



Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

The quality and relevance of staff training to deliver adult basic education (ABE) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



MARCH 2010

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- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ Local authority education services for children and young people;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
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- ▲ offender learning; and
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Introduction

- 1 The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy in Wales, 'Words Talk-Numbers Count' (April 2005), gives a commitment to developing the practitioner workforce in Wales. The strategy states that 'practitioners are at the heart of good basic skills provision'. Basic Skills Cymru has the responsibility for implementing and monitoring the strategy, and more recently for supporting the post-16 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher training network. Basic Skills Cymru continues to provide support for teachers, trainers and assessors to develop their professional skills.
- 2 Skills that Work for Wales, the skills and employment strategy and action plan published by the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2008, identifies the need for more basic skills practitioners with the right skills and expertise. The action plan includes a commitment to introducing a continuing professional development programme for teachers and trainers delivering adult basic education (ABE) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- 3 This report is published in response to a request in the annual Ministerial remit to Estyn for 2009-2010 to evaluate the quality and relevance of staff training to deliver ABE and ESOL.
- 4 The report focuses on teachers and trainers from a variety of providers who are delivering ABE and ESOL. It considers and evaluates the current staff training taking place within provider settings. It examines the barriers to completing the level 3 and level 4/5 ABE and ESOL professional qualifications for teachers and trainers.
- 5 Evidence is taken from questionnaires, inspection reports, interviews with teachers and trainers and meetings with providers of national training initiatives.

Background

- 6 The Moser report in 1999, 'A Fresh Start', stated that many teachers and trainers in ABE and ESOL lacked relevant teaching and specialist qualifications.
- 7 The main qualification for teachers and trainers at the time was the City and Guilds 9285 certificate. This was available at both level 3 and level 4. However, the Moser report recognised that the approach in the delivery of this qualification varied considerably between the 200 centres registered to deliver the award.
- 8 The report recommended that there should be new qualifications for teaching basic skills to adults.
- 9 This resulted in a new suite of City and Guilds qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4 in literacy, numeracy and ESOL:
 - Level 2 Certificate in Learning Support (9297);
 - Level 3 Certificate in Delivering Basic Skills to Adults (9375);
 - Level 4 Certificate in Adult Literacy Subject Specialists (9485);
 - Level 4 Certificate in Adult Numeracy Subject Specialists (9486); and
 - Level 4 Certificate in ESOL Subject Specialists (9488).
- 10 In 2005, University of Wales Newport (UWN), with funding and support from the Basic Skills Agency, developed bespoke level 4 specialist qualifications for literacy and ESOL in line with the Further Educational National Training Organisation (FENTO) requirements. This qualification was validated by Standards Verification UK (SVUK) within the University of Wales framework.
- 11 The City and Guilds level 3 qualification was developed in Wales and adopted by England and Northern Ireland as a bridging course for those not ready to undertake a level 4 qualification.
- 12 All of the above qualifications are currently under review by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). At the current time City and Guilds have extended the final registrations date for those taking the qualifications to December 2010¹.
- 13 In 2009, University of Wales Newport introduced a full-time and part-time Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and Certificate of Education (Cert Ed) in adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL at level 5. In England, the level 5 has replaced the level 4 as the minimum qualification for teachers of ABE and ESOL. In Wales, there is no minimum level of qualification for teachers of ABE and ESOL.
- 14 Basic Skills Cymru support the teacher training qualifications and offer training grants each year for providers to train and up-skill their workforce. Uptake of the grant in previous years has been slow. However, grant applications for 2009-2010 have shown a large increase and exceed the funds available.

¹ Information correct at date of publication of the report. Details of changes to the qualification can be obtained from City and Guilds.

