

Project Evaluation Report – November 2012

Introduction

The project is based on two key understandings and ways of working which are the collaborative network approach within SWCETT, and the notion of ‘seeding innovation’.

The existing infrastructure & foundation of effective practice within the existing CETT partnership has enabled the SITE project to ‘hit the ground running’ and maximise impact within the timescale. It has also built on the very high levels of voluntarism within the partnership, especially the commitment and pro-activeness of SWCETT management group members. The SWCETT collaborative network model will be explored in more detail later in this report.

Ljubojevic and Laurillard (2010)¹ have argued that practice which is first explained through sharing and collaboration develops readily from there into a shared understanding and becomes embedded in practice as a result of that understanding. When it is planned to introduce new practices it is therefore pedagogically essential to structure them so that teachers understand not just ‘*what*’ is being proposed but ‘*why*’. If teachers are to adopt an innovation, whether using technology, or in any other field, they need to feel it will be useful and they need to have some indication why that will be the case. Small changes using familiar pedagogies, approaches and technologies can be seen to seed innovation under these circumstances, and grow into more genuinely embedded change.

The combination of these two understandings and ways of working has been essential to the success of this project.

Project Aims, objectives and outcomes

The Sharing Innovation in Teacher Education (SITE) project builds on existing infrastructure & effective practice and capitalises on the goodwill of the existing CETT partnership.

The project aims are to:

- establish a cross sector team of expert teacher educators with a proven track record of innovative, high quality ITE development and delivery
- research, select, pilot and evaluate examples of cross sector ITE innovation with a range of sector, industry and other partners
- work directly with ITE providers and employers to embed these innovative solutions into practice for programmes starting in September 2012

The project objectives:

1. *To draw together an expert, cross sector ITE team to carry out the project.*
2. *To identify examples of innovation in ITE across the sector and the country and trial them within other providers, contexts and organisations.*

¹ Ljubojevic, D. and Laurillard, D. (2011). *Evaluating learning designs through the formal representation of pedagogical patterns, Investigations of E-Learning Patterns: Context Factors, Problems and Solutions*, Eds. Kohls, C. and Wedekind, J. IGI Global.

3. *To evaluate the effectiveness of those examples of innovation*
4. *To support an agreed group of providers to embed the innovations into their ITE programmes from September 2012.*
5. *To make the results available to the sector via the Excellence Gateway, and existing website / resources such as*
the Teacher Educator UK wiki at <https://teachereducatoruk.wikispaces.com/>
the Reflective Practice wiki at <http://reflectivepractice-cpd.wikispaces.com/>

The Project Outcomes:

(Each outcome is followed by a status report)

1. *Mobilised a team of expert ITE practitioners from the full breadth of the sector*
An expert group of 6 Practitioner Teacher Educators was established during July 2013, and this included Plymouth University, Learning South West, City of Bristol College, Exeter College, Bath Spa University, and Enable Assessment. Two members of the project (from Learning South West and Bath Spa University) were accepted by all as the main project facilitators, and other members of the group considered involvement as 'triallers' or 'embedders' in addition to their SWCETT management group roles. The group remained in contact throughout the project, and project progress was also informally peer evaluated by 15 members of the SW Teacher Educators' Forum at its network meeting in October 2012.

Overall we achieved outcomes beyond those planned for item 1.

2. *Researched and identified a comprehensive range of examples of innovative strategies and solutions with the potential to support, develop and build the future of ITE.*
3. *Ensured the examples of innovation address the full range of key areas for these projects i.e.*
 - a. *new and sustainable models of delivery to the highest quality standards*
 - b. *efficient models of delivery which are also fit for purpose*
 - c. *focussing on creating excellence in teaching and learning*
 - d. *ITE provision which is attractive and affordable to new trainees and employers*
 - e. *establishing new partnerships and increased co-operation between subject associations, employers and providers*
 - f. *provision with a focus on Maths, English and STEM subjects;*
 - g. *availability of clear advice and guidance relating to teaching qualifications, gaining QTLS and CPD in the sector.*

A wide range of examples of innovation in ITE were identified by the project team then edited and curated into sixteen innovations assembled into an 'Innovations Catalogue'. The full range of key areas, apart from 'g' above, were covered by the contents of the catalogue, and eleven of the sixteen involved utilising Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL).

