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Secondary teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their pre-service education and strategies to improve pre-service education for teachers: A school based training route in England

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of an EBITT course on teachers' early professional development, identify strengths of the course and also the ways in which the training could be improved. Data collected was recorded during individual face-to-face interviews using a structured interview schedule. In devising our approach we utilised the model suggested by Sharon Feiman-Nemser in her article *How do Teachers Learn to Teach?* in Cochran - Smith et. al. (2008) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*

The data was analysed to explore (after 2-4 years reflection) :

- which elements of initial training were valuable and less valuable
- what they have learned since the course
- which aspects of the course the teachers feel should be improved

It was cross referenced against findings from national surveys of teachers in their post qualifying year of teaching (induction year) and early years of teaching conducted by the TDA. These findings were presented as part of a common wider international study on the same theme in four countries (UK, Spain, Australia, and Ireland).

Introduction

The paper begins with a review of some recent research on teacher development in the early years of teaching and the choice of a theoretical model to interpret findings.

Each year in England about 6000 trainee teachers qualify by undertaking an employment based initial teacher training route (EBITT), where training is mainly school based. As part of the evaluation process providers are encouraged by the TDA (Training and Development Agency) to collect views from past trainees about their initial teacher training during the early years of their teaching career. For this study we have selected and interviewed seven secondary teachers from a variety of different subjects who undertook their employment based Initial Teacher Training course two to four years previously at this university.

Longer term reflection on learning has potentially much to teach us about the effectiveness of the training route. In many respects it provides richer data than that collected directly after completion of a course. After two to four years teachers should display a much deeper understanding of the professional role of the teacher, and have significantly more pedagogical knowledge on which to draw. At present, little data is collected in this way in England. The time elapsed since initial training is potentially a weakness in the validity of the data, but this is mitigated by putting the initial training in context of how well it prepared them for the early years of teaching.

The professional training in this one year route is largely school based and trainees are assessed against national standards before qualifying as a teacher. Teachers on this route are employed by the school as *unqualified* and most receive a salary or training grant. Currently each trainee has an individual training plan which must include a minimum of 60 training days (per year) but during the training period(s) covered in this paper this regulation did not apply. The route has proved to be popular with trainees as it is a personalised programme that can take into account prior experience. Schools value this route because it provides enhanced professional development opportunities for school staff when supervising and delivering the training. We consider that our findings can be usefully integrated with that from other countries and thus will contribute to the generation of new knowledge.

Literature Review and Theoretical Considerations

In England the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA 4) undertakes an annual survey of teachers in their post qualifying year (NQT), which is completed by teachers in February after about six months teaching. In this survey the core questions remain the same but additional questions are added each year to reflect changes in requirements. Overall, teachers rate their initial training highly. In the 2008 survey (TDA 4) of 14,000 teachers (44% response rate) 86% of secondary NQTs graded their training as good or very good. Our own July 2009 internal survey of 52 teachers (100% response rate - Appendix 2) confirms that there was a high degree of satisfaction with their training. The base line data from the TDA NQT survey for our 2005-6course produced less reliable findings in that only 19 teachers completed the survey and that the analysis combined primary and secondary responses. The timing of data collection about teachers' perceptions of their ITT is clearly important. It is reasonable to expect a variation in responses to the same questions when asked on completion of the course, after 6 months teaching and after three years in the profession as a consequence of professional growth in the early years of teaching.

A recent national survey (Springate et. al. 2009) of 1300 teachers with two to three years experience, found that 75% of secondary teachers had taken on new responsibilities, mostly in their second year of teaching, with a considerable minority not receiving additional support or training. A substantial majority reported that their training and development needs were identified accurately on completion of their initial training and addressed during the first year of teaching. Following the induction year teachers had an annual professional review (called performance management) during which teachers' performance was assessed and developmental needs identified. During this period three out of four teachers reported that they had effective support to help them develop teaching skills but could have been better prepared for new responsibilities by undertaking more directed learning, researching teaching and learning for different groups and by becoming better organised in terms of time management. These are clearly some of the factors that would colour the responses of teachers with two to four years experience when asked to reflect on their initial teacher training.

A three year longitudinal study by Wilson and Demetriou (2007) during which 10 teachers were interviewed in the early years of teaching also provides some insight into the ways in which teachers build upon learning in the initial teacher training. This training is largely school based with the development of teachers in their first post largely managed by individual schools. Although there is now a national framework for the development of teachers at different stages of their careers the meeting of school and national needs is seen by teachers to be more important than meeting individual professional needs. The main reason for schools not supporting the attendance of early years teachers at external courses that were not directly related to raising pupil outcomes.

Since the teachers interviewed in our study were largely school based during their initial teacher training we believe that their learning styles are similar to those of early years teachers. While there is a substantive literature on how teachers learn (Billet 2001, Schon 1983, Erault 2004, Hodgkinson and Hodgkinson 2004, Hoekstra 2007) there is less known about how new secondary teachers learn. Teachers not only need to have good subject knowledge but also know how to construct this knowledge in a way that will assist the learning of pupils. For much subject content this is being taught with limited subject pedagogic knowledge and without the benefit of experience. Experienced teachers are also faced with teaching new knowledge, but they have the advantage of having a complex professional knowledge to draw from. about including how individual pupils learn and the contextual factors that influence learning. Various dimensions to aid understanding of teachers' learning including informal / formal, professional knowledge / personal knowledge have been proposed.

The findings of the study by Wilson and Demetriou (2007) suggest that teacher learning takes place mainly by reacting to classroom issues and informal dialogue with colleagues, with little reference to educational research findings. There are emerging issues such as how teachers acquire an identity as a teacher and how colleagues influence professional understanding.. To survive, new teachers need to have self- belief and the personal qualities to pass through an emotional process as well as gain technical competence. This is thought most likely to take place if the school provides a supportive environment in which there are shared values and collegiality. The concept of teacher "disposition" appears to be important but little is known about this. So, for the purposes of this paper we decided to analyse the interviews with early career teachers using a framework suggested by Feiman - Nemser (2008) .

Feiman-Nemser suggests that learning to teach can be conceptualised into four broad themes. These are learning to think like a teacher, learning to know like a teacher, learning to feel like a teacher and learning to act like a teacher. In our study we saw that one of our respondents felt that they had to

“reflect and think of how you make progress with the class and (this) comes with so much more responsibility. You have to take into account their abilities and how they feel”.

This demonstrated that the teacher was moving beyond their initial naive beliefs. Thinking like a teacher means that you need to develop a more critical approach, 'taking a critical examination of one's beliefs, a transition to pedagogical thinking and a development of meta-cognitive awareness' (Feiman-Nemser).

There were four aims to the research:

To identify:

- which elements of the training were considered valuable (and for the course to build on those elements if possible)
- which elements were less valuable and explore why (and whether these were still 'live' issues for the course)
- what the teachers had learned since completion of ITT (to gain a picture of early teacher professional development subsequent to the course)
- what their future CPD needs/desires were (in order to see whether the course promoted a disposition towards continuous professional development)

Methodology

All teachers interviewed for this paper qualified as teachers by the one year school - based Graduate Training Programme (GTP) (TDA, 1). The programme is managed by a partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and three Local Authorities (similar to school districts) called the YDTP (Yorkshire Development and Training Partnership). The YDTP has to meet the national requirements for teacher training (TDA, 2), that are determined by the Training and Development Agency. Trainees have to satisfactorily meet the QTS Standards to successfully qualify and enter the Induction year (TDA, 3). The programme that we have gathered evidence from trains about 60 secondary teachers each year.

Our data is from in - depth interviews with seven teachers who have between two and four years experience since qualifying as teachers. We wanted to explore how well early career teachers could reflect on the learning achieved during their initial teacher training course and also their subsequent learning. We chose teachers with a range of subjects and backgrounds prior to starting their training and who were working in different types of school. The teachers were requested to take part in the structured interviews as part of our quality improvement cycle and sent the interview schedule in advance in order to allow for a considered response to questions.

In five out of seven cases the interviewer knew the teachers involved and in four cases teachers continued to work at the same school in which they trained. Several interviewees said they enjoyed the interviews as they were able to review their progress during the early years of teaching with an educationalist independent of their school.

