Is there a way to improve the recall of your students? Absolutely, says **Geoff Petty**. Geoff is the author of *Teaching Today and Evidenced Based Teaching*, and has trained staff in more than 300 colleges and schools.

Do you ever get the feeling that teaching is like running a bath with the plug out? A colleague once told me: "While I'm teaching them Edward II, they're forgetting about Edward I."

Well, there is a solution and it has been known for centuries. It creates better learning in less time, but hardly anyone does it. I hope you can try it.

What is the strategy and how do we know it works? Suppose you were teaching the mathematical concept of ratios, as in: "The ratio of flour to butter in my shortbread recipe is 3:2." You have to teach this topic to two maths groups of near identical ability. You teach the two groups in two different ways, taking two hours with each.

**Group 1, Massed practice:** you teach ratios in a single two-hour class.

**Group 2, Spaced practice:** you teach ratios for half an hour in four separate

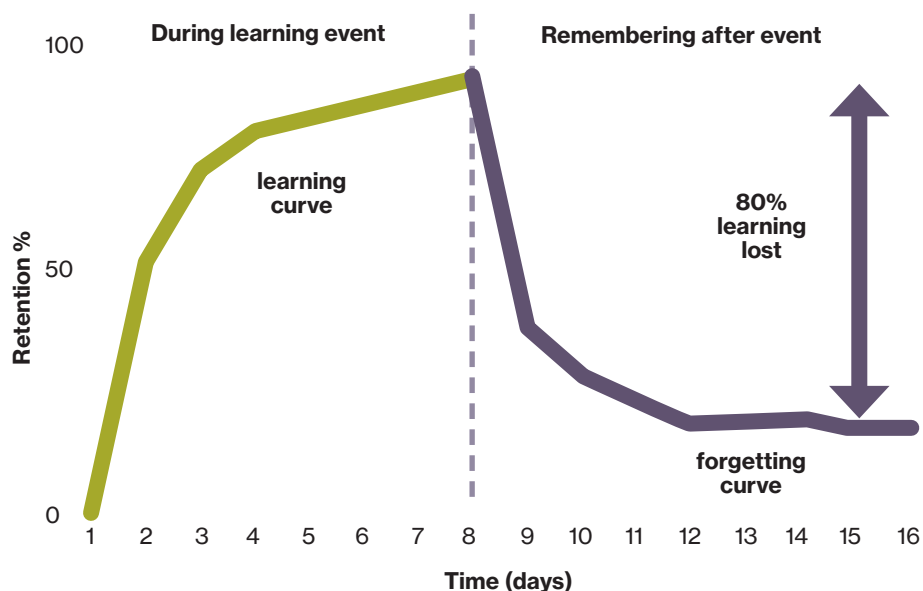
lessons. The rest of the time in those lessons you teach some other topic. Otherwise, your teaching to the two groups is pretty much identical.

Which group would do best? Most teachers – and most students – believe that the massed practice group will learn best; it's less confusing to do it all in one go, they say. But in trials, spaced practice wins hands down.

There have been many experiments on spaced practice and a summary of the findings can be found in Hattie (2009), page 185. On average, the spaced practice class does more than a grade better. Suppose the students in both classes took the same test on ratios after completing their study, and papers were graded as A, B, C, D etc as in GCSE or A-level exams.

A student in the massed practice class who gets a C would have got at least a B had they been in the spaced practice

### Typical learning and forgetting curves



## STUDY, COVER, RECALL, CHECK... AND REPEAT

Spaced practice of recall is a great revision strategy, but don't overuse it. Most students think revision means reading up your notes just before the exam. They don't think to space this work or to check their recall, though this saves them considerable time and effort. Here is a better way...