The innovations catalogue is available at:

the Teacher Educator UK wiki at <https://teachereducatoruk.wikispaces.com/>
the Reflective Practice wiki at <http://reflectivepractice-cpd.wikispaces.com/>

4. Selected innovations from those researched, piloted and evaluated them with other providers, employers and potential new partners.
5. Worked directly with the selected 'innovators' to embed their innovation in programmes starting from September 2012.- most impacted HFCE funded provision delivered through University provider partnerships

Although the project was not directly involved in providing places for ITE programmes starting in September 2012, the partners involved in the project provide PTTLS, CTLLS and DTLLS programmes running during this academic year and because of that a significant number of trainees have been within the reach of the project.

An invitation was sent out to SWCETT members asking them to 'trial' i.e. review and consider useability of innovations in the catalogue, and then to 'embed' i.e. use innovation/s and evaluate it/them for a small payment. Our targets were to recruit 12 'trallers' and 6 'embedders'

Numbers involved in the trialling phase

(note: some providers became involved in trialling voluntarily, hence the large numbers)

20 organisations from across the breadth of the sector:

Further Education (15 colleges), Higher Education (2 Universities), Work Based Learning (1 private training provider), Public Services (1) and Specialist Colleges (1)

These organisations will be training approximately 955 trainee teachers and employing approximately 45 teacher educators during 2012/13

Numbers involved in the Embedding phase of the project -

10 organisations from a range of contexts across the sector:

Further Education (7 colleges), Higher Education (1), Work Based Learning (1), and Specialist College (1)

These organisations will be training approximately 185 trainee teachers and employing approximately 18 teacher educators during 2012/13

6. Identified sustainable and innovative learning, resources, approaches and solutions for the future of ITE.

In order to review the degree to which the project achieved this outcome, the evaluation of project results was planned to ensure feedback and data from a variety of sources, and using more than one method. Each participant organisation was asked to complete an evaluative trialling and / or embedding report, and an online questionnaire was provided to gather more evaluative data about the embedding activities. It was agreed that 50 responses to this questionnaire would provide the project with a sound sample of the possible respondents.

The questionnaire is available at: <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/bathspa/siteproject>

The results, which are in the 'Evaluation of Innovations' section of this report, demonstrate a successful achievement of Outcome 6.

7. Made the results available on the Excellence Gateway, and existing website / resources such as the Teacher Educator UK wiki at <https://teachereducatoruk.wikispaces.com/> the Reflective Practice wiki at <http://reflectivepractice-cpd.wikispaces.com/>

The project materials will be available on the above website from 1 December 2012.

Evaluation of innovations

Project participants were asked a broad range of questions about the innovations, and they focussed on a range of key project themes and in particular outcome 6. The results are grouped under headings relating to those themes:

Data gathered.

By 22nd November 2012, trialling reports had been received from eight of the 12 trialling providers, and eight (rather than the six originally planned) embedding providers.

50 respondents had completed the online questionnaire, including 28 trainee teachers, 9 teachers, 8 teacher educators, 1 manager, and 4 'others'.

This indicates that the project has succeeded well in gaining feedback from teachers in training and teacher educators.

Context

- *The nature of their activity as a provider*
- *What was the ITE context?*

Project 'triallers' or 'embedders' included providers who were between them teaching all current ITE programmes (PTLLS, CTLLS, DTLLS and Cert Ed / PG Cert). A significant proportion of providers in the sector were involved, with participants from Higher Education, Further Education, Specialist Further Education and Uniformed Services Training. Prison education and adult and community learning were not represented in the respondents.

Trainees who were involved in making use of innovations from the catalogue included experienced and new teachers, trainers from work based training, first year and second year trainees on DTLLS / Cert Ed / PG Cert programmes, and were genuinely representative of the diversity of participants in ITE programmes across the sector. No ongoing total of trainees involved in embedding activities was kept by the project but it is reasonable to estimate from comments which were made about numbers of participants in reports that between 150 and 175 trainees were involved.

- *Which innovations they would consider using and why*

All 16 innovations were discussed during trialling. 13 of the sixteen innovations were utilised in the embedding process. The three innovations which were not used had no obvious linked features, and project participants did not indicate why they had not selected them. Embedding organisations were able to choose more than one innovation to embed and this resulted in 20 uses of innovations in total. There were four innovations, 'Cultural Awareness Activity'; 'Using Reflective Practice activities' and 'Recognising and Developing Outstanding Teaching' which were used more than once. Respondents indicated three main reasons for using the innovations were used for three main reasons, which were their appropriateness for the particular

stage of the programme in which they were used; because they were cross curricular, so could be fitted into a scheduled programme more easily and because the provider / teacher wanted to take on a challenge they had not tried before.