The interview questions are in Appendix 1. They were written with an intention to explore the experiences of training and subsequent learning using the four dimensions described by Feiman-Nemser. This framework claims to incorporate and highlight major theories and

findings in research on teacher learning. Moreover, it is compatible with contemporary frameworks for understanding teaching and learning, and it underscores the interconnectedness of content, process and contexts in learning to teach.

The key challenge was how to design research questions that considered the interaction of the person, programme and school setting and could account for the changes in what teachers know, do, think and feel over time. Teacher interview questions were devised from the literature of early teacher development (Feiman-Nemser, Wilson, Demetriou, Koetsier and Wubbles), findings from data collected nationally by the TDA in the annual Newly Qualified Teacher Survey (2008), our own 2009 data about the GTP and a steer from the ATEE Secondary Education RDC. The data was then interpreted against a model of how teachers learn, particularly when training was largely in a school based context.

Interview was chosen as the most suitable method to understand the teachers' experiences 'from their points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences and to uncover their lived world' (Krale et al, 2009). Although an interview can be described as 'a conversation with a purpose', a time limit of 45 minutes was agreed in advance. The majority of the interviewees had made brief preparatory notes against the questions and this helped them to think through their responses. It was nevertheless difficult for the researcher to keep the interviewee to the point of the question as information was supplemented by anecdotes, stories, observations and information that was not directly relevant to the research. As Sennet (2003) observes:

'The craft consists in calibrating social distances without making the subject feel like an insect under a microscope.'

There were four interviewees with a range of experience at interviewing. The apparent simplicity of a structured interview approach can belie the difficulty in gaining depth to responses. This proved to be difficult with questions with more than one sub section for example Q3 had too many different points and the interviewee failed to fully address them. In addition the wording of some questions did not clarify the specific terms used by Feiman-Nemser (Q2 and Q4). Interviewees were keen to get as much data as possible but the scope of the questions proved to be over ambitious for the time allotted and some aspects of Q3 for example, were not explored.

The interviews were transcribed and collated against each question on a chart. Analysis consisted of itemising all the points transcribed against the key questions (agreed by the Secondary RDC): what teachers think of their course: which aspects should be improved: what they have learned since the course and future CPD needs. The exact questions used are given in appendix 1. The collated data against the full interview schedule was coded according to the Feiman-Nemser themes and compared with national data on NQTs and early teacher professional development as appropriate.

Findings

These are grouped under the four dimensions of the FN model.

1 Learning to think like a teacher

How did the teachers who trained on the EBITT route **learn to think like a teacher?**

Feiman Nemser here points to the intellectual work of teaching: learning to examine critically one's existing beliefs about teaching and learning and develop an awareness of how they influence the teacher's thinking and practice; making the transition to pedagogical thinking - linking ends to means - and developing meta cognitive awareness where a trainee develops more defensible views about teaching and learning.

When our respondents focussed upon pedagogical thinking, they talked about planning lessons and schemes of work and the reasoning behind them. They said their thinking changed when they had to take full responsibility for planning. Once in the role of a teacher there are *“higher expectations of pupils and their behaviour than when I was a cover teacher: this was probably due to the ownership of the lessons.”* (Teacher G)

The use of the QTS Standards was sometimes seen as a framework to help thinking like a teacher and as a prompt to address specific issues to develop their learning. In one instance a school *“adopts more of a tick box approach, rather than using the standards to focus learning.”* However in a different situation the standards focus teachers:

“At the beginning of the course I knew I wasn't as good a teacher as I should be. I felt as though I didn't know what to do to become better and had policies and strategies thrown at me. You don't know where it happens, but the techniques start to bleed into your practice. When you do these things consistently day in and out then it then becomes embedded. One day I couldn't do it but a year later then I could. Some of the help came from my mentor, some from the course itself.” (Teacher D)

When this teacher states *“You don't know where it happens.....”* it would appear that they have an area of undiscovered self as they move towards a more conscious state of thought of how teaching strategies affect learning. This was also seen in another respondent:

“The school prepared me for different abilities and needs so I had to quickly learn how to adapt my lessons.”

There were some useful elements from university based sessions that assisted in developing teachers thinking. A training session about personal well-being enabled one person to critically reflect on their own working habits and he quickly realised not to overwork himself - *“it gets you nowhere”*.

“Meeting with other GTP students and being able to put your own learning and experiences into context” demonstrates the development of meta-cognitive learning. Training sessions resulted in positive feedback where trainees were given and valued the time to meet each other away from the classroom.

The biggest challenges that face teachers in their first few years can really focus the way they learn to think within their profession. For one it was their own self assessment and assessment of the children” that was the biggest challenge.

Another found the challenge of early additional responsibilities to be very emotional:

“I then put myself forward as a Head of Year and the challenges have been enormous – work life balance; work-work balance; what to do at work and what to take home. I was so early into it as I got the job at the end of my NQT year. I just got on with it and made loads of mistakes and still do. The staff make it possible for me to succeed and give me loads of support. The biggest challenge is trying not to let those people down”. (Teacher B)

This teacher took on responsibility early in his career which forced him to begin to think wider than previously as a classroom teacher in order to encompass a broader pastoral role. The support of colleagues is clearly a factor in his success and in the way he has been able to think through issues and address them.

When teachers are placed under stresses to meet particular targets then this also is a challenge which can force their thinking into a different path:

“Working in a National Challenge School and dealing with all the pressure that brings with it.” (Teacher F)

In a school like this certain standards of achievement have to be met, thus forcing thinking into areas such as intervention strategies which enable more students to achieve and thus raise the levels of attainment in the school.

Evidence that teachers were engaged in fundamentally examining their own existing beliefs was more limited in respect of new ideas and learning. In one case there seemed to be little progression in thinking like a teacher. *“For me there was little transition as I had already been teaching as an unqualified teacher.”* (Teacher B)

2 Learning to know like a teacher

Good teaching depends on a wide range of knowledge and this is recognised by Feiman-Nemser as **learning to know like a teacher**, along with the ‘knowledge teachers generate in practice’. Teachers need to know a great deal in order to develop the learning of all their pupils including:

- Subject knowledge
- Subject pedagogy
- How children learn
- How children develop
- How culture and language affect their learning (Ball and McDiarmid, 1990)
- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Classroom management

- Behaviour management

Thus knowing like a teacher requires considerable preparation. Those following the EBITT route have often previous experience within the school in which they train. Some (Teachers B, C, D E, F and G) had previously worked as teaching assistants *“I knew the kids from being a TA at the school during the previous year”*. This prior learning had given these teachers an insight into the abilities of pupils and *‘Considerable understanding of children’s emotional needs’*. Relationships are already in place with pupils and therefore the teachers know what to expect from their pupils.

Many secondary teachers enter the profession because they have a passion for their main subject. The positive aspect of the EBITT route is the resulting preparedness for teaching. One teacher stated he

“I felt well prepared because the course is 'on the job learning... it never leaves you. On a PGCE you don't realise how relentless it is - you get that straightaway on the GTP course. It's a fantastic way of training . You realise straightaway what the job entails" (Teacher D)

Feiman-Nemser talks about knowledge *for* teaching and knowledge *of* teaching. Knowledge *for* teaching occurs beyond the classroom and knowledge *of* teaching takes place in the context of daily working practices. The evaluation of centrally held sessions from the interviewees was very positive and clearly provided a good knowledge base for the trainees. Teachers also rated their training visits to other schools and contexts where gaps in knowledge could be filled. From the recent survey undertaken with GTP secondary trainees in 2008/9 (Appendix 2) trainees still highly value the training sessions out of their school context. However, an area for development is ensuring trainees read and understand key national policy documents. Further training is also identified as requiring attention is EAL teaching and learning. The central training sessions also have 'spin-offs' where professional learning and the development of knowledge takes place. This was noted by one respondent (Teacher E) as:

- *the social aspect of working with fellow course members*
- *their viewpoints about the course*
- *understanding different contexts and ways different schools operated*

And training from the second school placement

- *gave experience in 16-18 albeit limited*
- *revealed the way a similar school dealt with issues and problems but in different ways*

The experiences of working in other contexts and with other people shapes the knowledge base which teachers develop. Working with other course members also contributed to learning.

