

Skills for Life Workforce Development

■ Sally Bird, Professional Manager,
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Life Improvement Programme

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The new Further Education sector workforce strategy, announced by Bill Rammell, Minister of State, (Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education) on 30 January 2008 is aiming to ensure that all colleges and learning providers are able to deliver excellent provision for young people, adults and employers by developing a skilled, knowledgeable and trained workforce.

The workforce development strand of the Skills for Life Improvement Programme is already working towards these ends to:

- **increase** the professionalisation of the teaching workforce through support for specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL teacher qualification programmes
- **increase** the supply and quality of literacy, numeracy and ESOL teacher educators through a range of programmes to train the teacher-trainers
- **develop** the capacity of specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL mentors.

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Supporting teacher education reform

2008 is a period of massive change in teacher education for the Further Education sector. There are new professional standards, new generic qualifications for teachers and other staff, new specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL teacher qualifications, the introduction of national licensing and qualified teacher status, and mandatory professional development (CPD) for all teachers.

For the Skills for Life Improvement Programme these factors present both challenges and opportunities. Among the opportunities there is an increased momentum around

professional development in the sector, greater clarity than ever before about professional standards, knowledge and pedagogy, commitment from employers to ensuring their Skills for Life teachers are qualified, and motivation from individual teachers to become fully qualified and develop their careers.

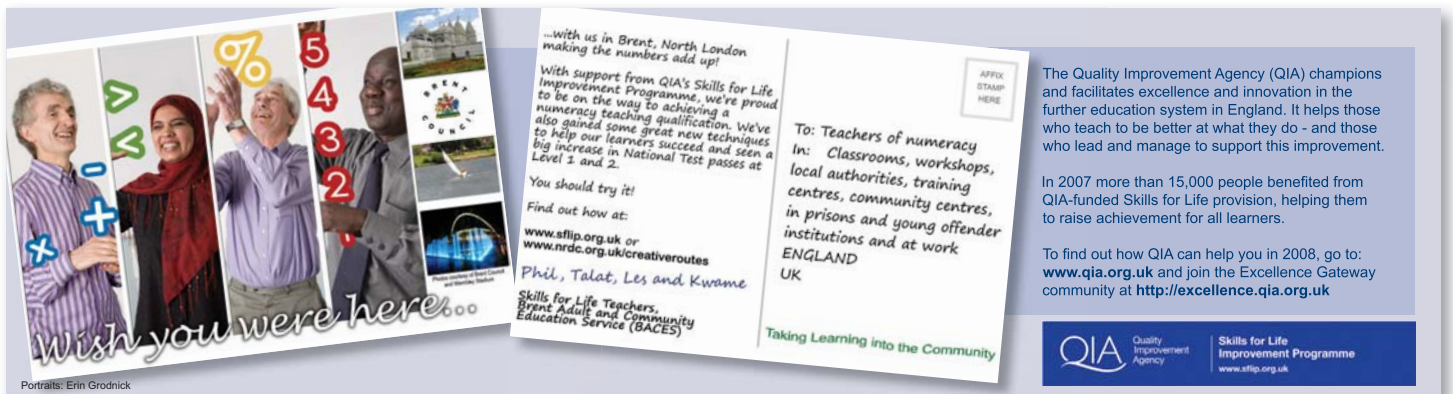
The Improvement Programme builds on this momentum and motivation by providing a number of training opportunities in 2008.

Support for teacher education programmes – **Creative routes** to qualification as literacy, numeracy and ESOL specialists. There are still Programme Development Grants available in 2007/08 for teacher-education providers who wish to develop their specialist literacy, numeracy or ESOL teacher qualifications. These must be qualifications at QCF Level 5 or above, that enrol candidates by June 2008.

The grants are for the development of:

- innovative approaches to supporting practical teaching, such as group teaching arrangements
- strong links between the taught programme and practical teaching
- support and mentoring for trainee teachers
- flexible tuition and assessment approaches
- recruitment and selection of trainee teachers from diverse backgrounds
- part-time provision for pre-service trainees.

‘I was fortunate enough to secure a superb training day provided by Beth Kelly from the LLU+. I am a Union Learning Representative passionate about lifelong learning, with a particular focus on Skills for Life. I am in the process of applying for future funding and keen to partner with organisations/initiatives such as yourselves which have a proven track record,’ wrote Earl Rod of Cumbria.



Recent promotion of numeracy in a national newspaper

Mentoring for teacher training programmes – opportunities for literacy, numeracy and ESOL specialist mentors to develop their skills for mentoring and reflective practice. The programme is offered to literacy, numeracy and ESOL mentors involved in supporting trainee teachers on teaching practice and/or supporting teachers to develop their practice.

‘The course was very relevant to me – not just on the work front but personally as well. I particularly think the buddy system and team meetings will be of greatest benefit to me in my work situation,’ said a delegate in Walsall.

Training the teacher trainers

– opportunities for experienced teachers to become teacher trainers and for professional development for experienced teacher trainers. The Improvement Programme offers a portfolio of courses for teacher educators and experienced teachers involved in offering literacy, numeracy and ESOL professional development, led by LLU+ at London South Bank University.

Professionally trained and experienced subject specialist teacher-trainers are essential to the implementation of the government strategy to develop the Further Education teaching workforce. LLU+ at London South Bank University leads on an Improvement Programme initiative to build regional capacity to train literacy, numeracy and ESOL teacher-trainers.

A team of experienced teacher-trainers will work on four new

Training-the-teacher-trainer programmes starting in February 2008 in four regions of the country – the West Midlands, the South West, Leeds and London. The programmes will enable 48 new numeracy, literacy and ESOL teacher-trainers to research the teacher training context, to broaden and deepen their knowledge of subject-specific teacher training and to equip themselves to train more literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers in their regions.

‘The course made me aware of the learning difficulties experienced by adults learning maths – especially those who are dyslexic or discalculic. It also made me realise the importance of catering for different learning styles through the use of tactile materials such as card matching exercises,’ said Les Atkinson, who has been teaching GCSE Mathematics for Brent Adult and Community Education Services (BACES) for the last 18 years.

CPD for organisations –

opportunities for organisations to apply to host professional development events. The Improvement Programme invites providers to apply to host professional development events at their organisations. Improvement Programme partners – including LLU+ at London South Bank University, NIACE and LSN will offer the training.

The invitation is for providers from the following learning settings: work-based and workplace learning, E2E, Train to Gain, Jobcentre Plus, voluntary and

community learning and offender learning. It is also for providers working to support learning for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

These are in-house events. Organisations will be asked to confirm that they can provide a suitable training room, or recommend a nearby Professional Development Centre. Small organisations are encouraged to form consortia with neighbours to make viable groups.

‘The training I received will prove to be of great value to me to keep abreast of the changes in teaching, both in methods and in the ever changing needs of the pupils I teach. I look forward to ongoing training,’ said a Midlands delegate.

Training can be booked online on www.sflip.org.uk or find out more about these programmes on www.sflip.org.uk

The workforce development strand of the Skills for Life Improvement Programme 2007/08 is coordinated by the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC), working with London South Bank University (LLU+) and the University of Wolverhampton (UoW).

For more about any of the programmes described and the Skills for Life workforce development element of the Improvement Programme, contact Sally Bird, Professional Manager, Workforce Development, at sbird@cfbt.com