Simply identify the key facts and simple skills your students must know for a topic. Make clear what this material is, for example on a summarising handout. Then tell students to:

**Study:** look at these materials and read their notes/books, endeavouring to understand it.

**Cover:** close the book or cover the handout, then after a cup of tea....

**Recall:** write down everything they can remember about this material, then...

**Check:** Look at what they recalled and compare it to the book or handout. What did they get right, what did they forget or get wrong?

**Repeat:** on another day until the learning is sound.

Set this work as a homework, which you don't even need to mark – just give a three-minute test or quiz on the material at the beginning of the next class. Make sure you warn students of this in advance.

'Study, cover, recall, check and repeat' improves recall of vital material. If this is done with spaces between the practice sessions, learning is maximised and learning time and effort minimised. Also, you and your students are saved the boredom of massed revision.

class. Given the strength of these findings it is surprising that so little attention is paid to how the teaching of a topic is distributed.

Students are less likely to forget if teaching is 'spaced' or 'distributed', but there is also a better chance that the learning is deeper. It works for any topic or type of learning. In one experiment students were taught to identify different painters and their characteristics.

One group had massed practice, studying one painter at a time, the other had spaced practice learning about each painter many times, on different days. Then students were shown paintings they had not seen before. The spaced practice group was much better at identifying who had painted which picture.

Why does spaced practice work so well? Partly it is because the brain has a brilliant system to ensure it is not overloaded with useless memories.

It works perfectly and it's called forgetting. Forgetting is the brain's default option: teach something today and most of it will be forgotten tomorrow. But if the brain comes across the same material again on another day, it forgets it again, but more slowly. After about six separate encounters the material is forgotten very slowly indeed, and in effect, is in the 'long-term memory'.

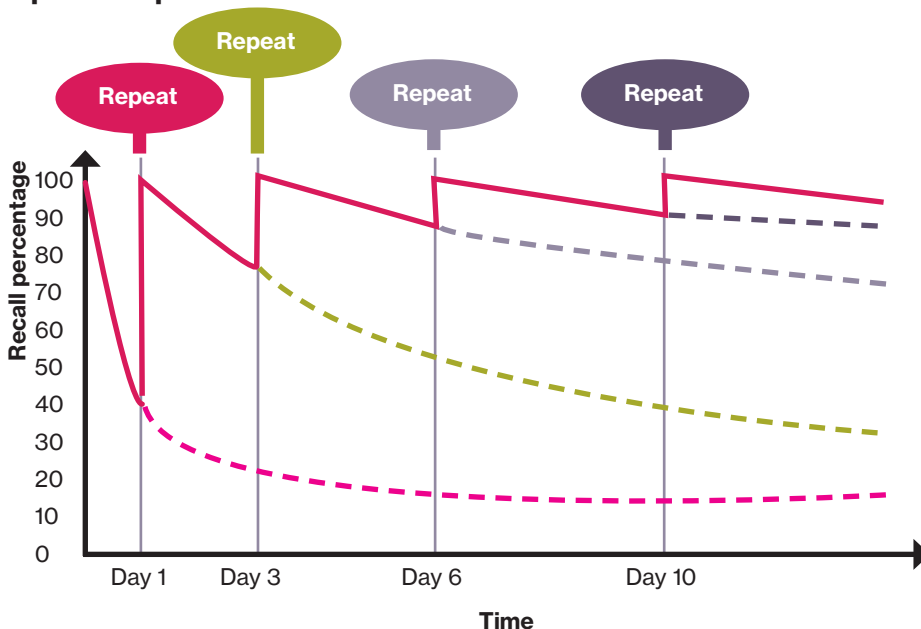
The time it takes to recall or reuse older learning can be very short indeed, and still be effective. Relearning is a very efficient process.

### Learning and forgetting curves

How can we make use of this well-known and well-tested strategy?