“I met one guy who was a PE teacher and wanted help with dance and I wanted help with some PE. We still share ideas. He sent me a piece on Stomp which was good for boys.” (Teacher C)

In addition the support from subject leaders and departmental colleagues helped trainees *“with ideas and issues in certain areas like physics which was not my specialism.”* (Teacher C). This is development of subject knowledge but not necessarily of its pedagogy. The example given points towards the need to develop wider subject knowledge in science. In most cases pedagogical knowledge development was a weakness (Evans et. al. 2008).

Within the classroom the knowledge required to teach is immense. The interviewees discussed in detail the range and amount of knowledge that they had to learn - especially teaching strategies, subject knowledge and behaviour management. For example, teachers have to anticipate what pupils will find difficult and enable them to make sense of their learning exemplified by the statement

“I find it difficult to interest pupils on the theory side partly because the pupils would rather be doing the practical work.” (Teacher A)

Our data shows that trainee teachers require considerable help from support staff within the school and are often expected to be proactive in this. Comments include:

“I should have asked for help more often but was too proud to ask too many questions. Upon reflection and knowing staff much better I know this would not have been an issue at all.” (Teacher F)

“Not having a network of teachers of the same subject. I had to build up everything on my own.. I still think the GTP is a brilliant route because everything is done for the job.” (Teacher C)

Hence the role of the school Initial Teacher Training Coordinator is key to in ensuring that trainees' needs' are anticipated and met. (Evans et al., 2007)

Knowledge for teaching is incorporated into the QTS Standards. The standards for QTS require teachers to have knowledge of EAL and the broad range of individual needs. The national NQT Survey for 2007 showed that only 33% of respondents felt their training was good or better in preparing them to teach pupils with EAL. By 2008 this had increased but only slightly to 38%. This area also got the lowest rating in our own cohort and was only as being adequate by GTP trainees. Meeting individual needs can be achieved in several ways. In one case a teacher was working at a school where she taught dance. She needed to learn about ways to engage wheelchair bound students:

“I worked with children in wheelchairs at my last school. I got a lot of help from mentors to get pupils involved in break dance. It was really emotional to see them move their arms and so on.” (Teacher C)

Her initial training may not have specifically prepared her for this but the structures within schools allowed for the teacher to gain support in learning how to develop teaching strategies. The same teacher had little experience within her training to apply learning gained from a second placement school on EAL. However, recently she found that she was able to reflect on that knowledge and apply it in her current school:

"I went to another school and did some training to help with EAL; I didn't put it into practice until recently. I have put some work on Indian dance into the curriculum so this has been helpful." (Teacher C)

In order to *know like a teacher*, respondents often learn from other people. For example,

"Learning is through other members of staff both through observation and coaching. Gaining coaching awards which are 'levelled' around pedagogic knowledge and also skills." (Teacher F)

Others talked about how they learned *"on the job"* and *"...learning through doing was the best practice"*, evidence pointing towards the development of 'knowledge of teaching'. However one teacher stated that observing other 'expert' practitioners teach or best practice in the beginning of one teacher's career did not have much impact on their learning to know what a good lesson might look like:

"Looking at an 'Expert Practitioner' (or) going to see a fabulous teacher teaching a fabulous lesson wouldn't have meant a thing to me at the beginning of the course." (Teacher D)

How does the use of standards develop the ability to know like a teacher? It would appear that they are viewed as either helpful *"for target setting. Teachers should be accountable." (Teacher D)* *"Made me look into EAL – as I would not have done that".(Teacher C)* *"Useful as a ticklist and checklist." (Teacher E)* or as a hindrance - *"I never used them to make me a better teacher. I felt I was jumping through hoops." (Teacher B).* *"Standards folders has never been looked at since the day the assessor looked at them."(Teacher E)* *I am still finding the standards difficult to understand." (Teacher A)*

The overall view was that standards are useful in themselves but the quantity of evidence required for assessment excessive.

The EBITT route into teaching is very much a personalised approach. Trainees are able to tailor their training plan to their needs which might include observations, attendance on courses, visits to other schools, school based training and so on. The route itself was seen as being useful in aiding these teachers to know like a teacher in terms of knowing how to pace yourself (a session on Teacher Well-Being was part of the training package) so that you don't overwork yourself - *"Understanding what is required of you, being a role model, setting reasonable targets which can be achieved rather than just meeting government standards."* The elements which make up the EBITT route are all seen to be helpful in developing the ability to learn to know like a teacher. Respondents cited behaviour management training, *"I brought back ideas and strategies from course to use immediately in the classroom"*; the career preparation profile which one respondent reflected into his own teaching; good quality school INSET and observations of other teachers. In one case training was not considered enough in order to know like a teacher - *"It didn't matter how many times I was told about*

behaviour management – I still had bad lessons so the only way was to actually do it and learn from it.”

Wilson and Demetriou (2007) talk about the development of new teachers being regulated through national policy frameworks and managed by individual schools. This has an influence on teacher learning and often leads to pressures which restrict wider learning. Attendance at external training requires that classes have to be left creating tensions between the school and the individual needs of the teacher. However schools also have pressures to perform well in league tables and school leaders are sometimes reluctant to allow teachers to attend external training courses which are not related to pupil outcomes. In addition, training for teachers from a wide variety of subjects has to be well thought through to be perceived as useful by all participants. Thus trainees have an individual training plan made up of external training days, schools visits and school-based training.

One teacher felt that he got little training or support from his department or school in order to develop his pedagogy. He had also not been able to attend some school based events due to teaching commitments. Three years later the teacher is now very aware of the importance of CPD. Respondents in our sample all remarked on how useful external courses were and how they implemented these in their own practice. In reflecting on their learning during the EBITT course the trainees noted that there were areas that were not included which may have developed their *learning to know* about teaching further:

- More time to visit other schools
- Teaching strategies
- Mini plenaries
- Starters for lessons
- Subject knowledge

Since their initial training year some challenging areas of *learning to know like a teacher* have become apparent. The “*fundamental importance of assessment*” and the “levelness of work” were cited by two teachers; another reflected upon how “*different learning styles (VAK) translate into the learning ladder (comprehension, analysis, evaluation) ... and the composition of a lesson.*” They then recognise how this is “*affected by the external contexts (weather) and pupil emotional needs/development*”.

All of the teachers felt that they were still *learning to know* about these things as evidenced by the following responses

"On the GTP course this (learning about assessment) is spoon fed you - you are given schemes of work. You are only half way in. Afterwards you have to do your own and then realise how important and interconnected all these things are and how it informs every aspect of teaching. Still learning it and miles away from where I want to be." (Teacher D)

"I know I still have a long way to go." (Teacher B)

"I've started collaborating.." (Teacher C)

In the few years since these teachers had their initial training, they have developed their ability to learn how to know like a teacher -in particular with regards to accountability for the outcomes of learning:

"Having to measure the impact of teaching and strategies with students and being accountable for the outcomes." (Teacher F)

The same teacher also remarked on the need to meet the demands of the inspection framework and knowing what is required in this area. The use of data to inform learning and teaching is also mentioned by some in order to know the best way in which to plan for learning experiences for pupils. Learning is an *"active, constructive process that is heavily influenced by an individual's knowledge and beliefs..."* (Borko and Putman. 1996)

Teachers interpret new knowledge and experience through their existing beliefs and modify and interpret ideas based on what they already believe and know. So as these teachers developed their pedagogy they then needed to apply their knowledge in order to meet accountability structures or introduce new curriculum:

"Introducing BTEC dance; teaching A level dance – I had not done it myself or taught it; GCSE on my own; dance shows" (Teacher B)

There were some areas of training identified which would have made the trainees better prepared in terms of learning to know like a teacher. Assessment is a large part of the curriculum and for one teacher this was a constant struggle:

"I struggled with the wider aspects of the role, e.g. assessment after the course because my mentor did not support me or coach me in developing this aspect of the teacher's role." (Teacher E)

The role of mentors is crucial in developing teacher knowledge as they are usually the first point of contact within the school for the EBITT trainee. When trainees have a less than satisfactory experiences their knowledge remains under-developed and they may not be aware of this until later in their career. Lack of commitment from one mentor meant that mentoring was nonexistent for one trainee (Teacher E) who realised the impact of this now when he then had a good NQT Induction tutor.