Qualified teacher status

- 15 In September 2007, The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications regulations were introduced in England. This legislation clearly defines teaching roles in further education and gives the level of qualification teachers are expected to hold for each of these roles. It gives a definition of qualified status for teachers in further education in England and guidance on how existing teachers can achieve full qualified teacher status.
- 16 Following the introduction of this legislation for England, a steering group was formed in Wales to consider a Welsh equivalent. The steering group was made up of experts in the field of further education and included representatives from: Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS); Fforwm; higher education institutions; work-based training providers; unions; further education colleges; and practitioners. The steering group recommended a policy similar to the one in England but adapted to the Welsh context. This recommendation has yet to be confirmed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Definitions

- 17 For the purpose of this report the following definitions are used:
- Teachers are practitioners teaching ABE or ESOL;
 - Trainers and assessors are practitioners who deliver ABE or ESOL to learners in work-based settings;
 - Vocational teachers are practitioners who teach other curriculum subjects but who support learners with their ABE and ESOL needs;
 - Practitioners refers to all teachers, trainers, assessors and vocational teachers; and
 - Providers are those offering the teacher training courses.

Main findings

- 18 Practitioners and work-based learning providers in ABE and ESOL do not have a recognised national qualification framework. Basic Skills Cymru recommend and promote the level 4 certificate and level 5 diploma as the minimum qualifications for teachers who are specialists in teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL. However, there is no definition of the specialist role and how this is different to the role of a teacher. There are no guidelines in Wales which clearly state the qualifications a teacher needs to hold in order to be considered qualified to teach ABE and ESOL and no statistics available to provide a reliable measure of the numbers who may be qualified.
- 19 The current structure of qualifications for ABE and ESOL practitioners is not matched well enough to the various job roles that they undertake. Work-based trainers and assessors, vocational teachers supporting learners and practitioners in learner support roles are unsure of the level of qualification they need for the work they do. This has led to many taking qualifications which are not suitable for their job role or their existing level of qualification and expertise.
- 20 Nearly all the relevant Estyn inspections identify a higher standard of teaching and learning in classes taught by teachers with relevant ABE and ESOL qualifications and experience. Nearly all ABE and ESOL managers claim an improvement in learner retention and attainment in classes where the teacher has attained ABE and ESOL teaching qualifications and after relevant continuing professional development training.
- 21 Nearly all practitioners in ABE teach, deliver, assess or support both literacy and numeracy as part of their job role. A majority of those teaching literacy and numeracy are very confident in their skills in both these subjects though data from Basic Skills Cymru, and responses to an Estyn questionnaire, indicate that many more teachers have taken the level 3 and level 4 qualifications in literacy than in numeracy.
- 22 Many practitioners have identified numeracy as an area for further development of their skills. However, there are very few opportunities for practitioners to improve their numeracy skills as most providers do not have staff qualified to deliver numeracy continuing professional development.
- 23 A minority of Estyn inspection reports identify a shortfall in the number of teachers with higher level ABE and ESOL specific qualifications. Many practitioners have barriers to taking the level 3, level 4 and level 5 qualifications. These include the remote venues, the cost, the workload and the lengthy assignments. Practitioners with existing qualifications and experience are not sure how these will be taken into account if they take the level 4 certificate or level 5 diploma. This leads to a reluctance amongst practitioners to take up the qualifications.
- 24 A minority of practitioners who have taken the level 3 course have benefited well from the practical teaching strategies this course offers. However, many employers and practitioners rely too heavily on the level 3 qualification where another qualification may be more appropriate for the practitioner. A minority of teachers take

this course even though the higher level 4 or level 5 would be more appropriate for their skills and career development. A majority of trainers, assessors, vocational teachers and learner support teachers take the level 3 qualification even though it has an emphasis on group teaching which is not relevant to their job roles. This means many practitioners in ABE and ESOL have a qualification which is not relevant to their job and which has little impact on the quality of the learning experience of the learners they are teaching or supporting.