Comments from embedding reports include:

I put myself slightly out of my comfort zone, not having directly taught a cultural awareness session like this before.

Innovation 12 fitted extremely well into tackling the raising of self-awareness concerning good teaching practice and the criteria around which those judgements are made in more formal processes.

I discussed using Twitter for reflection with DTTLS year 2 group. I introduced the concept during a discussion relating to the assignment for Managing and Developing Resources (L5). The group were keen to listen but from the ensuing discussion I realised they had many reservations and would not use it.

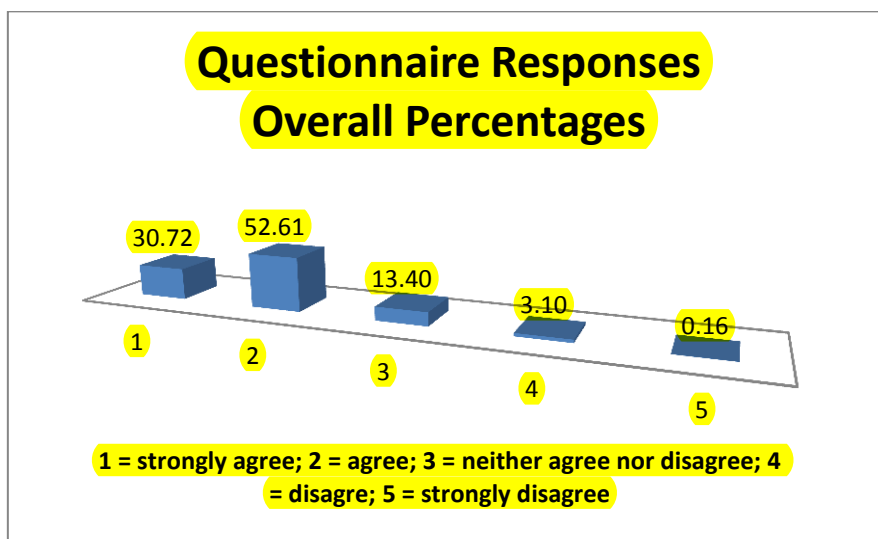
As can be seen from the third quote, teacher trainees were offered the opportunity to engage with one innovation but declined. This was the only example of its type, but has not deterred the tutor concerned, who will try again next year.

Table 1 shows the responses from participants to a series of questions rated on a scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The results are referred to within the next sections.

- *How effectively did the innovation work?*

Feedback from participants indicates that a significant majority of the innovations were felt to have worked effectively. Across all innovations, 31% of responses were 'strongly agree', 53% agree, and only 3% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Overall 83% of responses were 'agree' or 'strongly agree', which are extremely pleasing results for the project

Chart 1 – Overall responses



Comments received on this question include:

the activity added value to the programme as from my point of view as the teacher, it gave me a real 'hook' on which to handle the subject of cultural awareness.

The group enjoyed the activity and felt they learnt from it. One student sent an email the following day as follows: Just wanted to send a quick email to thank you for the past two days. I have taken a lot from both days on a number of levels (the innovation was used as part of a series of activities)

many of the students referred directly to the site, or to reflective practice models discussed on the site in their written homework. As an early introduction to reflective practices the site offered a reference point that showed our learners that reflective practice was something valued by teacher educators and was not something that was a simply a preferred approach by the XXXX team

- *How would it add value to the teacher training programme and improve its quality?*

The questionnaire responses indicated 90% agreement or strong agreement that the innovation added value. Comments from respondents included:

Feedback from learners was positive and they reported back that they would use this as an activity with their learners to promote discussion about multiculturalism and promote cultural awareness.

It will widen the students' knowledge and understanding of how to access on line resources, and provide them with useful links to resources for their own subject areas.

It added value by giving all the ITT team time to reflect on our usual delivery. After viewing the presentation we realised it was another way of adding to the delivery model, already interactive, but this had some different ideas relating to roles. Using another 'voice' would assist the teacher in mixing up the verbal delivery too

The questionnaire responses relating to whether the innovation would improve the quality of the ITE programme indicated 85% agreement or strong agreement. No comments were made to amplify the responses.

- ***Would the innovation help teaching professionalism?***

The questionnaire responses to this question indicated 85% agreement or strong agreement. No comments were made to amplify those responses.