One trainee thought that their knowledge as a teacher could have been improved had they been introduced to a wider repertoire of teaching and learning strategies. Teaching is a complex role and for one trainee this was identified as a need to *"learn more about the complexity of teaching on the job"*. There are also very specific areas of *learning to know* about a role or about a specific area of teaching: preparing for a managerial role (this is an

area that teachers move into within the first 3 years of their career); developing understanding of autism and special needs was another area identified as a possible career path for one; subject specific training was common to many of the respondents; further study at Master's level and finally:

"I know there are loads of new things out there. I want to learn and share them. I have learned about my new role but I really want to learn more strategies and make myself better." (Teacher D)

This shows that for some teachers the consolidation and deepening of their knowledge is central to their learning *to know like a teacher* and learning to feel like a teacher.

3 Learning to feel like a teacher

We asked teachers about aspects of their training which made them **feel like a teacher**. Feiman-Nemser states that feeling like a teacher *'signals the fact that teaching and learning are deeply personal work, engaging teachers' emotions and identity as well as their intellect'*. Developing a professional identity, as a teacher, is a very complex activity bringing together past, present and future ideals and realities. Teachers combine these beliefs and experiences with the images of the kind of teacher and colleague that they want to become and what kind of classroom they want to have (Featherstone,1993).

What teachers most remembered about their training was *"being worried and scared about the amount of data collection that was shown as necessary as evidence of meeting the standards."* (Teacher C) At a training event a previous student had shown her evidence files in a dozen large folders. The feeling of anxiety as a beginning teacher was very clear. However, for some there is less transition into the role as some had been working in classrooms as unqualified teachers, covering for absent staff or as teaching assistants.(Teachers B and C) Others felt themselves a teacher from day one as the students did not know that they are a trainee.(Teachers B, E and F) Evidence showed that there were specific things that actually made the EBITT teachers feel like a teacher from early in their training - *"This course makes you feel like a teacher from day one.you are part of the school. Children know you are here for a year day in and day out and they have a different view of the teacher to that of a PGCE student only there for a few weeks."* This trainee tells of his journey from *"30 pairs of eyes looking at you"* to after the course when *"you feel sharp."* (Teacher C)

The transition from a support role within a school to a teaching role can mean some marked changes in the way teachers feel. One teacher had been accustomed to being called by his first name, "to be called 'Sir' felt strange". This teacher had to reconcile images of themselves as a teacher and what this really meant for them.

Another trainee said they felt 'unleashed' to teach the subject he wanted to. The trainee brought to his first post positive experiences of the previous placement where he felt he had

ALL his 'shocks and horrors' whilst in a supportive environment. However he felt secure in his identity as a result, unlike other NQTs at the school. For one of the trainees he was straight into a full 75% timetable as the school fully funded him. This was tough. The positive impact was a 'sink or swim' mentality and a chance to get straight on with the role which suited him as a mature candidate. It was very emotional and stressful. However, he felt that “ *the (EBITT) course sets you up for promotion opportunities more quickly as you continue in the same school so you are more quickly seen as a competent teacher*”.

The security of an identity as a teacher was a common thread for those who had been working in the school prior to their training year:

“Because I was unqualified, I already felt, although fraudulently, like a teacher, albeit inexperienced. But I had worked as a cover teacher.” (Teacher B)

One teacher had already been a cover teacher for a year in the school and had a couple of years teaching experience in South America. She felt very much like a teacher. The emotional impact was positive and she knew how to conduct herself in a professional manner and have high expectations. Those who had prior experience in the school, found that they are often treated like a teacher from the outset, and therefore it was relatively easy to find their identity as a teacher. Equally they knew enough for others to respect them and make them “*feel part of the team from the start of the year*”. (Teacher F)

The teachers in the sample found it hard to articulate what made them learn to feel like a teacher. This might have been because most had been working in schools for some time. One was honest in his approach to and enthusiasm for teaching,

“The best thing is turning difficult kids around - I now feel that I'm quite good at that. I'm rough and ready - interpersonal skills are not my strong point - which has led to me to perhaps rubbing up some the wrong way.” (Teacher A)

Reflecting on his personal skills has made this teacher begin to look deep inside himself. At this stage he is still finding the move from an Army background to teaching a difficult move and has as yet to establish his full identity as a secondary teacher.

The university training provided some opportunities for trainees to *learn to feel like a teacher*. It was for some “*A good way of reflecting – highlighting what I was constantly being told*”. (Teacher A) It also provided new challenges for teachers to “*develop a more knowledgeable understanding of how process and practices work*.” (Teacher F) The training provided throughout the EBITT route is intended to enable the teachers to narrow the gap between their vision of teaching and the realities faced.

The transition into management roles and the way in which teachers are expected to feel in this role was difficult for some to reconcile. In one case,

“it was suggested...that I might be Head of Year. It was not really what I wanted. The challenge was enormous – work-life balance; work-work balance; what to do at work and what to take home.....the biggest challenge is not to let people down.” (Teacher B)

Little preparation was evident for those who took on these roles as their career progressed and one teacher commented that a “*school needs a system to **prepare** teachers properly to take on more management roles.*” (Teacher E)

4 Learning to act like a teacher

Learning to act like a teacher is about developing the capacity to make judgements in changing and often unique circumstances. To act like a teacher Feinman-Nemser considers that teachers need a repertoire of skills, strategies and routines and the judgement to figure out what to do and when. Learning to act like a teacher demands “adaptive expertise” (Hatano and Oura; 2003) Teachers learn through working with others by asking questions, sharing information, seeking help, experimenting with innovative actions and seeking feedback. Day to day activities in classrooms draws on developing knowledge in practice as well as learning through collaboration of pupils and teachers. Learning to act like a teacher can come from the school’s setting and the teacher’s interest and disposition to learn. In daily classroom life teachers choose how to act and what to do. In other words they exercise personal and professional judgements. The judgements may be intuitive or more explicit, driven by experiences and emotions.

The data collection from our teachers suggests that learning from personal experiences of immersion in the classroom are a starting point for many teachers – “*the first year was hard work because you have to learn how to do all the elements of teaching.*” As time went on with this teacher, he found that

“having a failed lesson taught me more than having a good lesson because you were less able to see what was good about the lesson.” (Teacher D)

Development of acting like a teacher was also enhanced by training sessions and placements in other schools for example,

“The training sessions OUT of school, provided me with practical ideas and strategies to try out.”

and

“The second placement which gave me experience in KS5, albeit limited, revealed the way a similar school dealt with issues and problems in different ways.” (Teacher E)

The second placement also “provided models of good practice” for subject specialism enabling teacher’s to seek out ways in which they could develop their ability to act like a teacher.

When teachers are supported well they are able to ‘act like a teacher’ and can develop strategies for learning. One teacher stated

“I had lots of support – with Head of Science who went over resources; ways of teaching; helped me with ideas and issues.” (Teacher C)

This teacher was training in an unusual pairing of subjects – Science and Dance. Her experience with her mentor in Dance was quite different and much more hands on. Each lesson was observed and alternative strategies offered immediately, enabling her to put action into practice immediately.

As the EBITT route is very much independent ‘hands on’ learning on the job, thus is unsurprising how most of our teachers *learned how to act*: One remarked that he

“Learnt on the job how pupils progress and develop and how different strategies and tactics work for different pupils.”(Teacher D)

This independence allows them to choose how to act and support the learners in their classrooms and build up a tacit knowledge.

Management of one’s self and time are often skills that trainees cite as an area of difficulty. Learning how to be professional in terms of time management and still keep a work-life balance seems to create tensions for some of those in the sample.