- We can devise our schemes of work to teach topics in sections spaced by days or months, rather than all at once. (Search for Bruner's 'spiral curriculum').
- We can set activities that require recall of prior learning. One of my favourites is to compare the similarities and differences of concepts taught today, and much earlier. "What are the similarities and differences between the reigns of Henry I and Henry II?"
- We can use repeated homework to perfect recall of key points from material taught earlier, see above.
- Don't be afraid to set assignments long after you taught the topic.
- Contrary to popular opinion delaying feedback on work is better than immediate feedback if the student really studies their work and your feedback.
- Go through worksheets used for homework and put a last question on each from an earlier topic.

### Spaced repetition



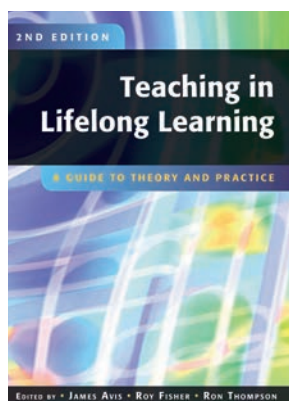
[HTTP://TEACHWELL.WIKIA.COM/WIKI/USE\\_SPACED\\_REPETITION](http://teachwell.wikia.com/wiki/Use_Spaced_Repetition)

### References

This article draws on chapter 23 'Learning for Remembering' in the new 5th edition of *Teaching Today*  
 Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, London: Routledge.  
 Petty, G (2009) *Evidence Based Teaching*, Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes  
 Petty, G (2014) *Teaching Today 5th Edition*, Cheltenham: OUP

## • Editor's pick

# 'This book is a tour de force and the authors are to be congratulated'



## Teaching in Lifelong Learning: A guide to theory and practice

**Edited by James Avis, Roy Fisher and Ron Thompson.**  
**Open University Press;**  
**paperback 978-0-3352-6332-5**

Last year saw the publication of the second edition of this text by Avis et al, the original having been published in 2010. Interestingly, given the rapidly shifting terrain of the lifelong learning sector, four years seems a long time and, looking back, it is important to note just how much and how significant the considerable change is that has taken place..

Of course, in some respects, learning and teaching remain what they have always been and this

### Excerpt: *Teaching in Lifelong Learning: A guide to theory and practice*

#### Chapter four, page 46

"There is a struggle over the nature of educational research and the type of contribution it makes to society. For writers such as Pring (2000), education is an applied discipline that directly addresses pedagogic and educational questions.

"This means that research engaging theoretical questions that have no immediate practical implications is seen as something other than educational, being possibly sociological or psychological. The difficulty rests with where this particular division is drawn and how narrowly or broadly we think about research and practice."

has been the strength of the first edition. Discussions around 'becoming' a teacher in terms of identity and 'doing' teaching in practice are more unified and coherent.

The book promises a 'helpful balance of theory and practice' and it does just that. The chapters take the reader through a review of the current landscape of teacher education before exploring the importance of the relationship between theory and practice – a theme picked up in the remaining chapters covering assessment, curriculum, diversity, technology, and reflective practice and its role in professional learning.

Of huge value in a book such as this – and thinking about my own students as 'professionals-in-the-making' – is the chapter

titled 'professionalism'. In particular, the issue of inter-professionalism is explored well. This is an often neglected topic and yet of key importance in understanding the nature of both practice and the teaching body in lifelong learning.

The chapter on 'subject specialist teaching' has lots of potential. A key feature of lifelong learning has always been the ability of teachers to reconcile their dual identity as both teachers and vocational specialists, and how this duality has an impact on learning and teaching.

This book is a tour de force and the authors are to be congratulated. At a potentially uncertain time for the sector a book of this nature and authority helps us all to review and reaffirm why teaching and learning in our sector matters.

And, in turn, why professional learning and teacher education also matter.

**Warren Kidd is a senior lecturer at the Cass School of Education and Communities at the University of East London and a teacher educator across secondary, lifelong learning and HE.**  
<http://allthingsteachereducation.blogspot.co.uk>

### Reader offer

There is a 20 per cent discount on the recommended retail price of this title when ordering from OUP/McGraw-Hill Education at [bit.ly/1BEYLul](http://bit.ly/1BEYLul). Offer is valid until 30 April, 2015.