- 25 The quality of ABE and ESOL teacher training courses is not consistent across Wales. A few practitioners from work-based provision change courses because a few college providers fail to understand their needs well enough.
- 26 The grants available from Basic Skills Cymru contribute very effectively to the training of many practitioners. However, many providers do not effectively plan ABE and ESOL teacher training courses as part of their curriculum. They plan courses to meet the requirements for grants from Basic Skills Cymru. This means providers arrange many courses at short notice and a majority of practitioners are not able to obtain information quickly or easily enough to make good use of the opportunities available. Providers cancel many courses due to low numbers.
- 27 There is no consistency in the level of fees set by different providers for courses not supported by the Basic Skills Cymru grant. The high cost of many courses restricts the numbers of practitioners many training providers can put forward for training.
- 28 A majority of colleges provide relevant and timely ABE and ESOL continuing professional development courses. However, work-based learning providers often lack expertise within their companies to run in-house courses for teaching ABE and ESOL, and do not have sufficient access to courses run by colleges.
- 29 In the best cases, a few practitioners work successfully in partnership to deliver staff training and development courses. They identify training needs well and employ experienced and well qualified outside trainers and speakers to deliver specific courses to practitioners from more than one institution.

Recommendations

Welsh Assembly Government should:

- R1 establish national qualification standards for teaching, delivering and supporting ABE and ESOL in Wales which clearly define the various roles and the relevant qualifications required for each one;
- R2 ensure that routes to qualifications are clear and unambiguous for all staff teaching, delivering, supporting or assessing ABE and ESOL;
- R3 establish a robust system for the accreditation of prior learning (APL) which acknowledges existing qualifications and experience;
- R4 revise the entry criteria and the content of the level 3 qualification in Wales to make it more relevant to all the various practitioner roles within ABE and ESO ;
- R5 support partnership models for the delivery of the teacher training qualifications and continuing professional development to draw on expertise from a variety of providers and to ensure all providers have equal access to courses;
- R6 revise the system for allocating training grants to make training more easily accessible to training providers and other non-college based providers; and
- R7 increase opportunities for teachers to develop their skills in teaching numeracy.

Providers should:

- R8 continue to promote and support relevant qualifications for all practitioners teaching, delivering, supporting, and assessing ABE and ESOL;
- R9 identify and promote opportunities for delivering joint training in partnership with other providers to ensure a wider range of opportunities for all practitioners to develop their skills; and
- R10 continue to offer relevant and specific continuing professional development opportunities for ABE and ESOL practitioners.

Qualification frameworks and qualified teacher status

- 30 There is no recognised and structured national qualification framework in Wales for the teaching, delivering, assessing and supporting of ABE and ESOL learners. Basic Skills Cymru recommend and promote the level 4 certificate and level 5 diploma as the minimum qualifications for teachers who are specialists in teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL. However, there is no consistent definition of the specialist role between providers and no recognised definition of how this specialist role differs from that of a qualified teacher.
- 31 There are no guidelines in Wales which clearly state the qualifications a teacher needs to hold in order to be considered qualified to teach ABE and ESOL, and no statistics available to provide a reliable measure of the numbers who may be qualified. Many employers accept teachers with the level 3 as qualified, whilst a few consider the level 4 or level 5 qualifications to be the required standard. The term qualified is further confused as most ABE teachers teach both literacy and numeracy but hold a higher level qualification in just one of these subjects. In mixed literacy and numeracy classes, this could mean they are qualified to teach half the class but not the other half. This leads to confusion amongst employers when they are asked for statistics on the number of qualified practitioners they employ and the level of their qualifications.
- 32 The current structure of qualifications for ABE and ESOL practitioners is not matched well enough to the various job roles. Work-based trainers and assessors, vocational teachers supporting learners and practitioners in learner support roles are unsure of the level of qualification they need for the work they do. This has led to many taking qualifications which are not suitable for their job role or their existing level of qualification and expertise.