“It was hard work in the evenings but it paid off as I felt I was able to teach.”(Teacher C)

“My timetable starts at 8am, before the rest of the school starts and on a couple of days my classes run to 4.45pm. The result of this was that I missed events put on for visiting PGCEs- who I think got a better deal than me.” (Teacher A)

and went on to say:

“...during my GTP year I was paid overtime to teach a couple more classes out of school hours - which restricted the amount of time I had for greater involvement in the school and in school training opportunities.”

Time constraints during what is a most important year for laying down the foundations of *how to act* as a professional and develop high quality teaching and learning experiences for pupils, clearly had an impact on this teacher who recognises the importance of the sessions he had missed and the impact they may have had on his pedagogy. As time goes on and teachers enter their second and third year they are able to engage with other activities enabling them to develop knowledge about practice.

The workload seems more manageable than last year because there is so much less paperwork to do.” (Teacher G)

As a result of this she has been able to engage in more professional development activities, including a master’s degree. She said,

“I have learnt to become more efficient and manage my time more effectively – would not get everything done otherwise.” (Teacher G)

How teachers learn to act as a teacher is interwoven with developing subject specific pedagogical techniques, behaviour management, classroom management and personal skills within a classroom setting: This is illustrated by one teacher who remarked that

“3 years prior experience working as teaching assistant in a special school gave him the skill of patience. I enjoyed building relationships and giving low ability pupils positive experiences in order to develop their expertise.” (Teacher D)

This same teacher had a clear grasp of what it was to act like a teacher as he had an *“understanding what is required of you as a role model”*. Prior relationships and experience with children was a positive influence in terms of behaviour management for another teacher who felt he *“didn't have to enforce his expectations because of prior relationships and role which also established me as 'approachable'.”* (Teacher E). In the first month another teacher realised the importance of planning organisation and establishing good relationships with children. However a different teacher (with prior experience) noted that over-preparation of behaviour strategies can be a problem in developing the art of *acting like a teacher*. This teacher also found that:

“I had to learn very quickly and adapt lessons as many of the pupils had not been taught Spanish before.”(LS)

Behaviour management is a key area for most beginning teachers. In the national NQT survey 83% felt their training was good or very good in helping them establish and maintain a good standard of behaviour in the classroom. Our own survey of trainees (Appendix 2) backed this up with trainees stating that training was very good in this aspect.

Developing this sophisticated understanding of how students learn and what they should learn requires both codified and context specific knowledge i.e. knowledge of how to teach (Erault; 2004). Teachers also have to learn to act in particular ways where different gender groups require adaptations to their learning activities as Teacher C found:

“Boys wise: I tend to tailor some activities towards the boys. Girls tend to like dance. Boys have to have certain music and like boisterous (activities) with kicks and lifts – then I move onto discuss poise and balance”.

Working with others clearly helps trainees and beginning teachers to act and develop their skills in the classroom. For example:

“I have learned so much from other people that has helped me in dealing with pupils behaviour; their needs. I learned particularly from one colleague about structures and boundaries with pupils; it really helped me and still does.” (Teacher B)

Another found the best way to act was to observe other teachers. When teachers recognise that routines and structures were essential parts of their organisational skills then they develop their ability to act – *“when you do these things consistently day in and out then it then becomes embedded”*. For example Teacher D

It didn't matter how many times I was told about behaviour management – I still had bad lessons so the only way was to actually do it and learn from it.” (Teacher B)

The TDA standards for Qualified Teachers are seen to focus the way you act as a teacher but real learning takes place in the classroom *“I just needed to get into the act of teaching and learning, as you go along.”*

A real challenge to the way they learn to act like a teacher is getting on with other colleagues and the politics of the school. For one teacher:

“Getting on with colleagues is hard for me - there is a bit of tension between the teachers and myself although we are all in the same department.” (Teacher A)

Teacher G felt that some members of the department saw her as a threat to them and did not understand this particular route into teaching. She found *“different ways to react to situations which have been learnt from watching others around her”*. Another commented that *“The politics of school is the hardest thing. You can't teach that. You need to adhere to it. I've made some big mistakes.”* His observations about the kind of people who go up the ladder were that *“political animals go further than good teachers”*. (Teacher D)

Perhaps here we are seeing that learning to act like a teacher and developing the skills required to ‘go up the ladder’ are quite different to each other. This is particularly interesting observation since several of the teachers have gained or are actively seeking promotion (Teachers B, D, E and F)

Discussion of findings:

Using The Fenman-Nemser Model

The interviews with 7 EBITT teachers undertaken after 2 -4 years of teaching have provided a perspective on how the course (school based training) has prepared them for the early years of teaching.

Analysis was undertaken using the Feiman -Nemser model (FN) with the aim to gain a deeper understanding of how teachers learned. The structured interviews were intended to elicit rich data about the learning process during the training period and subsequently. Analysing the model and its use in this study revealed that it was often difficult to separate the four FN dimensions in the analysis. At times we felt this to be a somewhat possibly simplistic separation of the dimensions of learning to teach and this was not evident in the way the learning process was articulated by the teachers. This may be a result of secondary training being directed towards a single subject. It did, however, enable the authors to compare and contrast aspect of interviewees learning about teaching or specific responses to identify key issues.

We found evidence of all four dimensions being explored by the teachers through a constructivist approach to learning. This is perhaps an inevitable feature of this route since it is based on an immersion approach to learning and involves knowledge of the ways of doing things within a specific context. The teachers articulated the learning process with *learning to feel like a teacher* being bound up in the finding of solutions for problems of a practical nature.

In analysing the trainees' responses we found evidence to suggest that in learning how to think, know and act like a teacher – these processes were bound up with and dependant upon learning how to feel like a teacher. This last aspect was not readily detailed by the teachers who were still articulating various constructivist ideas for action within the classroom. We found little evidence of the teachers articulating the wider aims and purposes of their subject, purposes of education and schooling or analysing the limitations/ strengths of their existing views about teaching. This was disappointing as teacher education should not serve to merely confirm trainees existing pre conceived views about education which are then reinforced by the school context. Nor should teachers see their training as merely learning how to conform to existing school or educational practices. However this may be a consequence of how the competency based model of teacher education for teacher professional development in England is interpreted by schools and trainers. The FN model incorporates a deeper understanding of practice into the theme of feeling like a teacher and this was interpreted by the teachers in a superficial way. It could be said that our teachers' approaches, values and norms are those which 'work' in the complex and demanding arena of the classroom and the training seeks to identify and experiment with these approaches.

The FN model is able to encapsulate within its four dimensions the QTS Standards as well as a number of other theories. However, the professional standards provide a much more detailed and potentially useful framework for trainee teachers – particularly in terms of describing a professional identity and the detail of the professional knowledge, actions and attributes of a teacher. The QTS Standards can also facilitate the creation of a more personalised course where the trainee undertakes an initial needs analysis (against the Standards) and can then focus their training and professional development accordingly.

Moreover the school based route develops teachers through a highly personalised programme building on an individual's strengths, identifying their needs and evidencing their work against the QTS Standards. This helps teachers to understand and meet the requirements, focus their learning and identify future training needs.

The school based training programme is an 'immersion' approach to learning. This enables the trainee to very quickly become part of the teaching team and culture of the school and have the status of a teacher in the eyes of pupils. This approach to training enables the well qualified trainee to learn, feel, know and act like a teacher very quickly.

The design of the EBITT course is perceived as high challenge/ high expectation. It enables trainees to develop pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge about pupil development/ needs in a highly intensive way. It enabled the trainee to see the effect of different behaviour management strategies with different groups over a longer continuous period of time than other routes.. Trainees find it an advantage to have previous experience working within a school setting prior to undertaking the course. It helps them to understand the possibilities and realities of the role and enables them to learn how to establish relationships with pupils.

Retention within the profession is a key factor in assessing the 'value' of a course particularly since, according to a new report co authored by Professor Alan Smithers from University of Buckingham, Four out of ten trainees fail to enter a classroom six months after finishing

their course (The Independent 14/08/09). The figures for employment based training are better than other routes and our on our GTP route all teachers have been successful in gaining teaching posts. The majority of our interviewees said that success on the course had enabled them to gain recognition and promotional opportunities within the school or externally immediately on completion. The above report also revealed that teachers who learned on the job through school or work based training were most likely to stay on in the profession. The report recommends that more weight should be given to school-based training schemes.