## • Other new publications

### Talk-Less Teaching

**By Isabella Wallace and Leah Kirkman**  
**Crown House Publishing;**  
**paperback**  
**978-1-8459-0928-4**

Unless you're a gifted speaker, the key message in this lively book is that you need alternative strategies to keep students motivated, help them understand and make progress. Talk-less teaching

is defined in this 195-page book as a way of teaching that engages every learner through a variety of experiences and has a demonstrable impact on their progress. It is full of strategies to try – some with intriguing titles like 'The Walking Chocolate Bar' and 'Crash! Bang! Wallop!' – as well as step-by-step processes and helpful tips and hints.

**Reader offer**  
**See offer panel for *Teaching Backwards*, page 33.**

### Lesson Planning: Key concepts and skills for teachers

**By Jonathan Savage**  
**Routledge; paperback**  
**978-0-4157-0896-8**

An alternative title for this book might have been: *Everything you need to know about lesson planning but were too afraid to ask.* There would seem little to fear from Savage's 183-page book as he takes the reader through writing learning objectives, resourcing lessons, evaluating

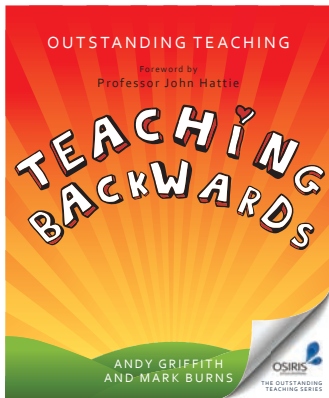
your lesson and reflective teaching practice. Each of the nine chapters is furnished with reflective and practical tasks, chapter summaries and further reading suggestions.

### Reader offer

There is a 20 per cent discount on *Lesson Planning* by Jonathan Savage when ordering from [www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com). Enter the code IRK69 when prompted. The offer is valid until 31 December 2015.



# 'A book that enables and empowers teachers to put theory into practice'



## Excerpt: *Outstanding Teaching: Teaching Backwards*

### Setting high expectations, page 15

"A chemistry teacher at a sixth-form college had an eye-opening experience. Each learner has an AS-level target grade based on their GCSE grades. One girl came with high GCSE grades, which translated to a target of an A at AS level. However, her work was below par from the outset. Knowing her previous attainment was so high, the teacher went to extra lengths to challenge and support her. The girl eventually attained a grade B. The teacher was disappointed, but the learner and her family were delighted – the student actually held the minimum five grade Cs at GCSE, but due to an administrative error her grades had been entered incorrectly!"

## Outstanding Teaching: Teaching Backwards

By **Andy Griffith and Mark Burns**. Crown House Publishing: paperback 978-1-8459-0929-1

My original thoughts on *Teaching Backwards* were: "Yet another book aimed at school teachers rather than pedagogy as a whole." I was wrong. Wherever you practise, you will find this book of interest and value.

The authors explore the concept of teaching backwards, starting with the notion that teachers should never make assumptions about what students know and have experienced. Griffith and Burns weave interesting and fun anecdotes into their explanations, leaving

you in no doubt about their intentions and encouraging the reader to delve further.

The book's premise is that teaching should start with the end in mind. The chapters take the reader on the journey from 'setting high expectations' (see extract) through to 'feedback', so vital for closing the gap between where students are in that moment in time and where they need to be.

Griffith and Burns emphasise clearly how teachers must model high expectations and KASH (knowledge, attitudes, skills and habits) to encourage their students to do the same and to start the teaching backwards process. This concept is closely followed by 'starting points' and the need to pre-assess the students' KASH before 'defining and demystifying the destination'.

This is all explained in an accessible and practical way, providing realistic and achievable ways to put teaching backwards into action.