Level 3, level 4, and level 5 qualifications

- 33 Nearly all Estyn inspections of ABE and ESOL classes in 2008-2009 have identified a higher standard of teaching and learning in classes taught by teachers with a combination of relevant qualifications and experience.
- 34 The Basic Skills Cymru Quality Standards Award and Estyn's Common Inspection Framework promote the need for a suitably qualified workforce. Most practitioners and employers support this need, but there is no clear national statement that requires a certain level of qualification to teach ABE and ESOL. Level 4 and level 5 courses are not easily available for teachers and there is a lack of relevant courses for assessors, vocational teachers and learner support teachers. This means the level 3 course is often the only available option for practitioners.
- 35 For a minority of teachers taking the level 3 course, the higher level 4 or level 5 would be more appropriate for their skills and career development. A majority of trainers, assessors, vocational teachers and learner support teachers do not have access to a course tailored to their job roles and take the level 3 qualification even though it has an emphasis on group teaching which is not relevant to their job roles. This means many practitioners in ABE and ESOL have a qualification which is not relevant to their job and therefore has little impact on the quality of the learning experience of the learners they are teaching or supporting.
- 36 Basic Skills Cymru support practitioner training and development well through their Adult Training Grant Scheme. They offer grants to providers to run courses as a means to providing opportunities and support for practitioners to take suitable and relevant qualifications. In 2009–2010, BSC will be supporting a total of 92 courses. Thirty-five per cent of these will be awareness raising sessions; 32% will be level 2; 28% will be level 3; and 5% will be level 4. Many providers plan courses to meet the requirements for grants from Basic Skills Cymru rather than planning ABE and ESOL teacher training courses as part of their general curriculum for workforce development. This means providers arrange many courses at short notice in reaction to the grant requirements and a majority of practitioners are not able to obtain information quickly or easily enough to make good use of the opportunities available. As a result, providers cancel many courses due to low numbers.

Delivery of ABE and ESOL teaching qualifications

- 37 A few providers offer courses which are planned well in advance as part of their general curriculum planning and which are not dependent on the Basic Skills Cymru Grant Scheme. However, there is no consistency in the level of fees set by different providers for these courses and the high cost of many courses restricts the numbers of practitioners that work-based learning providers can put forward for training.
- 38 Most providers of ABE and ESOL teacher training courses offer the level 2 or the level 3 with just three providers in Wales offering the level 4 in 2009-2010. A higher proportion of the courses is offered in literacy rather than in numeracy.
- 39 Nearly all providers teach the level 2 qualification effectively. Providers use the course to train volunteers and to raise awareness of ABE and ESOL. This course is the most frequently delivered and nearly all providers feel that the outcomes are very good. It fulfils the aims of awareness-raising very effectively and provides a very good background to supporting learners with basic skills or ESOL needs.
- 40 A few college providers cater for the needs of work-based learning practitioners well and a few work-based assessors and training companies benefit from very good support by providers and teacher trainers. In the best cases, providers find suitable placements for teachers to meet course requirements for group teaching. In a very few cases, teachers benefit well from opportunities arranged by providers for course delegates to shadow one another and more experienced teachers. However, a few practitioners from work-based provision change courses due to a few college providers failing to understand their needs well enough.
- 41 The quality of the delivery of the level 3 ABE and ESOL courses is not consistent across Wales. Entry requirements for practitioners to access the courses vary between providers. A minority of learners taking the level 3 course have difficulty in completing the assignments due to not having relevant initial qualifications. Many practitioners on level 3 already have a PGCE qualification and have completed the generic teaching units as part of this course. There is no consistency in the way that different providers accredit this prior learning. This leads to a lack of motivation and creates barriers to practitioners completing and attaining the qualification.

Barriers to practitioners taking ABE and ESOL qualifications

- 42 Unsatisfactory access to suitable courses is one of the main barriers to practitioners taking up courses and qualifications. Nearly all training providers find it difficult to access places on level 3 courses. In a few areas employers make several enquiries of local providers before finding a suitable course for employees.
- 43 Access to the level 4 and level 5 courses in both ABE and ESOL is limited. University of Wales, Newport is the main provider of the ABE and ESOL level 5 course. Very few colleges offer the level 4 or level 5 qualifications due to the costs of staffing and running the course for the small numbers who apply. Coleg Menai (accessing Basic Skills Cymru grant funding through a franchise arrangement with UWN) is a main provider of the ESOL qualifications at level 4 and level 5 in North Wales. Most of the uptake for both the ABE and ESOL courses comes from teachers in a close geographical area of the venues.
- 44 Sixty-two per cent of ABE teachers and 58% of ESOL teachers who want to take the level 4 or level 5 qualifications say that the barriers to completing the course include the timing of courses and a too heavy load of assignments. This is particularly so when the teacher is a full-time employee. A minority of part time employees are reluctant to take on a high volume of extra training with no extra pay for the time they have to give up.