Training days with content related to practical teaching concerns allowed for the exchange of ideas/ sharing concerns and facilitated high quality reflection. The teachers did not mention the need to learn about the philosophy and sociology of education in order to learn to teach. This reinforces the instrumental nature of the course as 'training rather than educating and contrasts with practice in other European systems. The teachers did not reflect deeply on the meaning of their learning or consider wider issues of purposes and aims of education.

Whilst the combination of in-school together with university and Local Authority support is seen as a good mechanism on the whole, there were a number of issues relating to consistency and rigour. In at least two cases the school mentoring support was considered barely adequate, timetables were not always correct, QTS Standards were not routinely considered as part of the formative learning process or even in some cases referred to and onerous folders of collated evidence were considered of limited value by the mentor and the trainee. Some interviewees felt there was a need for clearer role definitions/ expectation of the supervision expected of mentor in order to ensure consistency across the programme and safeguard a high quality individual experience. Whilst the university visits were useful they were not always undertaken in a private space- one teacher felt this should be a right for all trainees.

The purpose of the recommended evidence base collection (at that time) was not well understood and viewed as onerous and unnecessary by all the teachers. There was a strong steer for the course to explore alternative assessment methods which were not paper based eg viva, or an external report.

Several trainees felt that more visits to other schools to gain experience of other contexts and other ways of teaching and learning together with more out of school training should be a compulsory part of the course. Other schools can also offer teaching and learning experiences that cannot be supplied in the trainees setting.

The nature of the EBITT course means there is less divide between the formal aspects of training at the University/Local Authority and the practical school based elements - the so called theory/ practice divide. However, many of the responses to the interview questions threw up anecdotal evidence about their progress as a teacher rather than interpreting this in depth. This raises the question of the extent to which teachers on the EBITT route engage sufficiently in educational theory, the awareness of aims and purposes of education and their own ontological and epistemological positions.

Such perspectives were a common feature in initial teacher training courses in England 20 years ago, particularly in the Bachelor of Education degrees. The current QTS Standards do not require these perspectives and are based fundamentally on a ‘training’ notion of teacher preparation which raises the issue of the impact on the professional role and identity of the teacher of the future. Recent directives for teaching in England to become a master’s level profession may provide the platform for this.

The TDA survey on early professional development (Thewlis, 2006) shows that the priority areas of development for many teachers in their second and third years include:

- ensuring their first experience of performance management builds consistently upon their induction
- preparing to take on additional responsibilities
- expanding their subject knowledge and pedagogy, and
- developing their behaviour management skills.

Our findings generally support the TDA conclusions. The teachers in our study talked of how they developed understanding of subject pedagogy, self and pupil assessment (including data) and a deeper understanding of the connectedness of planning teaching, learning and assessment. They also talked about developing an understanding of the wider role of the teacher e.g. taking on managerial responsibilities.

Our sample of teachers expressed a range of views about the career development available for teachers in the second or third year of teaching. Opportunities for the teachers ranged from a management shadowing opportunity, to promotion to Head of Dept and promotion to Head of Year. 84% of early career teachers have taken on one or more tasks or responsibilities since completing their NQT year. Of this number 69% had undertaken a subject coordinator/management role and 34% a mentoring or management role. (Springate et al, 2009). However there was little mention of corresponding training to go with these roles. One teacher stated that there were no systematic training opportunities to prepare teachers to enter a managerial role. None of the teachers said that there was a specific training support programme for teachers in their second or third year of teaching. Instead their CPD was very much self-directed (a wish to undertake Masters level work) or where they had been identified and fast tracked into managerial positions. These findings of a mixed picture are supported by the above report (Springate et al, 2009) which claims only a small number of schools strongly support teachers with high potential and provide them with high quality professional development opportunities. The majority of the schools do not consider identifying the training needs of teachers in their second and third years in any way different to other teachers.

In the majority of schools....as a result, the individual developmental needs of teachers in the early stages of their careers were not identified or addressed well in around half of the schools.....In a small number of the schools, teachers identified as having high potential had been supported well by their senior managers; their aspirations for subject leadership or other responsibility were recognised; they had been provided with relevant high-quality

professional development opportunities; and they had been 'fast-tracked' to a post of responsibility. (Springate et al, 2009)

Summary of conclusions and recommendations

- The Feinman- Nemser model was sometimes difficult to apply to the interview data as the four categories overlapped
- Teachers value the YDTP structure for supporting school based training
- All interviewees were mature students with a considerable variety of work backgrounds prior to entry into the profession.
- Entry into first teaching posts and retention is very high on this route
- All teachers in the sample enjoyed and valued the course and felt it prepared them well for their teaching careers: they valued the 'immersion' approach: being based in one school with internal and external training opportunities
- In England there is more focus on competency standards. The Standards are generally considered useful when they are understood in relation to the activities of teaching and learning.
- The quality of the in- school support and particularly the mentor/ school based tutor is essential for high quality training. The person selected for this role by the head teacher should be someone who fully understands the requirements of the role and is given time to do it. Not all teachers received high quality mentoring support during the course
- There should be more external training days and visits to other schools are highly valued - they should be compulsory
- The evidence base against the QTS Standards could be slimmed down and alternative methods of assessment considered so as to reduce to paperwork
- Teachers interviewed displayed little evidence of having acquired a wider theoretical understanding of education disciplines (philosophy, psychology, sociology).
- All teachers in the sample were fully committed to the profession and actively looking at ways of enhancing their teaching capabilities through self directed professional development
- Structured support for early professional development is limited and variable
- Issues that were of concern to the interviewees in the future - politics/ relationships with staff, how to / preparing for promotion ; preparing for further study and further CPD opportunities

- There is little research reported about the early professional development of secondary teachers in the literature

Appendix 1

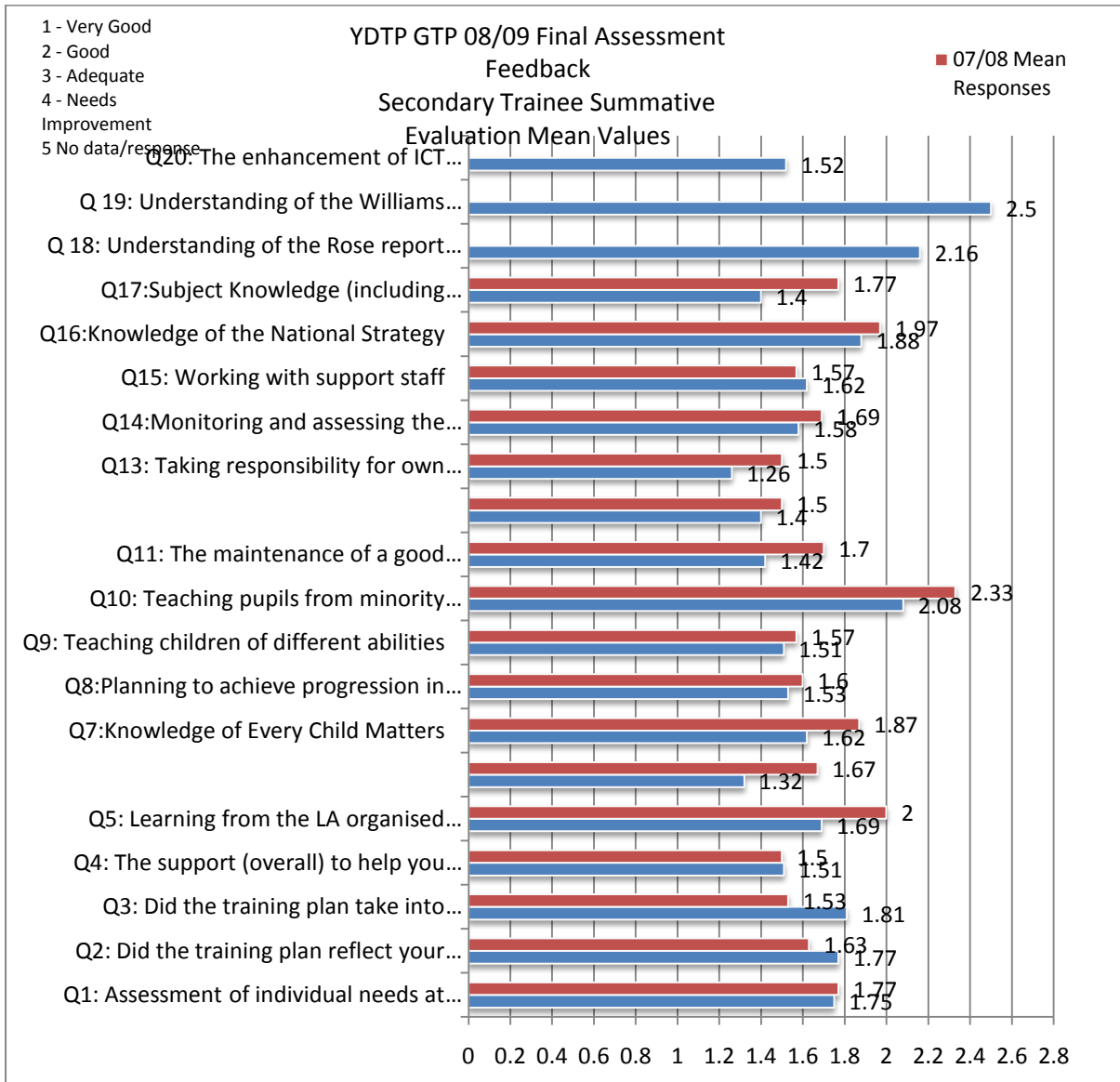
ATEE Questions - to be used by UK tutors interviewing secondary teachers with 2-4 years experience and who have followed a school based teacher training route