Of course, no current education text book would be without a chapter on 'looking for proof of learning'. The authors introduce this concept in an entertaining way, asking the teacher if they are Columbo or Clouseau in their approach to gathering evidence. This is followed by 'challenge' and the need to explore a lesson's content to ensure all activities are focused on stretching students to achieve and move beyond expectations, not merely keeping them busy.

The book may not provide you with any new or innovative theory but it does make current educational theory accessible

and fun, providing numerous amusing anecdotes and explanations that stay with you long after the book is finished.

The book's frameworks enable and empower teachers to put theory into practice; perhaps an old-fashioned term but one which aptly describes the highly effective approach taken by the authors.

**Penny Petch is head of teaching and learning development at Chelmsford College**

### Reader offer

Readers are entitled to a 20 per cent discount on this title and *Talk-less Teaching* when ordering from [www.crownhouse.co.uk](http://www.crownhouse.co.uk) and using discount code **Tuition1**. The offer is valid until 31 March 2015.

## The Professional Teacher in Further Education

By **Keith and Nancy Appleyard**  
Critical Publishing: paperback 978-1-9096-8201-6

The authors state at the start that 'professionalism' may be a slippery term with many different meanings before embarking on a valiant attempt to define and exemplify sound professional practice. They do a good job,

covering everything from the historical and political contexts and changing nature of professionalism in FE to a focus on critical thinking and the professional challenges of working in teaching and learning organisations. Overall, it is a useful introduction to FE, ideally suited to trainee teachers or the newly qualified.

**Reader offer**  
Readers are eligible for a 20 per cent discount on this

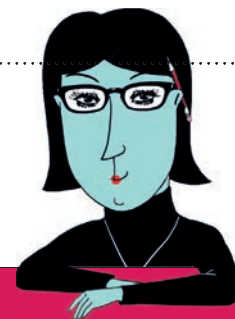
book. To order, telephone 01752 202 301 and quote discount code TPTFE01.

The offer is valid until 1 May 2015.

## The UKFEchat Guide: Getting off to a good start

**Edited by Sarah Simons**  
The first in a planned series of guides, this booklet is full of articles written by practitioners from across the vocational education and training sector, each sharing

their insights on different aspects of professional life as a teacher or trainer. The editor, a lecturer and writer who frequently contributes to *InTuition*, has produced a very readable 83-page publication with articles – there are 21 altogether – written largely in conversational tone and running to no more than a few hundred words each. Perfect for dipping in and out. The guide is available free from [www.ukfechat.com](http://www.ukfechat.com)



## Pedagogue

### Are we killing the art of skilling?

"A lot of people are unemployed. It is tragic that we can't do better at training people and preparing them for work," stated Prime Minister David Cameron following a visit to an employer in the North West earlier this year. His statement came when the expanding company revealed that it struggle to recruit locally due to a lack of skills in the workforce.

Over the past couple of months I have been hearing some disturbing rumours about the only resource growth area in our

sector being that of the 'skills instructor'.

Apparently, those who tread the corridors of power – and budgets – are beginning to question the wisdom of employing 'teachers' especially in vocational areas. 'Teachers' are an expensive resource and a 'skills instructor' at about 60 per cent of the cost makes far better economic sense.

This was brought home to me when I caught up with an old colleague. You know the type: fantastic skills, superb teacher, respected by fellow teachers, employers and learners by the shovel full and, until

now, a proud member of our profession.

He had just been informed that a reorganisation will take place in his department and all teachers will have to reapply for their jobs. He was completely down in the dumps with very good reason. The current eight teaching posts will be replaced by two 'teachers' and six 'skills instructors'. Like many others he's off – back into industry.

Economic sense for some, maybe, but is this really sense for the economy? There's your real tragedy, Mr Cameron.

**Pedagogue is a vocational trainer**



## My story

"I went along to the first day of the Education and Training Foundation's maths enhancement programme (MEP) and, if you'll excuse the phrase, I was cacking myself.