Continuing professional development

- 45 A majority of colleges provide relevant and timely ABE and ESOL continuing professional development courses (CPD) to teachers, assessors, vocational teachers and learner support teachers. However a few basic skills and ESOL departments are restricted in the number of basic skills and ESOL specific courses they can deliver due to prioritisation of other training.
- 46 Very few work-based training providers run CPD courses. Many lack the expertise within their own companies to run in-house courses and they do not have access to the courses run by colleges.
- 47 Many managers of ABE and ESOL departments use a good range of strategies to identify teachers' CPD needs. These include appraisals and observations of classes. However a very few do not have effective strategies for identifying, recording and meeting the training needs of part-time teachers.
- 48 Most colleges use higher qualified and more experienced ABE and ESOL teachers to deliver in-house CPD. There has been a rise in the percentage of CPD courses financed by Basic Skills Cymru grants over the last two years. In ABE, this rose from 20% in 2007/2008 to 30% in 2008/2009 and in ESOL, from 15% in 2007/2008 to 37% in 2008/2009. This is due to an increased awareness of the grant guidelines and the earlier distribution of grant application forms from Basic Skills Cymru in the academic year 2008/2009.
- 49 In a very few areas of Wales, college and local authority providers are working very well in partnership to deliver effective CPD to a wide range of practitioners. This approach merges the benefits of both in-house and regional training very well. It promotes one-day courses in local venues with the opportunity for sharing ideas and best practice. In a very few cases providers use the Basic Skills Cymru grant very effectively to bring in outside trainers and speakers. However, training providers are not benefiting well enough from partnership training.

Providers in south-east Wales use partnerships very well to promote staff training and development.

Managers and co-ordinators of ABE and ESOL provision identify teachers' training needs very effectively through observations and meetings with staff. They discuss the findings at managers' meetings and develop well planned and relevant training programmes. They apply for grants from Basic Skills Cymru as a partnership. This allows them to purchase outside speakers and trainers for specific topics. An example of this is Dyslexia style structured skills development training provided by LLU+.

They hold training events at local venues central to the partnership and take the needs of both part-time and full-time staff into account very well.

Managers monitor the impact of training through repeated observations and staff appraisal programmes.

Analysis of teacher questionnaire responses

- 50 Overall, nearly all practitioners in ABE and ESOL feel that specialist knowledge and training are essential to deliver ABE and ESOL lessons effectively to adults. Most teachers and trainers are willing to undertake training courses to enhance their skills.
- 51 Most ABE teachers feel that confidence and a greater knowledge of the theory of teaching literacy and numeracy are the main benefits of taking the level 3 and level 4 qualifications. Many teachers develop new approaches to teaching adults and gain a greater variety of ideas for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy. A few teachers find the courses to be useful revision of existing skills.
- 52 ESOL teachers feel they gain from refreshed knowledge, increased confidence and new teaching strategies. A few ESOL teachers gain a greater awareness of learner needs.
- 53 A few teachers of ABE and ESOL have been in the profession for a number of years and already have the City and Guilds 9285 certificate at level 3 or 4. A majority of these teachers feel it is unreasonable for them to have to take more qualifications to meet the new qualification framework. They feel the models for the new qualifications do not take enough account of their prior experience, skills and qualifications.
- 54 Nearly all teachers of ABE and ESOL believe that they are expected to attain the level 4 or level 5 qualification. However, a majority of assessors in work-based provision and teachers in vocational areas supporting ABE and ESOL learners are unsure of the level of qualification they need. Many of these practitioners feel that the current qualifications do not meet their training and development needs effectively. They find it difficult to meet the requirements of the qualifications for teaching groups of learners as they usually support learners on a one-to-one basis.
- 55 Nearly all practitioners and providers feel that the level 3 qualification teaches the practical skills for teaching ABE and ESOL well. Teachers who are interested in teaching ABE or ESOL as a career find it is a good link between the level 2 and the theoretical level 4 and level 5 courses. However, most teachers on the level 3 course and the majority of those delivering the course feel that the content and workload is higher than a standard level 3 qualification. Those who already have a PGCE qualification before starting this course find there is an overlap of learning in the initial generic units. This results in a minority of learners losing interest and motivation.
- 56 Providers of the level 3 course feel that it is more appropriate to those practitioners who already have a degree or higher level qualification. They feel that a minority of learners who take the course do not have the relevant levels of literacy and numeracy to complete the qualification successfully.
- 57 Around a half of teachers can give specific examples of how staff training and development has improved the standards learners achieve. These include learners gaining qualifications in a shorter time and learning new skills more effectively. Managers report more learners staying on courses and completing their learning goals. However, a few teachers do not have effective strategies in place to assess the impact of staff training and development on their learners.