1. What do you most remember about your training and why?
2. To what extent did your training help you to *feel* like a teacher? How would you describe the emotional impact of 'becoming' a teacher?
3. How well do you feel you were prepared to teach your subject and meet the needs of the children you have come across in terms of:
 - a. Subject and subject pedagogic knowledge?
 - b. Understanding pupil progression and development
 - c. Classroom and behaviour management strategies?
 - d. Pupil diversity:
 - i. Ability?
 - ii. Race?
 - iii. Gender?
4. Thinking about the above, for example, did working with the QTS Standards help, hinder or make no difference to your development as a beginning teacher? Can we explore this view?
5. What elements/concepts/ ideas framed your experience during your teacher training which you find most useful:
 - a. Within the school where you trained?
 - b. Within University?
 - c. Other (explore)?
6. What elements of your teacher training did you find least useful and why
 - a. In your school?
 - b. Within University?
 - c. Other (explore)?

(prompts may also include the structure of the programme, lectures, evidence collection, review points, lesson observations and feedback, use of Professional Standards, reading, CEDP)

7. What did the course not include that should have been included? (Or needs sharpening?)
8. What do you feel have been the biggest challenges facing you since your training?
9. What would have made you better prepared as a beginning teacher?
10. What have you learned within the teaching profession since your ITT course?
11. Looking forward what are your professional development needs?

Appendix 2



Appendix 3

Key points from the data that address the ATEE RDC Secondary Education Group Questions

1. What teachers think of their EBITT Initial Teacher Training Course

- design of course is high challenge/ high expectation
- learning to think 'professionally' as a teacher very quickly
- 'on the job' training - immersion
- ability to develop pedagogical knowledge and knowledge about pupil development/ needs in a highly intensive way
- mentors/ teachers observing trainee's practice and the ensuing dialogue
- acceptance by students and staff - validated as part of a school team- 'feeling like a teacher'
- learning to be highly organised and thinking smartly re work pressures
- networking with peers on professional matters eg exchange ideas/ materials; understanding how their specific context fitted into other teaching contexts;
- visiting, learning about and working in other schools/ contexts as part of the second placement
- learning how different teaching and behaviour strategies worked with specific groups/ individuals over time
- the combination of SHU tutors and school based mentors to support the trainee
- the QTS Standards can be a useful guide to help take the trainee through the assessment / learning about teaching process
- the content of the training days which fitted with practical teacher concerns
- supportive, knowledgeable, mentors who valued the EBITT training route and understood the Standards

2. Which aspects of the course the teachers feel should be improved?

- 'felt' to be very challenging in terms of emotional commitment. The number of hours worked led to considerable stress
- the collection of evidence against the Standards is too onerous and time consuming and of limited value
- clearer role definitions/expectations/ supervision of mentors to ensure consistency across the programme and safeguard a high quality individual experience
- checking / changing trainee timetables to ensure fairness
- a right to privacy for all reviews with mentors/ assessors
- a clear expectation and understanding of the purpose and scope of the evidence base for mentors and trainees so that it has an authentic meaning
- an exploration of some alternative assessment methods e.g. viva, external report to reduce unnecessary paperwork/ photocopying
- more university based training sessions which are tailored to individuals doing very different subjects

- more visits to other schools
- consider offering Masters points within the EBITT training route in line with qualification offered by the PGCE

3. What have the teachers learned as part of their professional development since the course?

- increase knowledge and understanding of subject pedagogy
- increased knowledge of assessment - self and pupil
- a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of planning, teaching, learning and assessment
- a deeper understanding of the wider roles of the teacher e.g. managerial, working with parents, being successful for Ofsted, working in a National Challenge school
- getting on with other colleagues/ learning about and navigating successfully the politics of the institution
- the role of data and demonstrating impact
- school as a learning institution for staff e.g. selecting and preparing teachers for managerial or mentorship roles

4. Future Professional Development Needs

- preparing for promotion - e.g. gaining experience in leadership, managing other staff
- undertaking a Masters qualification
- gaining deeper understanding of wider whole school issues
- preparing for new courses

Appendix 4 Pen portraits of teachers interviewed

Teacher A Design Technology (construction)

This teacher has a non standard background for teacher training. He left school at 16 with modest CSE qualifications and joined the Army, training as a carpenter. After gaining qualifications in carpentry and joinery he worked in the construction industry and eventually enrolled for a degree in building surveying, and employment as a surveyor. He applied for and accepted a position of unqualified teacher of construction at a large 11-19 school. At this time he had over 20 years trade and construction management experience.

He had the opportunity to help design the construction suite at his school, but was the only specialist teacher in this area. Previously courses had been taught by two DT teachers, who were reverting to mainstream subject teaching. While based within the DT area it became apparent that there was some tension within the department and that construction work was seen not to have the status of DT, which is largely based on the design cycle. This meant that the support from within the department was not as strong as it should have been. However arrangements were made with two FE colleges that ran construction courses for school age pupils to provide advice on subject content and delivery approaches- but was limited as none of the FE lecturers were qualified teachers. Support about meeting the standards was given by an Assistant Head Teacher. The main difficulty was in getting the teacher to understand the professional nature of the teacher's role. He thought he was going to teach construction in a similar way he had been taught it - by instructors rather than trained teachers. He seemed to lack the initiative to drive his training forward in the professional group of standards. This was attributed to his previous construction trade background during which it was not necessary to engage in reflection about values and wider reading. The wider role of the teacher - as a form tutor, as an expert on children's learning, and an understanding of the wider aims of education was a challenge to his own thinking. Following an extended period of training he did eventually qualify as a teacher, but with further development needed in professional understanding. At the time of the interview he had 3 years of experience but was still feeling uncomfortable in the role of the professional teacher and was actively looking for employment in the FE sector.

Teacher B (Drama)

Teacher B had a history with the school in which he was interviewed. He had been a pupil there before leaving to go to a local college and subsequently university to study Drama. During the last year of his studies at university he spent some time learning different methods in teaching and facilitating small groups. The last six months of the study were spent solely concentrating on gaining experience in a teaching environment. This gave him an insight into controlling a class as well as teaching methods to maintain focus in a classroom.

He also spent twelve months specifically learning methods to teach small groups to understand and perform both classical and contemporary scripts.