- ***Could it be used again?***

85% of responses indicated agreement or strong agreement that they would use the innovation again.

Comments included:

Without doubt. It was and will be very useful – the next PTLIS group (this time a standalone group) begins in January 2013.

I found this to be a very useful exercise as it raised awareness and sharpened judgement. If coupled with reflection and honest self-appraisal then it could help sharpen areas for each student to develop.

We will use this tool all year. It was first introduced during induction, but has been returned to regularly during the early weeks of the course by tutors and trainees

- *How could it be improved / adapted?*

Respondents did adapt the activities on a number of occasions and suggested further adaptations which would all improve their quality, value and impact. The process of 'seeding innovation' i.e. teachers taking ownership and developing them further was clearly in action.

Comments included:

I decided to use three different resources to 'provide a variety of ways of discussing/looking at outstanding teaching'

The links in the Reflective Practice site take the reader from introductions to deeper forms of knowledge, but the site is less successful in taking the reader between bodies of knowledge.

We would adapt it by building in opportunities for XXXX staff to evaluate their practice if they are already embedding LLN.

- *Would it be fair to implement the innovation?*

The questionnaire responses to this question indicated 82% agreement or strong agreement. This was the one question which included the highest number of 'disagree' responses, although this was still just 5 responses or 3% of the total. No comments were made to amplify those responses.

- *Would it be cost effective to implement the innovation?*

The questionnaire responses to this question indicated 85% agreement or strong agreement. No comments were made to amplify those responses.

- *Any other comments*

Opportunities to comment on unexpected outcomes or on any other matter concerning the innovations were provided, and in excess of fifty comments were made. They tended to amplify comments or responses elsewhere, and a number are shown below which addressed points not raised elsewhere.

Cultural awareness really helped people to talk openly about their experiences of prejudice. It was very useful in Health & Social Care to prepare learners for working with people from different backgrounds and to develop empathy. Employer Links - employers really wanted to help young people to develop their business plans and learn from their experiences.

I enjoyed thinking outside the box as we had been given permission to be as creative as we liked. This was very liberating.

I had reservations about this activity initially as, at first glance, I could not see how it would benefit learners in terms of preparing for the assignment. In practice however, it worked extremely well in terms of developing skills of critical analysis and critical reflection expected, to consolidate the theories and principles covered on the course, as well as enabling learners to be creative, innovative and to have fun.

This activity helps to keep learners engaged through the use of a different medium and has a wide range of applications. It is a great discussion tool, bringing students together as they work and pulls out different perspectives. It helps to formatively assess an individual's views and perspectives.

Table 1 – Responses to rate online questions

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
a. It would add value to the teacher training programme	30	31	5	2	0	68
b. It will improve the quality of the training programme	19	39	8	2	0	68
c. It would help improve teaching skills	18	34	14	2	0	68
d. It would help teaching professionalism	21	37	9	1	0	68
e. It would improve student learning	24	33	10	1	0	68
f. It would be straightforward to implement	15	44	6	3	0	68
g. It would be cost effective to implement	24	32	10	2	0	68
h. It would be fair to expect teachers to implement this	13	38	12	5	0	68
i. I would make use of it again	24	34	8	1	1	68
Total	188	322	82	19	1	612
Percentage	30.72	52.61	13.40	3.10	0.16	100.00

SWCETT model

Given the SWCETT model is integral to this project, it is considered in more depth in this section.

SWCETT was proposed and has been organised based on a series of **original principles** based on establishing and sustaining a collaborative ethos combined with a welcoming and open approach to member and new partner engagement. SWCETT has underpinned all its activities on the principles of

- Being Inclusive towards all members and other interested parties
- Participation and active learning
- Sharing and open sourcing

The SWCETT is a **collaborative network**, which is operated along the lines of an extended '**community of practice**'. Wenger (2006)² describes communities of practice as 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.' A genuine community of practice will have 'a shared domain of interest', and in the case of SWCETT this is Teacher Education. It will also operate as a community which will have 'joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other' (Wenger 2006). This is constantly evident through SWCETT as members engage in activities regularly and collaborate beyond institutional boundaries and a wide range of matters. Thirdly Wenger (2006) suggests that the community needs 'the practice'. 'Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction'. SWCETT focusses on facilitating, supporting and utilising this 'shared repertoire' to the benefit of all and to seek solutions and ways forward to recurring problems.