- 58 Many teachers in ESOL gain new teaching ideas from CPD and a few gain specific skills such as a greater awareness of strategies for teaching pronunciation. Most teachers in ABE update their knowledge through CPD activities. Many learn skills for making their teaching more varied in sessions. A few teachers gain a greater understanding of qualification requirements and methods of assessment. This has resulted in qualifications for ABE and ESOL learners better matched to learner needs.
- 59 ESOL tutors require a wide variety of future CPD. Almost equal numbers of teachers feel they require more training on using computers in classes, phonology, citizenship, differentiation in classes, linguistic differences in nationalities and teaching pre-entry learners.
- 60 ABE teachers feel the greatest area of training need is in teaching numeracy. This is particularly so for teaching level 2 learners. Many feel they need to up-skill in teaching the concepts behind mathematical calculations. Very few providers run CPD course in numeracy due to a lack of expertise in this area.
- 61 Around a half of ABE teachers who responded to the Estyn survey feel they require more skills in using ICT in classes and teaching learners with specific needs. A minority request more training in teaching beginner readers and beginner writers.
- 62 Teachers in both ABE and ESOL prefer in-house courses, short courses, regional courses and one-day events. A minority of teachers benefit from the networking promoted by regional training events where they have the opportunity to meet other practitioners. ESOL teachers in particular feel they benefit from exchanging ideas and best practice.

Appendix 1: Summary of teacher responses to the questionnaire

Questionnaires were sent to providers to establish the practitioners' perspective of the quality and relevance of staff training to deliver ABE and ESOL. The results of these questionnaires have been used to support the research from inspection reports and data analysis.

Adult basic education

Eighty-five teachers responded to the questionnaire:

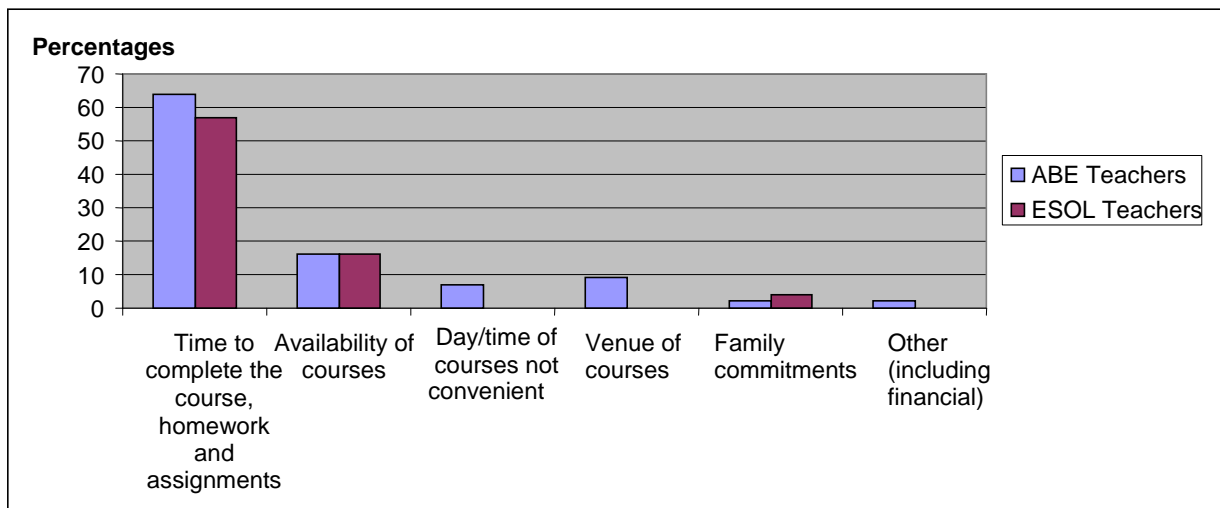
- 46 from colleges;
- 25 from local authorities;
- 9 from training providers;
- 4 other; and
- 1 not stated.