I was pretty sure that my lack of maths skills would be found out and I would be exposed as sub-standard. But, actually, the set up was really rather encouraging. There was a group of other teachers, performance coaches and managers and we soon realised we all felt the same: we really didn't think we could do it.

However, once we started it became clear that I knew more than I thought and the gaps I had could be filled in with a bit of effort and the support of the tutor and the website.

The website ([www.ncetm.org.uk/FEWorkshops](http://www.ncetm.org.uk/FEWorkshops)) contains a load of materials that allow you to work out your current level and then if you need to practise you can. They also gave us a book that covered the foundation syllabus, which you can work through. I did some of this sitting in the garden in the sun.

The sessions made for a long day but the format was such that it wasn't too much of a trauma. Lots of techniques and ideas were demonstrated, usually by us doing them.

I gained enough confidence and enjoyment from it that I offered myself as a GCSE maths teacher which I started last September."

**Toby Swift** is a countryside lecturer and GCSE maths teacher at Abingdon and Witney College in Oxfordshire

For more details on professional development and to watch Toby's video visit: [www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners)

## Strictly online

**The Guardian recently asked a few teachers whether they will tell their students how they plan to vote in the general election. The following is a selection of readers' comments.\***

### DisappointIdealist

I don't have any problems with teachers addressing political issues in classrooms, as long as the usual "on the one hand, on the other hand" approach applies. But personal loyalties should remain personal when in front of a class.

### PostWarBabyBoomer

As a teacher I was always prepared to say eventually why I was voting a particular way, but only after I explained what it was about a party's policies that I liked.

### Riccip

Ha! It doesn't take a genius to work that one out. Teacher training is little more than a filtering exercise to weed out anyone who doesn't buy into the leftist agenda.

### CloudFairy > Riccip

Right, because there's no teachers that ever vote Conservative.

### JPrinder

It would be entirely wrong for teachers, as role models, to talk about their own political persuasions. This, in my mind, would be no different to the radicalisation of Muslims...

### WeLoveWindows8

Schools should teach the value of the free market, globalisation and fostering a competitive ethos, rather than socialism.

### CornerSuite

All political manifestos should be shared with the older pupils together with previous 2010 manifestos... and a project to discover the facts devoid of political slant.

### Bluejil

We lived in the States and our child, in year 5, had a teacher I quite admired until she told the class she was voting for George Bush and she was a Christian. Politics and religion are divisive topics, they can be taught without sharing what you believe.

\*Comments have been abridged.

Full story and comments at [bit.ly/teacher\\_poll](http://bit.ly/teacher_poll)

# NoticeBoard

## Calendar

<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>13</b> Closing date for work-based learning annual workforce survey. See story below.	<b>17</b> AoC webinar: Technology in colleges – what do governors need to know. See story below.	<b>19</b> AELP 2020 Vision conference and debate. <a href="http://bit.ly/AELP_2020">bit.ly/AELP_2020</a>	<b>24</b> AoC Equality and Diversity Conference in Birmingham. <a href="http://bit.ly/AOC_equality_conf">bit.ly/AOC_equality_conf</a>	<b>MARCH</b>	<b>4</b> Vocational education & training seminar, Institute of Education <a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/209.html">www.ioe.ac.uk/research/209.html</a>
<b>5</b> EMFEC Group annual conference in Nottingham. <a href="http://www.emfec.co.uk/EducatnewsEvents/86864.html">www.emfec.co.uk/EducatnewsEvents/86864.html</a>	<b>10</b> Inaugural lecture of the Further Education Trust for Leadership, London. <a href="http://www.fetl.org.uk">www.fetl.org.uk</a>	<b>13</b> ATL seminar on dual professionalism at Birmingham City University. See story below.	<b>30</b> ATL Annual Conference in Liverpool <a href="http://www.atl.org.uk/contact-us/david-kimber.asp">www.atl.org.uk/contact-us/david-kimber.asp</a>	<b>APRIL</b>	<b>29</b> Annual STEMtech conference in London <a href="http://www.stemtechconference.com">www.stemtechconference.com</a>	
<b>MAY</b>	<b>1</b> Deadline for nominations to VQ Day Awards. See story below	<b>23-25</b> UCU congress and sector conferences in Glasgow <a href="http://www.ucu.org.uk">www.ucu.org.uk</a>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>17</b> University of Wolverhampton conference on lesson observation See story below.	<b>24</b> National Learning Conference at the British Library, London. <a href="http://bit.ly/Learning_Conference">bit.ly/Learning_Conference</a>	