After leaving university he worked in customer care for a while before signing up to a local teaching supply agency. He worked as a general cover teacher in a challenging secondary school in Barnsley, before teaching music as an instructor in another Sheffield school for three months. This gave him invaluable experience in terms of actually controlling and

managing a class as well as planning lessons and being flexible to the constantly changing demands of a school classroom. Following this Teacher B came to the school where he was interviewed initially as an instructor. His talents as a teacher were recognised by the school and he was encouraged to apply for the GTP programme. In his second year, when the school was in a category to improve, he was encouraged to become a pastoral manager of a year group.

Teacher C (Science with Dance)

The teacher worked at as a cover supervisor at the school before applying for teacher training via the GTP route. She held a degree in biomedical sciences but also had professional dance teaching qualifications and many years of teaching at a dance school. Her preference was to qualify as a teacher of dance, but her degree subject only qualified her to be trained as a science teacher. This meant that her GTP was in science but with dance as a support subject. During the GTP year she had two very different experiences of how children learn and also of the way in which mentors support trainees. When faced with issues related to students during this time, she sought out support and quickly learned new strategies that she could try with students. This was a strong quality in this teacher who after completing her training in her current school was appointed to another school, in a different authority to teach mainly dance, with supporting science. Whilst there she was able to develop a wide range of teaching skills, which she has been keen to develop further and has since returned to her GTP school as a full time dance teacher.

Teacher D (Music)

This student has a non standard background. On leaving school teacher D undertook a variety of jobs locally as apprentice Mason Pavior, Bus driver (the family tradition) and as a Chef/ Assistant Manager in a shopping mall food outlet for 10 years. Teacher D then decided to study A levels and then took a 4 year degree in Music and Education. Following his degree teacher D became a self employed caterer for a further 3 years before deciding to follow his passion and teach.

Over the years, teacher D took on various voluntary roles working with young people and music in a Primary school and at a local recording studio with 16 - 18 year olds teaching sound engineering, composition and guitar to unemployed teenagers.

Immediately, prior to the course was employed for 2 years in a Special School working with pupils with Special Needs including Autistic Spectrum disorder. Whilst there, he helped the music teacher to organise the Musical Youth ensemble which received an outstanding performance award in the national finals.

Teacher D undertook his training course in a leafy suburban school where he received good support. However he now teaches in a challenging school being promoted immediately upon qualifying as head of department. He relishes the challenge of introducing pupils (especially from deprived backgrounds) to all kinds of music. This includes music they would never normally hear or understand: he has taken boys and girls to Classical concerts in

London for example. He is an extravert, highly dedicated and is passionate about music and teaching young people.

Teacher D, now in his 30's is in his second year teaching since qualifying and is Head of Music. He is currently focussed on rewriting schemes of work to make music accessible and interesting whilst meeting national requirements. He remains very interested in pupils with Special Needs and also teaches part time at a local Special School. He is currently considering the possibility of taking his music teaching career in this direction.

Teacher E (Geography)

Teacher E went straight from school to University where he graduated with a Geography degree. Since graduating, Teacher E worked successfully for 2 years as an Assistant Chaplain in a Catholic School before being recommended to undertake the EBITT course at the same school. At the school, teacher E had experience of working with young people in his capacity as assistant chaplain: coordinating assemblies and liturgies, organising retreats, pilgrimages, teaching some RE lessons as well as undertaking other Pastoral care responsibilities within the school. Teacher E also had an interest in sport from his A Level days and was engaged in coaching America football, and taking his Professional Mountain Leadership qualification. Teacher E felt he made the transition to teacher fairly easily as he had established good relationships with staff and pupils throughout the school. However, he felt he did not have the mentoring that he subsequently received through the statutory NQT process (at the same school by a different person). He felt this affected his progress to some extent. However he was considered a high quality beginner teacher and, now in the second year of teaching, has been encouraged to consider promotional and managerial opportunities.

Teacher F (Physical Education)

This teacher left school after taking his 'A' levels. He secured a place at Sheffield Hallam University to study Sports Science. He obtained a 2-2 in 2001. His desire was to become a PE teacher but felt he needed to gain some life experience outside of education.

He secured a post with one of the largest Building Societies in the UK and worked with them for four years. In this time he was promoted to Regional Account Manager. Part of his role was to educate Financial Advisors about policies and products; he also managed over 3000 advisors. It was the training aspect of his role that steered him back towards his original desire to teach. Consequently, he made contacts with several local schools in order to become involved in the classroom as a voluntary teaching assistant.

His obvious talents were quickly identified by one school in particular who offered him a post as a Teaching Assistant within the PE department. He built successful and professional relationships with both the pupils and the staff, showing many qualities expected from 'outstanding' teachers. The school offered to support him in his application for GTP.

He qualified as a teacher through the GTP route in 2006. He was offered a permanent position by the school he trained in. He quickly developed as a teacher and leader and was promoted to head of transition and innovation in 2007. Since then he has been identified as a 'future leader/head teacher' and put on relevant courses to develop these skills further.

At the time of the interview he has 3 years of experience. He understands that he has the potential to become a head teacher but also realises that he needs to further develop his skills as a teacher and leader. He feels fully supported and guided by his current school and is enjoying working in a 'challenging school' which tests his abilities and life skills to their very limited. He believes he continues to learn each day, how to become better at the craft of teaching.

Teacher G (Modern Foreign Languages: Spanish)

This teacher left school after taking her 'A' levels. She secured a place at The University of Sheffield to study Hispanic Studies. She obtained a 2-1 in 2004. Part of her degree was to work for a year in a Spanish speaking country. She chose to work in Ecuador with the British Council as an English teacher. She was very happy with this post and realised that she had 'skills' which made her a good teacher. These skills were also recognised by her employer. She returned to England in 2003 to complete her degree.

Once her degree was completed in 2004 she returned to Ecuador working as an English Teacher for an American Franchise company. She worked with them for one and a half years. However, the challenges and dangers of working in Ecuador, in particular the risk of being kidnapped on a daily basis by the numerous gangs helped her to make the decision to return to England in 2006.

She soon secured a position in a Sheffield school as a cover assistant. Her talents as a teacher were quickly realised and consequently the school supported her in becoming a qualified teacher of Modern Foreign Languages through the GTP route at Sheffield Hallam University. She qualified in 2008 and was offered a permanent position by the school. Her leadership skills as well as teaching ability was recognised by the school and in particular her head of department, who over the year gave her more and more responsibility in the day to day running of the department. As the main Spanish teacher she was given full responsibility of devising relevant schemes of work for both key stage three and four.

She wishes to become a head teacher within the next 5 - 7 years and is being supported by the school to receive relevant training at the appropriate times. In the meantime she has secured a position as second in the Languages Department with responsibility for the day to day running of the department as well as curriculum development.

At the time of the interview he has 2 years of experience in this one British school. She fully understands what she needs to do in order to pursue her ambition of becoming a highly effective head teacher. Her thinking and practice shows that she already has many of the qualities this post would require. However, she also understands that she needs to further develop her teaching skills in order to become an 'outstanding practitioner' in a 'challenging school' in the first instance.

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Web sites

TDA (1) Information about the GTP route

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/teachers/teachertraining/thegraduateprogramme.aspx?keywords=GTP>

TDA (2) Requirements for Initial Teacher Training

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/ittstandards.aspx?keywords=requirements+for+ITT>

TDA (3) QTS Professional Standards

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/ittstandards.aspx?keywords=QTS+Standards>

TDA (4) Newly Qualified Teacher Survey

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/datasurveys/nqtsurvey.aspx?keywords=NQT+survey>

‘Four out of ten Teachers Quit Early, Report Warns’

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/four-out-of-ten-trainees-quit-teaching-early-report-warns-1771871.html>

Glossary of terms

EBITT Employment Based Initial Teacher Training

EAL – English as an additional language

GTP – Graduate Teacher Programme

Induction Year – teaching employment of one year duration during which the NQT must meet Core Teacher Standards in order to become a fully qualified teacher

NASUWT – National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

QTS Standards – A prescribed number of criteria set by the English Government in order to gain the Qualified teacher Status qualification and be ready to start the Induction year

TA – Teaching Assistant

TDA – Training and Development Agency

VAK - Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic

YDTP - Yorkshire and Derbyshire Training Partnership