English for speakers of other languages

Forty-four teachers responded to the questionnaire:

- 35 from colleges;
- 8 from local authorities; and
- 1 not stated.

1) Barriers to completing the level 3 and level 4/5 qualifications

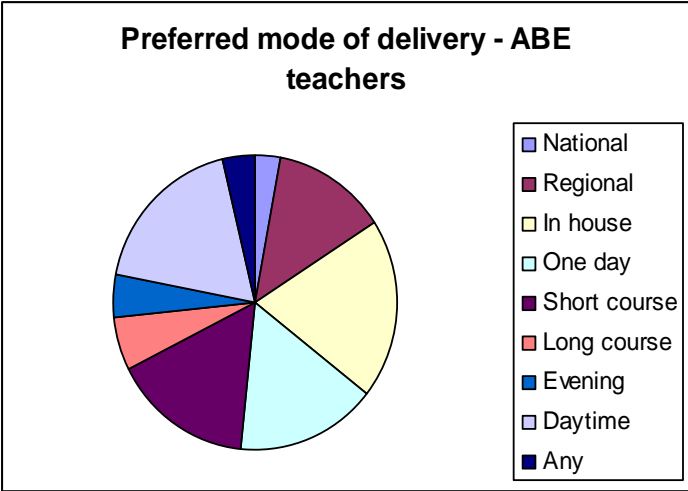
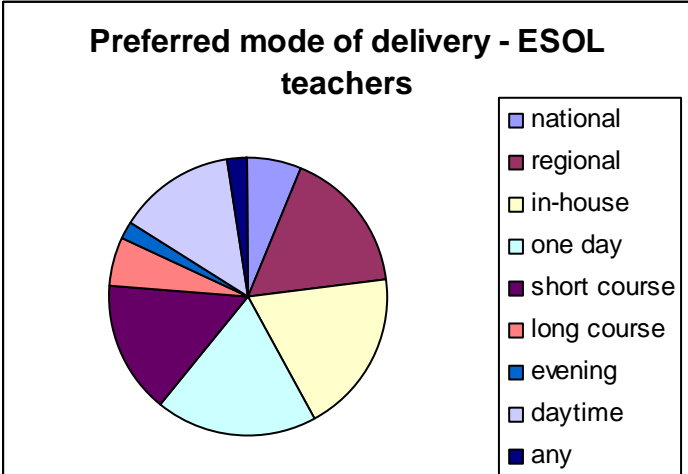


2) Confidence of teachers in their skills to teach literacy, numeracy and ESOL

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident
Literacy	55%	37%	8%
Numeracy	66%	30%	4%
ESOL	66%	34%	

(Percentages based on the number of teachers answering this question)

3) Preferred delivery model for staff training and development



Glossary/references

ABE	Adult basic education
Basic Skills Cymru	Has lead responsibility to implement Words Talk, Numbers Count, the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales within the Welsh Assembly Government
CPD	Continuing professional development
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
FENTO	The Further Educational National Training Organisation (FENTO) is the National training organisation responsible for workforce development across the UK in the further education sector. www.fento.org.uk
Fforwm	Is the national organisation that represents all of Wales' 24 further education (FE) colleges and institutions. Fforwm was re-branded as ColegauCymru / CollegesWales in November 2009. www.fforwm.ac.uk
LLUK	Lifelong learning UK. The independent employer-led sector skills council responsible for the professional development of staff working in the UK lifelong learning sector. www.lluk.org
LLU+	Language and Literacy Unit (South Bank University)
SVUK	Standards Verification UK is the subsidiary of Lifelong Learning UK responsible for the verification of initial teacher training

The remit author and survey team

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