Underpinning organisation and a democratic approach

SWCETT is co-ordinated in a way which is neutral, facilitative, helpful and supportive and the range and scope of membership has considerable credibility. The administration dimension is crucial, and serves as the organisational infrastructure of the community. The power relationship between and across members is very important, and considerable effort is put into ensuring all participants in SWCETT activity feel that they are welcome, and that they have some control and influence - **we are defined by the element of democracy.**

Contributions and active learning / participation

The process by which SWCETT operates includes many participants from the community of members by seeking and finding contributions, partners **contributing by playing to their strengths** and knowledge of what their strengths are. The membership has a considerable depth and breadth of experience and expertise and sharing this and disseminating professional practice is important to all.

² Wenger, E. (2006). *Communities of Practice: A brief introduction*. Retrieved from <http://www.ewenger.com/theory>

We **have an active learning model in our membership** - this is underpinned by being effectively organised through a non-provider who acts as a neutral facilitator yet has equal commitment and influence across the partnership. The processes and activities tend to follow the classic **development cycle** – where groups of practitioners can be drawn together at short notice, at all levels and engage in **creating, adapting, and evaluating** activities, projects, events and interactions.

This model is underpinned by the notion of ‘Expansive Professionalism’ for teachers, which ‘promotes an open and outward looking approach, recognises the value of education to society at large, and works to improve the health, welfare, self-esteem and ongoing progression of students’ (Crawley 2012: 4)³. By grouping into a CETT we work to move things forward in terms of teaching and learning quality across the region and beyond - we have links to other CETTs, their associated networks and other groupings of professionals, and connect readily with individual practitioners as well as organisations.

The partnership is more than an ability to work across a large geographical area - wherever people are they value networks because of the opportunity to **work together to develop and improve**.

This ethos is evident throughout this project, and is we believe one of the key reasons for its success.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The project approach, methodology and methods were sound and worked well. In retrospect more questions both on the reports and the online questionnaire would have provided even more extensive data. Evidence from such a short timescale however can only appear indicative, and further cycles of trialling and embedding would be needed to provide more substantial data.

A central part of the (Ljubojevic and Laurillard 2010) model referred to earlier in this report is to use a ‘step by step’ approach to embed innovations into practice. This has also been called a ‘small blends’ approach (Smyth et al 2011⁴) where using and blending small activities, tools or innovations into teaching builds confidence to the level where practitioners recognise the value of an innovation and then start to embed or ‘blend’ it into their practice in a variety of ways. This project has used innovations which have generally appeared comfortable to use, and less prone to disruption than others available, and they have been quietly utilised yet particularly well received. Almost all participants have recognised the potential for this approach and have been both ready to innovate, and convinced the innovations are worth using again. This strongly vindicates the project’s approach, although a longer period

³ Crawley, Jim (2012) ‘On the brink’ or ‘designing the future’? Where next for Lifelong Learning Initial Teacher Education? *Teaching in lifelong learning: a journal to inform and improve practice*, 4 (1). pp. 2-12.

⁴ Smyth, K., Bruce, S., Fotheringham, J. and Mainka, C. (2011) *Benchmark for the use of technology in modules*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Napier University

of embedding would provide more longitudinal evidence. The effectiveness of the approach over such a short timescale is extremely encouraging.

We also gathered some data which is relevant to issues raised in the Lingfield report (2012)⁵, and the Ecorys (2012)⁶ report. The innovations not only represented a variety of new approaches to delivery of ITE, including effective use of Technology Enhanced Learning, but participants considered the innovations straightforward; giving value for money; likely to improve the quality of the ITE programmes and the teaching of trainees; considered it fair to implement them, and felt they would contribute to the professionalism of the teachers concerned. The activity is a good example of bottom up professionalism, an approach which could general work well in many other aspects of the professional life of teachers in the Lifelong Learning (LL) sector.

Recommendations

This project has exceeded expectations and provided some highly beneficial and positive experiences for teacher trainees, teachers, teacher educators and others. It has demonstrated innovation is alive and well in the LL sector. We would recommend the following:

1. Further evaluation of the project approach over an extended period of time with further activity.
2. Continued use of the existing innovations and addition of a further range of innovations.
3. Extension of the number of 'triallers' and 'embedders'.

We would welcome the opportunity to take this project further.

⁵ Lingfield et al (2012) *Professionalism in Further Education Final Report of the Independent Review Panel*. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

⁶ Ecorys (2012) *Supporting Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in FE and Skills: Delivery and Funding Models. A Final Report to the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)*. Coventry: LSIS