### Lesson observation

The Centre for Research and Development in Lifelong Education (Cradle), at the University of Wolverhampton, is hosting a conference: *Lesson Observation: New approaches, new possibilities* on 17 June. To register, email [cradle@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:cradle@wlv.ac.uk)

### Free webinars

Two webinars for governors will be run by the Association of Colleges as part of its governance development programme funded by the Education and Training Foundation. On February 17 there will be a webinar titled *Technology in colleges – what do governors need to know?* The date for March's webinar on risk assessment for governors is to be confirmed. [bit.ly/AOC\\_webinars](http://bit.ly/AOC_webinars)

### Union seminars

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is running a series of seminars on developing collaborative expertise in FE. The next takes place 1pm-3pm on 13 March at Birmingham

## ANNUAL WORK-BASED LEARNING SURVEY

The annual workforce survey for work-based learning providers is now open. The survey, by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and the Education and Training Foundation, collects providers' staffing levels, salary levels, staff qualifications and recruitment shortfalls for those on the payroll between 1 August 2013 and 31 July 2014. Please complete the survey by 13 February at [bit.ly/InTuition\\_snapsurvey](http://bit.ly/InTuition_snapsurvey)

City University. The topic is "dual professionalism and its problems" and speakers include Professor Ken Spours, Institute of Education, and Frank McLoughlin, principal of City and Islington College. For details, email Norman Crowther [ncrowther@atl.org.uk](mailto:ncrowther@atl.org.uk)

### Apprenticeship resources

Information to support staff delivering apprenticeships is available on a site run by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP). The Apprenticeship Staff Support Programme (ASSP) is funded by the Education and Training Foundation. [www.apprenticeship-staff-support.co.uk](http://www.apprenticeship-staff-support.co.uk)

### Awards time

Remember to nominate learners and teaching colleagues for the VQ Day Awards 2015 by the 1 May deadline. The Teacher of the Year and Newly-Qualified Teacher of the Year awards are both sponsored by the Education and Training Foundation. [www.vqday.org.uk](http://www.vqday.org.uk)

### Learning technology

A series of events and opportunities for engagement are available for practitioners through the Learning Technology Support Programme, called Learning Futures. The programme, funded by the Education and Training Foundation, will invest £1 million in provider-led action

research projects.

[www.lfutures.co.uk](http://www.lfutures.co.uk)

- A learning technology skills self-assessment tool, developed by Coralesce, is available at [www.edtech-assess.com/get-started](http://www.edtech-assess.com/get-started)

### EmCETT resources

The East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (emCETT) offers a range of blended support for practitioner-led action research. In the latest blog, John Webber, project manager for learning innovation and technology at Sussex Downs College, writes about students as partners in developing effective teaching and learning.

Visit: <http://practitionerledactionresearch.com>

### Practitioner support

Don't forget to visit the Foundation's website for support in your practice and your development. [www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/research](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/research) [www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners)

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- All new Excellence Gateway – fantastic resources; new, simpler search facility
- Induction and mentoring for clerks
- Share your skills via the Leadership Register [www.leadershipregister.org.uk](http://www.leadershipregister.org.uk)
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